

*Environment in Humanitarian Action: Global Training Manual Template*

# Environmental Screening in Humanitarian Action







*This module was developed as part of the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit's project titled Localisation of Environment in Humanitarian Action, and is part of a template of a training manual consisting of:*

- 1 Introductory Module*
- 11 Technical Modules*
- 1 ToT Module*

*The template is an open source and available for any organisation or individual to use or refer to in the development and delivery of their Environment in Humanitarian Action training.*

*What distinguishes this training manual is its comprehensive and flexible framework. We encourage users to adjust the content to meet with the specific needs within their specific Contexts. We kindly ask that credit is given when using or adapting this resource.*

# MODULE OVERVIEW

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This module provides essential methods and tools for conducting environmental screenings and assessing environmental risks in humanitarian contexts. Participants will explore the importance of systematically identifying potential environmental impacts through rapid and practical screening processes tailored to the unique challenges of humanitarian operations. The module emphasizes the necessity of integrating environmental considerations into project planning and execution to minimize negative impacts and enhance the sustainability of humanitarian interventions. By the end of this module, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to perform effective environmental screenings, develop mitigation strategies, and understand the role of local legislation and community involvement in ensuring environmentally responsible humanitarian action.

## Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will:

1. Understand the foundational concepts and principles of environmental screening and risk assessment within the context of humanitarian operations, including the differences between screening and full Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).
2. Be able to use relevant tools and methodologies such as NEAT+ and REA to conduct thorough environmental screenings, ensuring that potential environmental risks are identified early in the project cycle.
3. Develop and prioritize effective strategies to mitigate environmental risks, incorporating criteria such as efficiency, cost-effectiveness, community acceptability, and compliance with local legislation.
4. Recognize the importance of integrating environmental considerations into all stages of humanitarian project planning and implementation, ensuring that interventions are both sustainable and minimally harmful to the environment.
5. Understand the role of local legislation, community involvement, and organizational capacity in conducting environmental screenings, and how these factors influence the success and compliance of humanitarian projects.

## Estimated delivery time

**Total time:** 275 minutes

# CONTENT OUTLINE

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<b>1. Introduction to environmental screening and risk assessment</b>	<b>04</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Differences between Environmental Screening and full EIAs and when each is appropriate.</li><li>◦ Importance of conducting environmental screening in humanitarian action.</li></ul>	
<b>2. Methodologies and tools for environmental screening</b>	<b>07</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Overview of common methodologies and tools used in environmental screening and Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA).</li><li>◦ Guide on using NEAT+ for rapid environmental screening and its application in humanitarian contexts.</li><li>◦ Brief mention of other tools (e.g., FEAT, checklists, matrices) and when they might be appropriate.</li></ul>	
<b>3. Steps in conducting an environmental screening</b>	<b>13</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Guide on conducting an environmental screening, from initial scoping to reporting.</li></ul>	
<b>4. Developing and prioritizing mitigation strategies</b>	<b>16</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Identifying and prioritizing potential environmental risks in humanitarian projects.</li><li>◦ Criteria for selecting and prioritizing mitigation strategies.</li></ul>	
<b>5. Case studies and practical exercises</b>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Case studies illustrating successful environmental screening and mitigation strategies in humanitarian contexts.</li><li>◦ Practical exercises where participants apply the tools and concepts learned to real-world scenarios.</li></ul>	



# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Step	Activity	Method	Duration	Materials Needed	Expected Outcomes
1	<b>Introduce the module.</b> Provide an overview of the module, its objectives, and the schedule.	Presentation, plenary discussion	10 mins	Slides, handouts	Understand the module's objectives and structure
2	<b>Explain the overview, importance, and differences between Environmental Screening, and EIA in humanitarian contexts.</b>	Lecture, plenary discussion	20 mins	Slides, handouts	Understand the overview, importance, and differences between Environmental Screening, ERA, and EIA
3	<b>Conduct an interactive exercise:</b> understanding Environmental Screening, ERA, and EIA. Participants discuss these concepts in small groups.	Group work, discussion	40 mins	Flipchart, markers	Recognize the significance of Environmental Screening, ERA, and EIA
4	<b>Introduce methodologies and tools for environmental screening.</b> Overview of common methodologies and tools used in Environmental Screening and ERA, including NEAT+ and others (e.g., FEAT, checklists, matrices).	Lecture, demonstration	25 mins	Slides, handouts	Learn methodologies and tools for Environmental Screening, ERA, and EIA
5	<b>Interactive Exercise and Role-Play: Practicing Environmental Screening using NEAT+.</b> Participants work with a case study to fill out the survey using the NEAT+ tool, followed by interpreting the results.	Group work, role-play, hands-on practice	80 mins	NEAT+ tool (software), case study materials, flipchart, markers	Gain practical experience in using NEAT+ for Environmental Screening, including interpreting results
6	<b>Step-by-Step Exercise: Conducting a Mock Environmental Screening.</b> Participants conduct a mock Environmental Screening for a humanitarian project, from initial scoping to reporting.	Group work, hands-on practice		Flipchart, markers	Practice conducting an Environmental Screening
7	<b>Group Presentations: Sharing Insights from Steps 5a and 5b.</b> Each group presents their findings and experiences from the NEAT+ tool exercise and the mock environmental screening.	Group work, presentations	30 mins	Flipchart, markers	Synthesize learning experiences from both activities

8	<b>Discuss mitigation strategies</b> for environmental risks. Identify and develop strategies to mitigate risks, focusing on criteria for selecting and prioritizing mitigation strategies.	Lecture, discussion	20 mins	Slides, handouts	Develop strategies for mitigating environmental risks
9	<b>Facilitate an interactive exercise:</b> developing and prioritizing mitigation strategies. Participants create mitigation plans based on previously identified risks, using the criteria provided.	Group work, presentation	40 mins	Flipchart, markers	Create effective mitigation strategies

## Facilitator notes

### Section 1: Introduction to environmental assessment

#### Key points

- Explain the purpose and importance of environmental screening and risk assessment in humanitarian contexts.
- Highlight the role of environmental assessments in identifying and mitigating negative environmental impacts.
- Highlight the importance of environmental screening in humanitarian contexts, emphasizing its role in quickly identifying potential environmental risks and guiding project planning.
- Emphasize the need for integrating environmental considerations into all stages of humanitarian project planning and implementation to ensure sustainability and minimize negative impacts.

