



How to green your response activities

The following are examples of response strategies and activities that can be included in the shelter response where relevant and where linked needs have been identified. They should be tailored to every response.

1 Identify and provide construction materials that minimise environmental impact and strain on local resources

- “Partners will also aim to understand, prevent, and mitigate adverse environmental impacts by selecting sustainable construction materials to prevent over-exploitation, pollution, and degradation of the natural environment” (Sudan)
- “Distribution of shelter materials to reduce the impact on cutting trees and deforestation” (Chad)

2 Provide training greener construction materials and methods

- “Technical training in construction of quality durable shelters and the safeguarding the environment (the protection of the ecosystem) in a community approach and highlighting the cash transfer modality will be organised for the affected communities, host communities and cluster partners” (Chad)

3 Prioritise local resources where their use does not have negative environmental impacts⁸

- “The use of local materials as an alternative to tarpaulins will be explored for the sake of preserving the environment.” (Chad)

4 Provide clean energy from renewable sources (for cooking, lighting etc)

- “Solutions to provide clean energy from renewable sources such as solar energy, biomass and bio-gas, among others, will be included. Ovens and stoves will be delivered that improve cooking conditions and allow sustainable management of agricultural and forestry waste, promoting carbon sequestration and helping to reduce greenhouse gases.” (Venezuela)
- “In order to reduce the excessive use of firewood, the distribution of improved or gas stoves will be encouraged.” (Chad)

⁸ Local is usually greener because of the lower carbon footprint of transporting the materials to where they will be used. However, local procurement should not lead to unsustainable resource extraction or harm market access or increase prices for the general consumer. This should be assessed as part of determining green specifications and market supply capacities and impacts.

5 Address major issues of environmental concern identified in environmental assessments through green response activities. For example providing alternatives to timber or (re) planting vegetation in areas with acute deforestation, taking into account local cultural norms and land use regulations

- “Seedlings of trees and fruit trees will be distributed to 72 households in host sites and communities for planting them to restore the environment damaged by rampant cutting down of trees.” (Chad)

6 Provide natural hazard management support, including training in risk mitigation and capacity building of local authorities

- “Partners will also provide natural hazard mitigation support for 329,000 people at the community level, including displaced people, to facilitate early warning, prevention, and response measures.” (Yemen)

7 Plan how waste from shelter-related activities should be managed, ideally by reusing it. Where this is not feasible, a strategy should be in place to ensure that materials are appropriately disposed of, and ideally recycled. This includes :

- Packaging from emergency shelter kits and NFIs
- Emergency shelter materials: e.g. tarps can be reused to provide additional weather protection
- Waste from shelter construction materials: can pose physical and chemical hazards and be a host for disease vectors. Potential construction waste should be pre-identified, and an appropriate disposal/management plan developed.

8 Plan how rubble or debris can be managed following debris management guidelines.⁹ Where possible, disaster waste should be assessed and incorporated into shelter design. This reduces unnecessary material extraction, saves money and reduces the burden of disaster waste

9 Highlight protection-environment links

- “Taking into account the protection aspects of environment and urbanisation will significantly improve the living environment in rural areas and Cluster intervention sites.” (Burkina Faso)

10 Highlight environment-HLP links

- “Special attention will be given to housing, land, and property (HLP) issues as competition for land and natural resources remain critical drivers of conflict and impediments to durable solutions.” (Sudan)

11 Collaborate with environmental organisations, research institutions or other actors with access to environmental data and information to identify mitigation activities affecting shelter response

⁹ <https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/resource/debris-management-guidelines-1>