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## WREC Global Information Session on Green Procurement & Waste Management – November 2025 (15.00 -16:30am CET)



Note for the record (NFR)

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**Speakers:** Paola Robert (Logistics Cluster’s Environmental Specialist in Green Procurement, WREC), Marta Kucharski (Logistics Cluster’s Environmental Specialist in Waste Management, WREC), Marc Quinn (Supply Chain Manager, Humanitarian Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT), Palladium); Juan Carlos Sanmartin (Logistics Associate, WFP Venezuela), Ernesto Castellanos (Environmental Sustainability Specialist Admin Unit, WFP Venezuela); Natalia Corro (Disaster Risk Management & Climate Change Technical Coordinator, PIRAC); Mathieu Grenade (Environmental and Decarbonization Lead, French Red Cross).

**Number of participants: 101**

**Organizations:** ACF, ADRA, ALIGHT, CLIMATE ACTION ACCELERATOR, FRENCH RED CROSS, CRS, DELOITTE, DRC, FCDO/PALLADIUM, GOAL, HULO, ICRC, IDA FOUNDATION, IFRC, IOM, INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS, JACOBS, MEDECINS DU MONDE, MERCY CORPS, MSF, NRC, OXFAM, PAH, PIRAC, RED CROSS UK, IRC, RELIEF INTERNATIONAL, SHELTERBOX, SOLIDARITES, TGH (TRIANGLE GÉNÉRATION HUMANITAIRE), UN, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WELTHUNGERHILFE, WFP, WVI (WORLD VISION).

Where are participants joining the call from:

A word cloud showing various locations and roles of participants. The most prominent word is 'Venezuela'. Other visible words include 'logistics manager', 'IFRC/BRC', 'Senior Logistics', 'ACH', 'NRC KC', 'WASH', 'Lorenis', 'NBS', 'Procurement', 'rebecca', 'Logistics Officer', 'Castellanos', 'Cameroon', 'CO-Venezuela', 'Denmark', 'Ngo houag', and 'Infrastructure Officer libya nrc'.

### Agenda:

- Welcome & Introduction
- Waste estimation and procurement overview (re-cap)
- How are partners doing it? Palladium, WFP Venezuela, PIRAC/French Red Cross
- Q&A
- Wrap-up

### 1. Welcome & Introduction

Paola Robert, Environmental Specialist in Green Procurement, [WREC Coalition](#). Contact: [paola.robert@wfp.org](mailto:paola.robert@wfp.org)

Marta Kucharski, (Environmental Specialist on Waste Management, [WREC Coalition](#)). Contact:

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The session opened with a welcome and an overview of the agenda. A live poll was used to capture participants’ locations.

### 2. Waste estimation and procurement overview

Marta Kucharski (Environmental Specialist on Waste Management, [WREC Coalition](#)). Contact: [marta.kucharski@wfp.org](mailto:marta.kucharski@wfp.org)

The session moved to an overview of the importance of estimating waste in your organization and different available methods achieve this.

**Why is it important to measure logistics waste from an organization?**

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- Understand waste types and quantities (cardboard, plastics, hazardous waste)
- Enable reuse/recycling instead of landfill.
- Support planning (budget, storage, resources) and efficient management.
- Define strategies for waste reduction (e.g., packaging changes).
- Advocate for donor resources (e.g. budget for hazardous waste, transport).
- Ensure compliance with environmental policies.

### Methods to measure waste:

There are four different methods to apply depending on the phase of activity—whether the organisation is already implementing operations (method 1 and 2) or in the planning stage (method 3 and 4) - [WREC Decision tree infographic](#) is available for selecting best method:

- 1) Waste monitoring system (dashboard tracking)
- 2) Waste characterization - [WREC Waste or Material Characterization Exercise Guidance](#). Further details: [How to Measure your Waste Workshop\\_NFR and Presentation](#)
- 3) Waste estimation via procurement plans (tools like packaging calculators). Packaging:** [Waste packaging calculator \(II\)](#) and [PIRAC/French Red Cross calculator](#)
- 4) Waste metrics (e.g., waste per vehicle/year, office waste per worker or m2).

Today's session was focused on the third method which is recommended for waste reduction strategies, for planning logistics operations such as reverse logistics, and for emergency preparedness (e.g. contingency plans on waste management), as presented by the speakers.

### 3. How are partners estimating their waste?

Three organisations provided an overview of why they started estimating their waste, the approach, challenges, benefits and lessons learnt from this process. The objective of this was to provide partners with examples of how it is being achieved in the field.