#### Background information

- Environmental screening is a rapid assessment process designed to identify potential environmental impacts of humanitarian interventions. It serves as a practical alternative to full EIA in resource-limited settings and for small scale projects.
- Conducting these assessments helps ensure that humanitarian actions are environmentally responsible and sustainable.
- Incorporating environmental considerations into project planning helps ensure that humanitarian actions are both sustainable and responsible, reducing the likelihood of unintended environmental harm.



## Content Development: Introduction to environmental screening and risk assessment







Table 1: Differences Between Environmental Screening and EIA

Aspect	Environmental Screening	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>Definition</b>	A rapid assessment process designed to identify, evaluate, and prioritize potential environmental risks and impacts associated with	A comprehensive and detailed analysis of the potential environmental impacts of a project or action, usually required by law.
<b>Scope</b>	Focused, rapid assessment of potential environmental risks in specific projects or interventions.	Comprehensive, detailed analysis of environmental impacts across various aspects of a project, covering a wide range of environmental factors.
<b>When appropriate</b>	Best used in the early stages of a humanitarian response when quick decisions are needed, and detailed information is not yet available.	Typically required for large-scale projects with potentially significant environmental impacts, especially those subject to legal or regulatory review.
<b>Timeframe</b>	Designed for quick application, often completed in a few hours or days depending on the project's complexity.	Requires a longer timeframe, often taking several weeks to complete due to the in-depth analysis required.
<b>Expertise required</b>	Can be conducted by trained humanitarian staff using simplified tools and checklists.	Requires specialized environmental experts to conduct in-depth studies, including field surveys, data analysis, and technical evaluations.
<b>Application context</b>	Primarily used in humanitarian contexts where time, resources, and immediate action are critical.	Typically mandated by law for large-scale development projects with significant potential environmental impacts, such as infrastructure projects, industrial developments, or resource extraction.
<b>Regulatory compliance</b>	May be conducted to ensure basic compliance with environmental guidelines, but usually not legally required.	Legally required in many countries for projects above certain thresholds, with specific regulatory requirements and public consultation processes.
<b>Outcome</b>	Provides a rapid overview of key environmental risks, leading to immediate mitigation actions, often in the form of a basic Environmental Management Plan (EMP).	Results in a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment report, outlining all baseline conditions, potential impacts, proposed mitigations, and alternatives, often forming the basis for project approval or rejection.
<b>Cost</b>	Generally low-cost due to the streamlined process and limited scope.	High cost, reflecting the need for extensive research, expert consultations, and comprehensive reporting.
<b>Public participation</b>	Basic consultations through stakeholder meetings, primarily focused on project area characteristics and immediate project impacts.	Involves extensive public participation, including public hearings, consultations, and opportunities for objections, ensuring transparency and community input.



<b>Flexibility</b>	Allows for rapid adjustments based on the findings, enabling quick adaptation of humanitarian interventions.	Less flexible due to the detailed and formalized nature of the process, often requiring formal amendments to address changes.
<b>Follow-up and monitoring</b>	Incorporation of monitoring and evaluation as part of the main project's monitoring plan. Involving periodic informal checks on key environmental indicators.	Involves a formal monitoring plan, with scheduled reviews, updates, and reporting requirements to regulatory bodies.
<b>Example</b>	Screening environmental impacts before establishing a temporary shelter in a disaster-affected area.	Conducting an EIA for a large infrastructure project e.g. water treatment facility to ensure compliance with environmental regulations

Table 2: Importance of conducting environmental screening in humanitarian contexts

Key Aspect	Description	Importance	Example
 <b>Identification of Risks</b>	Quickly identifies environmental risks associated with humanitarian interventions.	Allows for early detection and management of potential environmental issues, preventing harm to both the environment and affected communities.	Screening before setting up a refugee camp to ensure environmental risks like deforestation or water contamination are minimized.
 <b>Timely Mitigation</b>	Enables rapid development of mitigation strategies to avoid or reduce negative impacts.	Prevents significant environmental damage and ensures the sustainability and safety of humanitarian projects.	Implementing waste management strategies in camps to avoid contamination of local water sources or soil degradation.
 <b>Resource Efficiency</b>	Streamlines the assessment process, making it suitable for resource-limited humanitarian settings.	Optimizes the use of available resources, reducing the time and costs involved in the assessment process, allowing for faster deployment of aid.	Using a simple checklist for rapid screening of environmental risks during an emergency response, ensuring that critical resources are allocated efficiently.
 <b>Compliance with Standards</b>	Ensures that humanitarian projects meet basic environmental standards and guidelines.	Helps organizations avoid legal or regulatory issues and aligns projects with international environmental and humanitarian standards.	Screening to ensure compliance with national water quality standards.
 <b>Community Engagement</b>	Involves local communities in identifying and assessing environmental risks.	Enhances the relevance and acceptability of mitigation measures and ensures that the needs and knowledge of local communities are incorporated.	Engaging local communities in screening processes to identify potential impacts on local water sources, ensuring culturally appropriate mitigation strategies.
 <b>Prevention of Long-Term Damage</b>	Focuses on avoiding actions that could lead to long-term environmental degradation.	Protects ecosystems and resources that are vital for the long-term recovery and resilience of affected communities.	Screening potential impacts of temporary shelter construction to avoid long-term soil erosion and habitat destruction.

## Section 2: Methodologies and tools for environmental assessment

### Key points

- Introduce common methodologies and tools used in environmental screening and risk assessments in humanitarian context.
- Provide detailed guidance on using NEAT+ for rapid environmental screening, emphasizing its structured process and application in both rural and urban settings.
- Briefly mention other tools like REA and FEAT and their appropriate applications within humanitarian operations.

### Background information

- Various methodologies and tools are used to conduct environmental screening and assessments in humanitarian context, each with its own strengths and applications.
- Understanding and applying these tools effectively can significantly enhance the sustainability and environmental responsibility of humanitarian interventions, preventing or mitigating potential negative impacts on the environment and affected communities.

