

Presentation of the training course Module 5

Integrating the environment into humanitarian action in Afghanistan

Taking into account the complexity of the Afghan environment in which humanitarian action has to be carried out, the training course Module 5 *Integrating the environment into humanitarian action in Afghanistan* has been developed to support Afghan aid actors having an effective humanitarian action based on the comprehension of the importance to preserve the natural environment for the benefits of the population, in order to better integrate it in their programs.

Whether through direct damage to land, water or air, or through coping strategies that indirectly stress natural resources, environmental impacts in the aftermath of disasters and conflicts can leave populations with a degraded natural resource base and greater vulnerability to future events.

At the same time, the relief and recovery operations that follow can sometimes cause also environmental damage, as the crises to which they were designed to respond. Unsustainable techniques used during the emergency phase, combined with short-term planning and ad hoc response mechanisms, can leave disaster and conflict-prone regions on trajectories that continue to over-exploit natural resources, leading to a degradation of the very ecosystems needed for the recovery and rebuilding of livelihoods for the affected population.

All the sections of the Module 5 have been developed using practical experience as well as feedback and suggestions from trainers and participants from former training sessions. They are specifically adjusted for the Afghan context.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this training course is to provide participants with comprehensive understanding of the **importance for aid actors to integrate environmental considerations into their programs for the benefits of the population.**



Upon completing the course, participants will be able to:

- Understand and analyse the interactions between conflicts, natural disasters, humanitarian action and environmental degradation.
- Identify the key environmental stakeholders and their institutions acting in Afghanistan.
- Have a better understanding of the risks of negative environmental impacts in urban and rural context.
- Propose appropriate technical solutions and methodologies.
- Find useful resources, best practices, and other useful information related to environment issues.
- Advocate for the integration of environmental considerations into the overall work of their organization and the humanitarian sector as a whole.

LEARNING STRATEGY

The module includes practical exercises and case studies which focus on the Afghan context. Each section includes a theoretical part followed by practical activities.

PRE-REQUISITES

- Participants should have basic understanding of projects implementation in the sector of Humanitarian aid in Afghanistan.
- Participants should have a good level of spoken and written English.

CONTENT

This module includes 8 sections:

1. **Introduction:** The introductory section allows participants to get to know each other, course objectives and limits are clarified and the course timetable and rules are presented.
2. **Interaction between Crisis, Environmental degradation and Humanitarian Action:** After the definition of the key environmental concepts, this section analyses the complex links between crisis (conflicts and natural disasters) and the natural environment: participants understand that a deteriorated environment may be both the consequence and the cause of a crisis situation. In the same time, this section highlights the potential negative impacts that humanitarian assistance could have on the environment.



3. **Who does what? Key environmental actors, institutions and legislations:** Completely focus on the Afghan context, this section clarifies the institutional and legal framework in which environmental initiatives have to be carried out by civil society in Afghanistan.
4. **For a sustainable management of wood resources in Afghanistan – Issues, Challenges and opportunities:** This section allows participants to think and understand how the loss of forest cover and the poor management of wood resources do not only have environmental impacts, but also affects directly the living conditions of the populations. Through various case studies, participants understand that environment is a cross cutting issue which can be used as a mean to achieve different goals for the benefits of the populations.
5. **Sustainable water management and ecological sanitation in urban context:** The objective of this section is to present the main techniques which are recognized as ecological or sustainable in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. Participants will understand the main principles of an ecological approach in this sector and understand that a technical solution is not always “right” or environmentally friendly in absolute terms, as everything depends on the context.
6. **Humanitarian logistics and the environment:** This section allows participants to understand how logistics activities can cause very serious environmental damage and how the organization can take into account/opting for alternative logistic techniques more sustainable in order to: minimize their carbon footprint; optimize their waste management; reduce their water use etc...
7. **Adopting an environmental approach throughout an organization:** This section looks at how to change the mindset of humanitarian actors and proposes procedures for the integration of the environment at an institutional level. To that end, participants have to understand resistance factors and how to respond to these in order to be able to argue the case in favour of an environmental approach and convince organizations to adopt such an approach.
8. **Course evaluation and conclusion:** Participants look back at the ground that has been covered during the course and prepare how they will apply what they have learned. Participants give feedback about the course and make recommendations for ways of improving it.