#### **Palladium:**

*Marc Quinn - Supply Chain Manager, HSOT | Humanitarian Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT) | UK aid-funded programme implemented. Contact: [mark.quinn@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:mark.quinn@fcdo.gov.uk)*

Waste management became a priority due to the UK plastic packaging tax laws (2022), requiring compliance and data on plastic packaging. Palladium decided to comply with these requirements even though their volumes are less than 10 tonnes of imported plastic packaging.

- 1. Approach:** they requested suppliers to provide data on **type and amount of plastic packaging** for all commodities, built a database to quantify packaging waste for 11 core relief items (e.g., blankets, kitchen sets) and integrated requirements into **special terms and conditions** and purchase orders.
- 2. Benefits:** This supported strategic goals of the organisation **Reduce, Recycle, Quantify, Identify, Recycle** and provided a baseline for packaging reduction and informed planning for downstream waste management.
- 3. Process:** suppliers were requested to provide data on the volume and type of packaging for each of the core relief items purchased. This information is being captured for each purchase order.

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4. **Challenges:** ensuring supplier data is accurate and usable, reliance on downstream actors during disaster response, where waste management is often deprioritised and contamination of packaging waste (labels, branding) reducing recyclability.
5. **Key learnings:**
  - Start with a small number of suppliers and standardise requests active management and policing of data collection are essential
  - Avoid flexible wording in contracts, be prescriptive
  - Different commodities may require tailored approaches
  - Capturing data early helps measure success of packaging reduction initiatives

Core relief items are in the process of being redesigned to make them plastic free.

**WFP Venezuela:**

Juan Carlos Sanmartin - Logistics Associate. Contact: [juan.sanmartin@wfp.org](mailto:juan.sanmartin@wfp.org)

Ernesto Castellanos – Environmental Sustainability Specialist, Admin Unit. Contact: [ernesto.castellanos@wfp.org](mailto:ernesto.castellanos@wfp.org)

WFP Venezuela started operations in 2021 with a school feeding program and expanded nationwide. They distributed 42,000 metric tons of food by the end of 2023, generating significant packaging waste. This triggered them to implement a reverse logistics solution with zero cost to manage waste.

1. **Process:** an Expression of Interest was issued to identify recycling suppliers followed by a competitive bidding process. To allow for empty trucks to return carrying recyclable materials at no cost a contractual clause was included in agreements with all transport suppliers. Trucks that are delivering food and return empty to hubs are being used to transport clean, organized recyclable waste. Transport suppliers have become key partners in the process to ensure a successful operation.

In terms of the waste estimation of packaging, every package per commodity was manually weighed and used they used United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calculators to estimate the emissions of this packaging.

A Tableau-based tool was developed to predict waste volumes and plan recycling operations of future operations.

1. **Challenges:** Recycling is uncommon in Venezuela; few suppliers with national coverage. They required strong supplier engagement and legal adjustments to achieve their goal.

2. **Results:**

- a. 73 metric tons have been recycled in two years at zero cost
- b. 60 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have been reduced
- c. \$12,000 USD of revenue have been generated from the sale of recycled materials, which have been used for operational costs (e.g., salaries, services).
- d. Reverse logistics has been successfully applied during an emergency operation (floods in the Zulia state).

3. **Lessons learnt:**

- a. Success depends on trust and collaboration with suppliers, they are key partners to achieve these initiatives

Continuous improvement and data-driven planning are essential.

**PIRAC/ French Red Cross**

Natalia Corro - Disaster Risk Management (DRM) & Climate Change (CC) Technical Coordinator. Contact: [natalia.corro-barrientos@croix-rouge.fr](mailto:natalia.corro-barrientos@croix-rouge.fr)

Mathieu Grenade - Environmental and Decarbonization Lead, French Red Cross. Contact: [mathieu.grenade@croix-rouge.fr](mailto:mathieu.grenade@croix-rouge.fr)

A study on waste management capacity in the Caribbean was conducted as part of the Gradius 360 / 3 Oceans program with the aim to integrate waste management into emergency planning and strengthen disaster preparedness.

**1. Objectives:**

- a. Assess capacity for managing packaging waste during humanitarian interventions.
- b. Develop operational recommendations and tools for emergency waste management.

**2. Process:**

Focused on secondary and tertiary packaging (e.g., polyethylene bags, cardboard boxes).

- a. Define waste typology and estimate volumes.
- b. Inventory local recycling facilities and cross-border regulations.
- c. Integrate waste management into operational planning.
- d. Data collected via existing resources, questionnaires for operators and authorities, and field visits to St. Lucia and Dominica.

**3. Key outputs:**

- a. Developed an Excel-based waste estimation tool for calculating weight and volume of packaging per item.
- b. Produced 11 country fact sheets detailing:
- c. Identified local recycling capacity and regulations for waste movement.
- d. Operational processes and contingency plans.