### Content development: Methodologies and tools for environmental assessment

Tool/ Methodology	Description	Applications	Real-World Application
<b>Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT)</b>	A rapid environmental assessment tool designed for emergency situations to quickly identify potential or existing environmental hazards. The FEAT tool follows a three-step process: (1) Collect information on priority hazards, quantity, and exposure, (2) Look up the actual impact zone corresponding to the hazard and quantity involved using the Exposure Distance Table, (3) Advise on impact reduction and mitigation measures. The results are documented in an Impact Table, capturing essential information and facilitating standardized reporting.	Useful for initial assessments immediately after a disaster to guide priority and urgent interventions. It helps in identifying priority responses and supports initial emergency actions.	Using FEAT to assess chemical hazards in an industrial area post-earthquake, providing rapid insights into potential environmental and human health impacts and guiding immediate response actions.
<b>Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+)</b>	A rapid and simple project-level environmental screening tool allowing humanitarian actors to quickly identify issues of environmental concern before designing longer-term emergency or recovery interventions. NEAT+ provides a creative and practical approach to integrating sustainable environmental practices into humanitarian aid. It has two versions: Rural NEAT+ (available in Excel and KoBo Toolbox) and Urban NEAT+ (available as a web application). The tool flags environmental issues of high, medium, and low concern and provides mitigation tips.	Used for mainstreaming environmental concerns into humanitarian response plans. It helps in early identification of environmental risks and integration of mitigation measures into project planning and implementation.	Using NEAT+ to assess and mitigate potential impacts of water and sanitation activities in a refugee camp.

<p><b>Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment in Disasters Guidelines (REA)</b></p>	<p>A tool to identify, define, and prioritize potential environmental impacts in disaster situations. The REA follows a systematic process:                  (1) Organization-level Assessment to understand the environmental context and prioritize issues,                  (2) Community-level Assessment to gather input from affected communities,                  (3) Consolidation and Analysis to combine findings from the previous assessments and identify key environmental issues and mitigation actions,                  (4) Action Planning to develop strategies to address identified environmental impacts.</p>	<p>Used for rapid assessments disasters arising from natural, technological, or political hazards. Helps prioritize environmental impacts and follow-up actions during a disaster.</p>	<p>Conducting a REA immediately after a disaster to identify urgent environmental concerns and developing an action plan for mitigation.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p>	<p>A systematic process to evaluate the environmental consequences of proposed projects or actions.</p>	<p>Provides a comprehensive overview of the environmental implications of a project and the proposed mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>Conducting an EIA for a major housing reconstruction project in a post-disaster area.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</b></p>	<p>An assessment process that evaluates the environmental impacts of policies, plans, and programs at a strategic level.</p>	<p>Ensures environmental considerations are integrated into high-level decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Implementing an SEA to assess the environmental impacts of a large-scale humanitarian aid program.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Audits</b></p>	<p>A systematic evaluation of a project's compliance with environmental regulations and best practices.</p>	<p>Ensures ongoing projects meet environmental standards and identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Conducting an environmental audit of a long-term humanitarian operation to ensure compliance with environmental guidelines.</p>
<p><b>Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive process that assesses the damage, losses, and needs across various sectors, including environmental impacts, to guide recovery and reconstruction efforts.</p>	<p>Primarily used in post-disaster settings to inform recovery planning and ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into the broader recovery process.</p>	<p>Conducting a PDNA after a major earthquake to assess the environmental damages alongside economic and social impacts, helping to shape sustainable recovery strategies.</p>

<p><b>VEHA Tool (Virtual Environmental and Humanitarian Adviser)</b></p>	<p>The VEHA Tool is an innovative online platform designed to support the integration of environmental considerations into humanitarian operations. By providing automated, sector-specific guidance, it assists humanitarian actors in identifying environmental risks and best practices for mitigation. VEHA offers a structured approach to align humanitarian response activities with sustainable environmental management through detailed planning and field implementation guidance. Users can navigate through various sectors, select relevant activities, and access tailored advice to ensure their interventions minimize ecological impacts and contribute to environmental resilience.</p>	<p>The tool is particularly valuable for practitioners involved in project planning, execution, and management across humanitarian sectors, including water, sanitation, shelter, health, and food security. It helps program managers incorporate environmental safeguards and sustainable practices directly into their projects, enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions.</p>	<p>Using VEHA during the planning of water and sanitation interventions in a refugee camp to align project activities with sustainable solutions, minimizing ecological impacts and promoting environmental best practices.</p>
<p><b>CEDRIG (Climate, Environment, and Disaster Risk Reduction Integration Guidance)</b></p>	<p>CEDRIG is a structured assessment tool developed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to support humanitarian and development actors in identifying risks related to climate change, environmental degradation, and natural hazards. The tool aims to ensure that strategies, programs, and projects are resilient and do not exacerbate existing risks. CEDRIG is divided into three parts: CEDRIG Light for rapid screening, CEDRIG Strategic for detailed assessments at the programmatic level, and CEDRIG Operational for in-depth analysis at the project level.</p>	<p>CEDRIG Light is used for rapid, initial screening of strategies, programs, or projects to identify whether they are at risk from climate change, environmental degradation, or natural hazards, and to determine if they could contribute to these risks. It is particularly useful in the early stages of humanitarian response planning, allowing for quick identification of key environmental concerns and deciding whether more detailed assessments are needed.</p>	<p>During the initial assessment phase of a humanitarian response to a flood emergency, CEDRIG Light can be used to rapidly screen planned emergency shelter locations for potential environmental and disaster risks, such as susceptibility to future flooding or environmental degradation. This initial screening would help prioritize safer locations, guide site selection, and flag areas requiring further detailed assessment, thereby enhancing the safety and sustainability of the response.</p>

