

Guidance note – Environment and Humanitarian transport, RMRP 2022

This guidance note has been adapted for the RMRP 2022. Guidance is limited to the context of the region and this emergency. The note is not intended to cover all human mobility emergencies anywhere in the world. Where humanitarian transport interventions overlap with those of other sectors, guidance for those sectors should also be reviewed.

Environmental factors can be causes of humanitarian needs for people on the move and host communities. The environment can be affected by humanitarian transport sector response to those needs. Those impacts can be mitigated, and humanitarian transport sector response can also be an entry point for low-cost and simple ways to improve environmental management. It is important to consider three ways in which environment related to the sector:

- How environmental situations affect humanitarian needs related to humanitarian transport;
- How the activities of the humanitarian transport sector can generate environmental impacts if not carefully designed;
- How the humanitarian transport sector can generate environmental benefits and enhancements through activities that the sector would generally develop anyway, and how these benefits can also contribute to sustainable development, durable solutions and integration;

Environmental impacts of humanitarian transport activities and mitigation strategies:

Sector activities	Possible environmental impacts	Mitigation strategies
Humanitarian transport		
	In general, it is assumed that the environmental footprint of humanitarian transport for local trips and day-to-day needs will be small and that most environmental mitigation strategies are likely to be applied anyway, albeit based on a logic of efficient use of limited vehicles, staff time and similar.	Some strategies to reduce environmental impact such as collective use of vehicles may not always be feasible (e.g. for transportation of protection cases, where confidentiality and privacy are essential criteria). Measuring the emissions of humanitarian transport is not recommended unless agencies expect to have the flexibility to be able to implement cleaner alternatives in future. However, if efficient vehicles are used (e.g. electric transport), make a point of showcasing this in public communications!
Border-to-border humanitarian transport	Large accumulations of people at major transport hubs can result in a significant increase in volumes of waste generated at bus stations and associated environmental impacts (vermin,	Agencies working at transport hubs should consider supporting waste management and contributing to the cost of waste management, to avoid increasing the spending and debt of local governments. Developing a light-touch waste

	vector-breeding etc). This is primarily the case at bus stations which become de facto hubs in border areas, especially where previously the numbers of people using those locations as transport hubs was significantly less (e.g. Arauca in Colombia). These situations can contribute to tensions with the host community, especially where travellers are seen to not be using environmental behaviour considered appropriate.	management plan with adequate resources can significantly reduce public health risks and community tensions around transport hubs, which are often located in areas that concentrate local poverty. In border areas, transport hubs are also places where awareness-raising activities can be developed, especially with people waiting for transport to move further into the country or before crossing the border to the next country on their journey. If transport is contracted from external companies, seek to include environmental criteria in tenders for transport services, considering issues such as the age of the fleet, the fuel used, policy regarding “load factor” to minimise trips by large vehicles with very few people (where COVID-19 and protection considerations permit), use of electric mobility or similar. Consider provision of transport vouchers that can be redeemed in the most environmentally friendly form of public transport available and include these as options to always consider when designing tenders and interventions.
Internal humanitarian transport	Internal humanitarian transport is assumed to be either from borders to main destinations in the same country, or between major cities. Environmental impacts are likely to vary based on the diversity of routes and times of transport, as well as numbers of people moving through hubs. However, environmental impacts and environmental opportunities are likely to be broadly similar to those associated with border-to-border humanitarian transport.	

Environmental benefits and enhancements that can result from humanitarian transport interventions:

Local or day-to-day humanitarian transport offers an opportunity to conduct awareness-raising, since there will typically be few people in the vehicle, trips are more likely to be accompanied by agency staff and there is a greater opportunity to interact. As a result, this is an opportunity to raise awareness on environmental behaviour in the country, waste management, environmental health and also to detect relevant situations. For example, are the people being transported aware of significant cases of deforestation due to lack of fuel/energy provision? Are they aware of situations of people of concern being involved in illicit environmental economies? Are environmental factors being used as a part of xenophobic discourse? Do people know how to manage waste related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. masks, gel bottles, gloves, anything potentially infectious)? While the opportunity to have these conversations will depend on the context (they would not be appropriate when transporting highly traumatised protection cases, for example), transport is a space for contact with affected populations and agencies can make use of the opportunity and take statistics on the number of applicable times that transport is used as an opportunity for awareness-raising.

Other opportunities may exist such as paying the transport of people who do two hours of cleaning at transport hubs prior to departure, as a sort of cash for work activity, paying it with plastic bottles

to encourage cleaning and recycling or supporting local food vendors selling food at transport hubs to replace non-biodegradable packaging such as Styrofoam and plastic utensils with compostable alternatives and wooden cutlery.

More and more countries are organising their own humanitarian corridors and border-to-border transport instead of relying on international cooperation to organise movements. However, this does not mean that there is no space to address environmental issues within these initiatives. The transport sector can work with authorities to ensure that opportunities for awareness-raising are exploited and that agents involved in transport and humanitarian corridors receive training to allow them to conduct awareness-raising. Indicators related to training on environment can be included in general indicators on support to country initiatives in humanitarian transport.

From whom can you receive support?

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