Mapped 16 recycling facilities in the Caribbean which are available on the [WREC Waste Management and Recycling Mapping](#).

**4. Key Findings:** managing waste would cost about 2.5% of a total operation cost, however, waste management is feasible and affordable if planned in advance.

**5. Challenges:**

- a. limited infrastructure and profitability for recycling in small islands.
- b. There are strict regulations for cross-border waste movement.
- c. There is a need for cultural shift within humanitarian organizations to prioritize waste management

**6. Lessons learnt:**

- a. Strong interest among humanitarian actors to address waste issues.
- b. Requires investment in time, resources, and collaboration.
- c. It would be beneficial to standardized tools, mapping, and procedures.

Further research is needed on regulatory flexibility for emergency waste handling.

**4. Q&A**

**Q1. How can humanitarian organizations standardize waste estimation across different contexts?**

Participants agreed that standardization is essential to ensure consistency and efficiency. The discussion

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highlighted the need for a common framework that includes indicators, reporting formats, and practical tools. Platforms like the WREC were mentioned as key for collaboration and data sharing. Standardization could also involve integrating waste-related specifications into procurement processes and developing SOPs and training modules. However, the challenge lies in balancing this with localized procurement practices, where packaging and supplier conditions vary significantly.

**Q2. How should organizations manage waste when procurement is localized and packaging differs?**

The group emphasized using proxies and assumptions for packaging specifications when exact data is unavailable. Engaging local suppliers early to collect packaging data was seen as critical, while estimation tools and historical data can help fill gaps when dealing with retailers rather than manufacturers. Participants stressed the importance of sharing collected data widely to avoid duplication and build a sector-wide database, enabling smaller organizations to benefit from existing knowledge and reduce the burden of repetitive measurements.

**Q3. How are you measuring the reductions in terms of emissions when you are switching from 100% virgin plastic to 30% recycled plastics, which EF are you using?** Palladium uses EFs supplied by the manufacturer for our CRI items. Otherwise, uses the UK govt EFs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting> )

**Q4. According to WFP, what is the incentive that make the transport companies alert/notify you when they have free space on a truck which is not aimed at delivering at WFP WH?** The suppliers feel like part of our program, and based on their social responsibility, they support our efforts. We provide them data and annual certificates of the amount recycled thanks to their support.

**Q5. To WFP knowledge, would it be possible to replicate the approach in lower income countries? What maturity markets would it take to engage transport providers in such an approach? Also, as it does not represent any additional costs for WFP, what would it take, according to you, to allow access to this service to other humanitarian organisations, international and national actors?** In WFP experience, it could be applied in any country or context. Much of the work involves encouraging the transport provider and achieving coordination that does not generate additional costs for them. Through Service Provision in Venezuela, we handle the recycling operations for sister agencies such as UNHCR and PAHO. Any humanitarian actor who needs it can count on our support.

I would add that it depends from the transport market, in certain countries and remote areas is already hard to find local transporters and they will try in all ways to charge any customer humanitarian or not because they need it or because they know they are the only option, but totally agree on Juan's point that raising awareness and improving communication and negotiation with the transporter could lead to positive results such as the great work in Venezuela. In any case if in some countries its hard to find reverse logistics at no cost at least it can for sure be at a lower price compared to a forward distribution and this will depend on knowledge you have of the transport network and transporters behaviors such as the empty loads they would do anyway and for which trips.

Totally agree. The most important thing (in my opinion) is to build a relationship of trust with the transport suppliers. Show them the impact of the project and the key role they play in it.

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**Q6. In Colombia: WREC is working with Danish Refugee Council in Colombia to get more partners that want to manage e-waste. They have already identified suppliers who do this and it's also free of cost. If there is anyone here from Colombia or has colleagues, there please reach out to me.** For information hulo is launching a Call for Interest to identify collector/recycler for e-waste in Colombia (we are targeting 4 regions: Bogota, Valle del Cauca, Narino and Arauca). The CFI will be released tomorrow.

**Q7. How can organizations move from managing waste to reducing it at source?** Participants agreed that the most effective approach is to integrate eco-design principles into relief for item development. This requires collaboration between technical teams, environmental advisors, and suppliers during the design phase to minimize packaging and select sustainable materials. Palladium's initiative to develop plastic-free packaging prototypes was cited as an example of proactive measures that can significantly reduce waste before it enters the supply chain.

### 5. Final remarks:

- **Feedback on today's session:** <https://forms.office.com/e/NAYZDKHKkt>  
<https://forms.office.com/e/NAYZDKHKkt>
- **Information session: Automating Carbon Accounting** – 19 November ([see recording session](#))
- **Green Procurement Coordination Group meeting** – 16 December at 14.00h ([Registration link](#)).

### Contacts

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