Table 2: Detailed guide on using NEAT+ for rapid environmental screening







Component	Description	Importance	Example
 <b>Environmental sensitivity module</b>	Assesses the sensitivity of the environment of the humanitarian project area by evaluating factors such as vegetation type, soil condition, climate, and socio-economic settings.	Identifies underlying environmental vulnerabilities and categorizes risks as low, medium, or high, forming the foundation for further analysis.	Analyzing camp conditions, natural resources, and local infrastructure in a flood-affected area to determine environmental sensitivity.
 <b>Activity modules</b>	Optional separate modules assess the potential environmental impacts of specific humanitarian activities: Shelter, WASH, Food Security, and livelihood.	Allows for targeted assessment of how specific activities might impact the environment, offering a customized approach to risk mitigation.	Evaluating the environmental impact of WASH activities in a drought-prone region to identify potential water resource conflicts.
 <b>Environmental analysis</b>	Combines data from the Environmental Sensitivity Module and Activity Modules to generate a comprehensive report with mitigation tips.	Provides actionable insights by overlaying sensitivity data with activity data, helping to prioritize mitigation strategies.	Generating a report that suggests best practices for waste management and resource use in a refugee camp to minimize environmental damage.
 <b>Automated reporting</b>	The tool automatically generates a report categorizing environmental issues by severity (low, medium, high) and includes tailored mitigation strategies and additional resources.	Simplifies the process for humanitarian practitioners, providing clear guidance without requiring environmental expertise.	Using the NEAT+ report to inform decision-making in the early stages of a humanitarian intervention, ensuring that environmental concerns are addressed proactively.
 <b>Mitigation tips and resources</b>	The report includes specific tips on mitigating environmental impacts based on the activities and sensitivity analysis, as well as additional resources for further reading.	Supports project managers in implementing best practices and reducing environmental harm, enhancing the sustainability of interventions.	Implementing recommendations from the NEAT+ report to improve energy efficiency in shelter construction and reduce deforestation risks.
 <b>Integration with geospatial data</b>	Optional use of geospatial data (e.g., from GIS platforms like MapX) to enhance the assessment process by providing detailed environmental context.	Enhances the accuracy and depth of the environmental sensitivity analysis, particularly useful in remote or data-scarce environments.	Using remote sensing imagery to assess land cover and land use types in a disaster-affected area, improving the precision of the environmental sensitivity assessment.



Table 3: Decision guide for selecting environmental screening/assessment tools in humanitarian contexts

Context/ Scenario	Tool	When to Use	Key Considerations
<b>Rapid onset emergency</b>	NEAT+	Use when a quick, preliminary assessment of environmental risks is needed in the early stages of an emergency response.	Best for rapid screening to identify immediate environmental concerns; can be used in both rural and urban contexts.
<b>Protracted crisis or recovery phase</b>	PDNA	Use for comprehensive environmental assessments during the recovery phase, focusing on long-term impacts and recovery needs.	Suitable when assessing broader recovery needs across multiple sectors, including environmental, social, and economic aspects.
<b>Post-disaster environmental hazards</b>	FEAT	Use when there is a need to quickly identify and assess specific environmental hazards, such as chemical spills or industrial accidents.	Ideal for scenarios with known hazardous materials or where environmental contamination is a concern.
<b>General disaster response</b>	REA	Use for a rapid environmental impact assessment in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, especially when prioritizing environmental risks and mitigation actions.	Best for initial assessments in various types of disasters (natural, technological, or political) to guide early response efforts.
<b>Project-level environmental screening</b>	NEAT+	Use at the project level to identify specific environmental risks associated with particular humanitarian activities, such as WASH, shelter, or livelihoods.	Provides a focused assessment of potential environmental impacts specific to the humanitarian activities planned.
<b>Strategic planning and policy development</b>	SEA	Use for assessing the environmental impacts of policies, plans, or programs at a strategic level, especially in large-scale humanitarian interventions.	Useful for integrating environmental considerations into high-level decision-making processes and ensuring sustainability.
<b>Large scale humanitarian or development projects with potential major impacts</b>	EIA	Use when a comprehensive environmental assessment is required for large-scale projects, such as infrastructure development or major reconstruction efforts.	Typically mandated by law and involves detailed analysis, public consultations, and long-term monitoring.

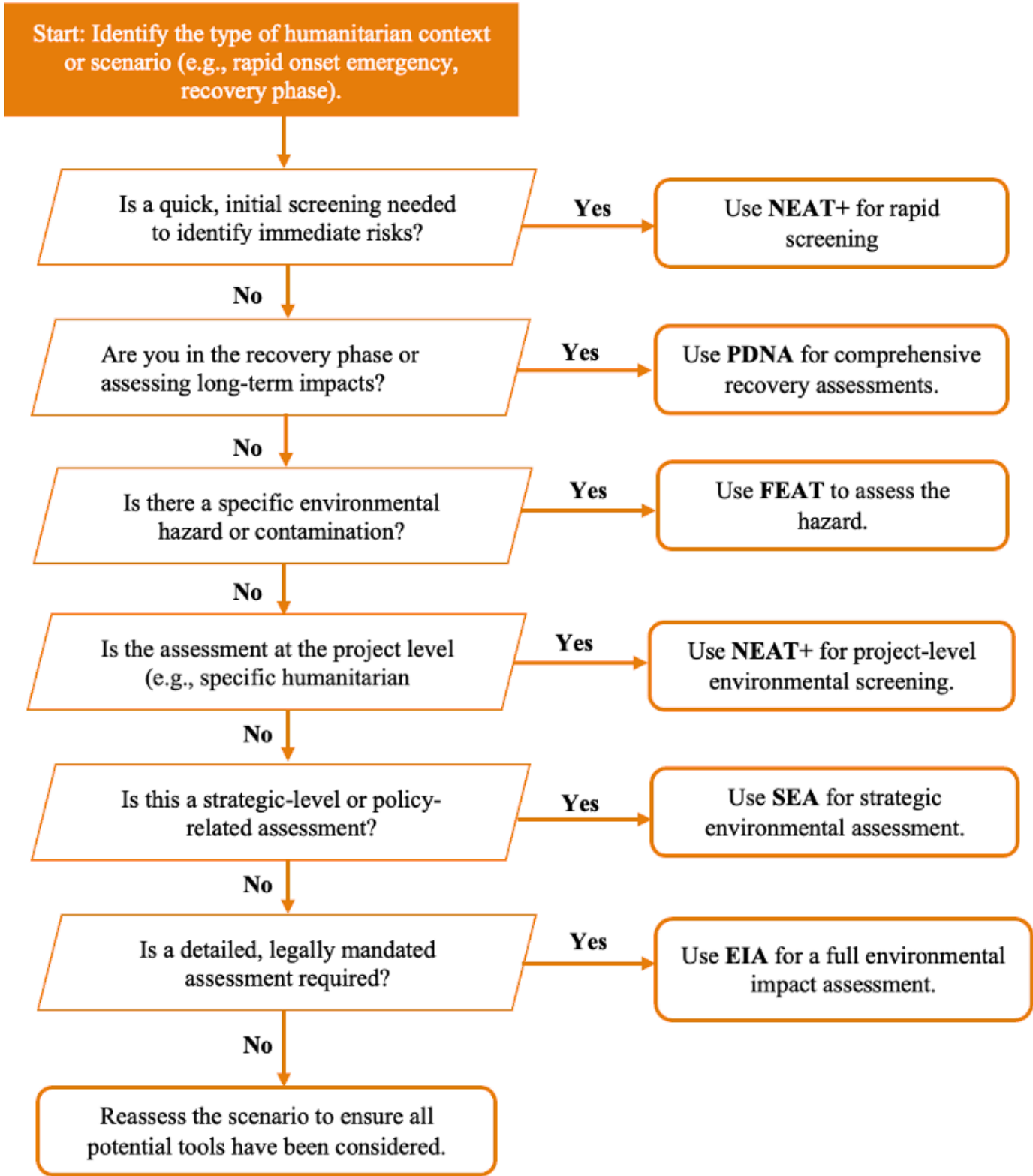


Figure 1: An example of a possible decision tree to guide decisions on environmental screening/assessment

## Section 3: Steps in conducting an environmental screenings

### Key points

- Provide a systematic guide to conducting environmental screening, ensuring that all critical steps are covered to identify and mitigate potential environmental risks effectively.
- Emphasize the importance of thorough documentation and reporting at each stage to ensure transparency, accountability, and the successful implementation of mitigation measures.
- Acknowledge the potential challenges that may arise during the screening process, such as limited resources or community resistance, and emphasize the importance of being adaptable and responsive to these challenges.

### Background information

- Environmental screening is a crucial first step in assessing the potential impacts of humanitarian interventions on the environment. By following a structured process, organizations can identify environmental risks early in the project cycle, enabling them to implement timely and effective mitigation strategies.
- This process helps to ensure that humanitarian projects are both environmentally responsible and sustainable, reducing the likelihood of causing unintended harm to the environment or affected communities.
- It is important to recognize that challenges such as limited resources, data scarcity, or community engagement issues may arise during this process. Addressing these challenges effectively requires flexibility, collaboration, and a commitment to incorporating local knowledge and expertise.

### Content development: Steps in conducting an environmental screening

Step	Description	Importance	Example/ Application
<i>Initial scoping</i>	Identify the scope of the environmental screening, including the project's geographic area, activities, and potential environmental issues.	Defines the focus of the screening, ensuring that all relevant environmental factors are considered from the outset.	Conducting a preliminary assessment to identify key environmental concerns, such as deforestation risks in a proposed shelter site.
<i>Data collection</i>	Gather relevant environmental data, including baseline information on local ecosystems, resources, and potential hazards.	Provides the foundation for the screening, allowing for an accurate assessment of environmental risks and vulnerabilities.	Collecting data on local water sources, soil conditions, and biodiversity in a flood-prone area.
<i>Legal and regulatory review</i>	Identify and analyze all relevant local, regional, and national environmental laws and regulations that pertain to the project activities.	Ensures that the project is compliant with all legal requirements, preventing potential legal issues and promoting responsible environmental stewardship.	Reviewing local water usage regulations before implementing a WASH project to ensure sustainable and lawful utilization of water resources.
<i>Stakeholder consultation</i>	Engage with local communities, environmental experts, and other stakeholders to gather input on potential environmental impacts and concerns.	Ensures that the screening process is inclusive and considers local knowledge and perspectives, enhancing the relevance and acceptability of the findings.	Holding community meetings to discuss potential environmental impacts of a planned WASH project in a rural area.

<i>Environmental sensitivity analysis</i>	Analyze the collected data to assess the sensitivity of the environment, categorizing areas of concern based on their vulnerability to potential impacts.	Identifies key areas where environmental impacts are likely to be most significant, guiding the focus of mitigation efforts.	Using NEAT+ to assess the sensitivity of a proposed refugee camp site, identifying high-risk areas for deforestation and water contamination.
<i>Impact identification and evaluation</i>	Identify and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the project activities, considering both direct and indirect effects.	Helps prioritize environmental risks and determine the most appropriate mitigation strategies.	Evaluating the significance of different risks on the environment, and prioritizing the mitigation measures of risks with the highest impacts.
<i>Mitigation planning</i>	Develop a mitigation plan that outlines specific measures to avoid, minimize, or manage the identified environmental impacts.	Ensures that the project includes concrete actions to address environmental risks, reducing the likelihood of negative outcomes.	Creating a plan to manage solid waste in a refugee camp, including strategies for recycling and safe disposal.
<i>Monitoring and review</i>	Establish a monitoring framework to track the effectiveness of mitigation measures and adapt the plan as needed based on ongoing assessments.	Ensures that the mitigation strategies are working as intended and allows for adjustments to be made in response to new information or changing conditions.	Setting up regular water quality testing in a camp to ensure that waste management practices are preventing contamination.
<i>Reporting</i>	Document the findings of the environmental screening, including the identified risks, planned mitigation measures, and monitoring framework.	Provides a clear and comprehensive record of the screening process, supporting transparency and accountability.	Producing a report that outlines the environmental risks and mitigation strategies for a new shelter project, which can be shared with stakeholders and used to guide implementation.

Table 2: Challenges to environmental screening and assessments in humanitarian action

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>	<b>Real-World Example</b>
<i>Limited time and resources</i>	Humanitarian contexts often require rapid responses with constrained time and resources, making thorough environmental assessments challenging.	Use simplified tools like NEAT+ and prioritize key environmental risks that can be quickly assessed and mitigated.	In a rapid onset disaster, using NEAT+ to quickly assess environmental risks in setting up temporary shelters, ensuring minimal environmental impact with limited resources.
<i>Multiple tools and methods</i>	The availability of numerous tools (e.g., NEAT+, REA, FEAT, PDNA) can lead to confusion about which tool is most appropriate for a given context, potentially resulting in inconsistent assessments.	Provide clear guidelines or decision trees that help practitioners choose the most suitable tool based on the specific context, project scope, and available resources. Training sessions can also help familiarize teams with the strengths and limitations of each tool.	In humanitarian responses, teams could implement a standardized decision-making framework that guides the selection of appropriate environmental assessment tools. For example, NEAT+ might be chosen for rapid environmental screening in emergency settings, while PDNA could be reserved for comprehensive environmental evaluations during the recovery phase, ensuring that the chosen tools align with the specific needs of the context.

<i>Lack of environmental expertise</i>	Humanitarian teams may lack specialized environmental knowledge, leading to insufficient assessments.	Provide training on environmental screening tools and integrate environmental specialists into humanitarian teams.	Training humanitarian staff on NEAT+ in a refugee camp to enhance their capacity to identify and mitigate environmental risks.
<i>Regulatory and legal constraints</i>	Navigating local, national, and international environmental regulations can be complex and time-consuming.	Engage with local authorities early in the planning process to ensure compliance and streamline the legal requirements.	Collaborating with local government in a post-conflict setting to ensure that reconstruction activities comply with environmental laws and regulations.
<i>Community resistance or lack of engagement</i>	Lack of community involvement can lead to resistance or failure of environmental strategies.	Involve local communities from the outset in the screening and mitigation processes to ensure their concerns are addressed.	Involving community leaders in environmental screening for a new water supply project to ensure cultural and environmental concerns are incorporated into the design.
<i>Data scarcity, inaccessibility and inconsistent quality</i>	Limited availability or access to environmental data can hinder accurate assessments; Variations in the quality and reliability of environmental data can undermine the accuracy of assessments.	Utilize remote sensing, satellite data, and engage local knowledge to fill data gaps; Utilize multiple data sources, including remote sensing, on-the-ground surveys, and community input to improve data reliability.	Using satellite imagery to assess land use and vegetation cover in a disaster-affected area where ground data is unavailable; Combining satellite imagery with local surveys to get a comprehensive view of deforestation impacts in a conflict-affected area.
<i>Political and security challenges</i>	In conflict zones or politically sensitive areas, conducting environmental assessments can be risky or restricted.	Collaborate with local NGOs, and leverage existing networks to safely gather necessary information.	Partnering with local NGOs in a conflict zone to conduct an environmental screening for a displaced persons camp.
<i>Funding constraints</i>	Limited financial resources may restrict the scope and depth of environmental assessments.	Prioritize key environmental risks and seek additional funding from donors or partners.	Applying for supplementary funding from environmental foundations to expand a screening process for a complex humanitarian operation.
<i>Technological limitations</i>	Lack of access to advanced tools or technology in remote or resource-limited settings.	Adapt assessments to available technology and seek alternative methods to gather data.	Conducting environmental screenings using basic tools and techniques in a remote rural area with no access to advanced technology.
<i>Cultural and social barriers</i>	Environmental screening processes may encounter resistance due to cultural beliefs or social norms.	Conduct culturally sensitive community consultations and involve local leaders to ensure environmental strategies respect local customs and traditions.	Engaging with local elders in a rural community to adapt water resource management strategies that align with cultural practices.
<i>Coordination among multiple stakeholders</i>	Coordination among multiple stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, and local communities, can lead to delays or conflicts.	Establish a clear coordination framework that defines roles, responsibilities, and communication channels among all stakeholders.	Developing a coordination plan for an environmental impact assessment that involves local government, humanitarian organizations, and community groups to ensure all voices are heard and integrated.



<i>Logistical constraints in remote areas</i>	Conducting environmental assessments in remote or inaccessible areas poses logistical challenges.	Plan for alternative logistical arrangements, such as using drones for data collection or partnering with local organizations.	Using drones to assess flood-prone areas in a remote region where ground access is limited due to poor infrastructure.
<i>Political interference</i>	Political pressures may influence the outcomes of environmental assessments or restrict access to certain areas.	Engage neutral third-party organizations to conduct assessments and advocate for transparency and accountability.	Partnering with international organizations to carry out an independent environmental assessment in a politically sensitive area to ensure unbiased results.
<i>Adaptability to climate change</i>	Environmental screening processes must account for the long-term impacts of climate change.	Integrate climate change scenarios into screening tools and encourage adaptive management strategies.	Incorporating climate change projections into the planning of a coastal refugee camp to anticipate future sea-level rise and increased storm frequency.

## Section 4: Developing and prioritizing Mitigation strategies

### Key points

- Outline the process of identifying and prioritizing environmental risks that have been highlighted during the environmental screening process.
- Provide clear criteria for selecting and prioritizing mitigation strategies, ensuring that the most effective and sustainable measures are implemented.
- Emphasize the importance of compliance with local environmental legislation, community involvement, and assessing organizational capacity throughout the process.

### Background information

- Developing effective mitigation strategies is a critical step in ensuring that humanitarian projects do not cause unintended harm to the environment or affected communities. This process builds on the findings from the environmental screening and involves a careful evaluation of potential risks.
- The selection and prioritization of mitigation strategies should be guided by factors such as their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, community acceptability, compliance with local legislation, and potential co-benefits.
- Understanding local environmental legislation and ensuring community involvement are essential for the success and sustainability of mitigation strategies. Additionally, assessing the organization's capacity to implement these strategies effectively is crucial.



## Content development: Developing and prioritizing mitigation strategies

Table 1: Identifying and prioritizing environmental risks



### Identify environmental risks

Use the results from the environmental screening (Section 3) to identify specific environmental risks associated with the project.

#### Importance

Provides a clear understanding of the key environmental issues that need to be addressed, ensuring targeted and effective mitigation.

#### Link to Previous Sections:

Builds on the Environmental Sensitivity Analysis and Impact Identification steps from Section 3.



### Assess the severity of risks

Evaluate the severity of each identified risk based on factors such as the likelihood of occurrence and potential impact on the environment and community.

#### Importance

Helps prioritize which risks require the most urgent and comprehensive mitigation strategies.

#### Link to Previous Sections:

Follows from the Environmental Sensitivity Analysis and Impact Evaluation processes in Section 3.



### Categorize risks

Classify the risks into categories (e.g., high, medium, low) to streamline the prioritization process.

#### Importance

Simplifies the process of determining which risks need immediate action versus those that can be addressed over time.

#### Link to Previous Sections:

Directly linked to the risk categorization steps in the Environmental Sensitivity Module discussed in Section 3.



### Consider cumulative impacts

Assess whether the identified risks, when combined with other existing or planned activities, could lead to cumulative environmental impacts.

#### Importance

Helps in understanding the broader environmental implications of multiple projects or interventions in the same area, ensuring a holistic approach to risk management.

#### Link to Previous Sections:

Builds on the Impact Identification and Evaluation steps in Section 3 by considering not just isolated impacts but the cumulative effects of multiple activities.



### Consider cross-cutting issues

Identify how the environmental risks intersect with other critical issues such as gender, health, and livelihoods.

#### Importance

Ensures that mitigation strategies are not only environmentally sound but also socially responsible and inclusive.

#### Link to Previous Sections:

This could tie into the Stakeholder Consultation step from Section 3, where diverse perspectives on how environmental risks might impact different groups can be gathered.



### Community involvement in risk identification

Engage local communities in the risk identification process to incorporate local knowledge and ensure that identified risks reflect the community's concerns and priorities.

#### Importance

Ensures that the screening and mitigation processes are culturally appropriate and supported by the community, enhancing the success of the project.

#### Link to Previous Sections:

Relates to the Stakeholder Consultation and Community Involvement steps in Section 3.

Table 2: Criteria for selecting and prioritizing mitigation strategies

Criterion	Description	Importance	Example/Application
<b>Efficiency</b>	Evaluate how efficiently the mitigation strategy addresses the identified environmental risk, considering both time and resource requirements.	Ensures that the chosen mitigation strategies effectively reduce or eliminate the environmental risks within a reasonable timeframe and using available resources.	Implementing a waste management system in a refugee camp that quickly reduces the risk of water contamination using existing resources.
<b>Cost-effectiveness</b>	Assess the cost of implementing the mitigation strategy relative to the benefits it provides in reducing environmental risks.	Ensures that resources are used efficiently and that the mitigation strategy provides maximum environmental protection for the least cost.	Choosing between two water filtration systems based on their cost and effectiveness in preventing contamination.
<b>Community acceptability</b>	Consider how acceptable the mitigation strategy is to the local community, including cultural, social, and economic factors.	Increases the likelihood of successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the mitigation measures.	Involving local communities in the design and management of a new waste disposal system to ensure it meets their needs and expectations.

<b>Compliance with local legislation</b>	Thoroughly assess and ensure that all mitigation strategies align with existing environmental laws, regulations, and policies at local, regional, and national levels. This includes obtaining necessary permits and approvals before project commencement.	Prevents legal disputes, fines, or project shutdowns, and demonstrates respect for the rule of law and local governance structures, enhancing the project's legitimacy and community acceptance.	Before initiating construction for shelter projects, secure environmental impact permits as required by local authorities, and ensure construction methods meet stipulated environmental standards.
<b>Feasibility</b>	Assess the practicality of implementing the mitigation strategy in the given context, considering factors such as available technology, expertise, and infrastructure.	Ensures that the chosen strategies can be realistically implemented given the project's constraints.	Selecting a water purification technology that is both available and maintainable in a remote, disaster-affected area.
<b>Long-term sustainability</b>	Consider the long-term viability of the mitigation strategy, including its ability to remain effective over time and its impact on future projects.	Promotes the enduring success of the mitigation measures, ensuring they continue to protect the environment and community even after the project ends.	Implementing reforestation programs that not only mitigate current environmental risks but also enhance future resilience against climate change.
<b>Adaptability</b>	Evaluate how easily the mitigation strategy can be adapted to changing circumstances, such as new environmental data or evolving project needs.	Ensures that the strategy remains relevant and effective even as project conditions change, enhancing long-term resilience.	Choosing flexible waste management strategies that can be scaled up or down based on the size of the refugee population in a camp.
<b>Environmental co-benefits</b>	Consider whether the mitigation strategy also provides additional environmental benefits beyond addressing the identified risks.	Promotes strategies that not only mitigate risks but also contribute positively to the environment, such as improving biodiversity or reducing carbon emissions.	Implementing energy-efficient technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also addressing immediate energy needs in a humanitarian setting.
<b>Stakeholder involvement in implementation</b>	Assess the level of stakeholder involvement required for successful implementation of the mitigation strategy, and plan accordingly.	Ensures that the strategy is more likely to succeed with buy-in from all relevant parties, including local communities, government bodies, and partner organizations.	Designing a water management strategy that involves local communities in both planning and ongoing maintenance to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.
<b>Organizational capacity</b>	Evaluate whether the organization has the necessary resources, expertise, and infrastructure to effectively implement the mitigation strategy.	Ensures that the strategy can be carried out successfully, or highlights the need for capacity building or external support if gaps are identified.	Assessing the need for additional training or partnerships to implement a complex waste management system in a disaster-affected area.



# ACTIVITIES

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## 1. Interactive exercise: understanding environmental screening, and EIA

- Participants will work in small groups to discuss and differentiate between Environmental Screening, and EIA.
- **Discussion points:**
  - *What are the key differences and similarities between Environmental Screening, and EIA?*
  - *In what scenarios is each process most appropriate within humanitarian contexts?*
  - *How do these processes contribute to effective environmental management during humanitarian interventions?*

## 2. Case study analysis: applying environmental assessment tools

- Participants will analyze a detailed case study where Environmental Screening, and EIA have been applied in a humanitarian project setting.
- **Discussion points:**
  - How were each of the assessment tools utilized throughout the project lifecycle?
  - What environmental risks were identified, and how did the assessments influence decision-making and outcomes?
  - What challenges were encountered during the application of these tools, and how were they addressed?

## 3. Interactive exercise: selecting appropriate tools and methodologies

- Participants will collaborate in small groups to select and justify appropriate environmental assessment tools (e.g., NEAT+, REA, FEAT) for a given humanitarian scenario.
- Scenario Example: Planning the establishment of a new refugee camp in a post-disaster context.
- **Discussion Points:**
  - Which tools and methodologies are most suitable for rapid and effective environmental assessment in this scenario?
  - How do factors such as time constraints, resource availability, and contextual specifics influence tool selection?
  - What are the anticipated benefits and limitations of the chosen tools in managing environmental risks?



#### 4. Step-by-step exercise: conducting an environmental screening

- Participants will engage in a structured exercise to conduct a mock environmental screening for a hypothetical humanitarian project, following each step systematically.
- Scenario Example: Implementing a temporary healthcare facility in a flood-affected region.
- **Participants will:**
  - Perform initial scoping to understand potential environmental impacts.
  - Collect and analyze relevant baseline environmental data.
  - Identify and prioritize potential environmental risks.
  - Propose preliminary mitigation measures.
- **Discussion points:**
  - What insights were gained during each step of the screening process?
  - How can community involvement and stakeholder engagement enhance the effectiveness of the screening?
  - In what ways do local environmental legislation and regulations influence the screening outcomes?

#### 5. Group discussion: developing and prioritizing mitigation strategies

- Participants will partake in a facilitated discussion to formulate effective mitigation strategies for environmental risks identified in previous exercises.
- **Discussion points:**
  - How can mitigation measures be designed to balance effectiveness, practicality, and sustainability?
  - What criteria should be considered when prioritizing mitigation strategies (e.g., efficiency, cost-effectiveness, community acceptability, compliance with local legislation, organizational capacity)?
  - How can potential challenges in implementing mitigation measures be anticipated and addressed proactively?

#### 6. Case study analysis: successful implementation of mitigation strategies

- Participants will examine a real-world case study showcasing the successful development and implementation of environmental mitigation strategies in a humanitarian project.
- **Discussion Points:**
  - What were the critical environmental challenges addressed in the case study?
  - How were mitigation strategies developed, prioritized, and implemented effectively?
  - What role did community involvement, stakeholder engagement, and adherence to local legislation play in the success of these strategies?
  - What lessons and best practices can be extracted and applied to future humanitarian interventions?

# RESOURCES

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## Materials

- NEAT+ tool (software): for hands-on practice with environmental screening.
- Case study materials: detailed case studies to be used during group work and role-play exercises.
- Slides and handouts: covering key concepts, methodologies, and tools for environmental screening, ERA, and EIA.
- Flipchart and markers: for group discussions, presentations, and exercises.
- Sample baseline data sets: to be used during the environmental screening exercises.
- Printed guides and templates: for FEAT, NEAT+, REA, and other environmental assessment tools. Multimedia resources: videos and infographics on environmental assessments and risk mitigation in humanitarian projects.

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## Delivery method

- **Lectures:** to introduce foundational concepts, principles, and methodologies for environmental screening, and EIA.
- **Group work:** engaging participants in collaborative activities to deepen understanding through practical exercises and discussions.
- **Role-play:** used in Step 5a to simulate real-world application of the NEAT+ tool, including filling out surveys and interpreting results.

- **Case study analysis:** participants analyze and apply lessons learned from real-world scenarios to their own contexts.
- **Simulations and hands-on practice:** participants practice conducting environmental screenings and develop mitigation strategies through interactive exercises.
- **Presentations:** group presentations to synthesize and share learning outcomes from various exercises.

## Assessment tools

- **Quizzes:** short quizzes at the end of the module to assess understanding of key concepts.
- **Reflection questions:** open-ended questions for participants to reflect on what they have learned and how they can apply it to their work.
- **Feedback forms:** collect feedback on the module to continuously improve content and delivery methods.
- **Group work evaluations:** assessing the effectiveness of group exercises and the understanding demonstrated in group presentations.
- **Case study analysis:** evaluating participants' ability to apply concepts and tools to real-world scenarios.

## Reflection and review questions

### Section 1: Introduction to environmental screening and risk assessment

- What is the primary purpose of environmental screening in humanitarian action?
- How do Environmental Screening, and EIA differ in their application?

### Section 2: Methodologies and tools for environmental screening

- What are the main methodologies and tools used for environmental screening in humanitarian contexts?
- How does the NEAT+ tool assist in identifying environmental risks in humanitarian projects?
- What are the strengths and limitations of using FEAT, NEAT+, and REA in environmental assessments?

### Section 3: Steps in conducting an environmental screening

- What are the critical steps in conducting an effective environmental screening?
- How does stakeholder consultation contribute to the environmental screening process?
- Why is it important to document each step of the environmental screening process?

### Section 4: Developing and prioritizing mitigation strategies

- What criteria should be considered when selecting and prioritizing mitigation strategies?
- How can community involvement influence the success of mitigation strategies in humanitarian projects?
- What are the potential challenges in implementing mitigation strategies, and how can they be addressed?

### Overall module review questions

- How does integrating environmental considerations into humanitarian action enhance the sustainability of interventions?
- What are the key benefits of using tools like NEAT+ in environmental assessments within resource-limited settings?
- Reflect on the importance of compliance with local environmental legislation in the success of humanitarian projects. How can this be ensured?

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

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## 1. Importance of environmental screening in humanitarian action:

Environmental screening provides a rapid assessment of potential environmental risks in humanitarian interventions, allowing for quick decision-making and timely mitigation measures. This process is crucial in resource-limited settings to prevent unintended environmental damage and promote sustainable humanitarian responses.

## 2. Understanding the differences between Screening, and EIA:

Environmental Screening, and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) serve different purposes. Screening is a rapid tool used at the onset of projects, and EIA provides a comprehensive analysis for large-scale projects. Understanding when and how to use each ensures appropriate environmental management.

## 3. Key tools and methodologies:

Tools like NEAT+, FEAT, and REA are essential for conducting environmental assessments in humanitarian settings. NEAT+ is particularly valuable for rapid environmental screening, providing practical, actionable insights without the need for specialized expertise.

## 4. Systematic screening process:

Conducting an environmental screening involves clear steps: initial scoping, data collection, stakeholder consultation, impact evaluation, and mitigation planning. Each step ensures that potential environmental risks are identified early and addressed effectively, enhancing the environmental responsibility of humanitarian projects.

## 5. Developing mitigation strategies:

Effective mitigation strategies are based on criteria such as efficiency, cost-effectiveness, community acceptability, and compliance with local legislation. The integration of local knowledge and community involvement is critical for the success and sustainability of these strategies.

## 6. Role of local legislation and community involvement:

Understanding and complying with local environmental laws and engaging communities in the screening process ensure that mitigation measures are culturally appropriate, legally compliant, and well-supported by those affected, enhancing the overall impact of humanitarian interventions.

## 7. Addressing common challenges:

Environmental screening in humanitarian contexts can face challenges such as limited resources, data scarcity, and political interference. Using simplified tools, engaging stakeholders, and adapting strategies to local conditions help overcome these challenges and ensure effective environmental management.

## 8. Real-world applications and case studies:

Case studies illustrate successful environmental screenings and the implementation of mitigation strategies, demonstrating how these processes protect both the environment and affected communities in diverse humanitarian contexts.

## 9. Monitoring and continuous improvement:

A robust monitoring framework is essential to track the effectiveness of mitigation strategies and adapt them as needed. Continuous improvement based on ongoing assessments ensures that humanitarian interventions remain environmentally sound and responsive to changing conditions.



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