

GREENING THE SYSTEM: Supporting a sustainable sector

As part of the Humanitarian Horizons 2021–24 Research Program, Humanitarian Advisory Group is forging a new research path in collaboration with key regional thinkers. This stream aims to support a measurable reduction in the negative impacts of humanitarian action on the climate and the environment.

What do we mean by greening the system?

'Greening the system' refers to strengthening environmentally friendly approaches to addressing humanitarian needs and measurably reducing harmful impacts of the humanitarian system on the climate and environment. This research stream will explore in practice the concept of 'green response' developed by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC).

In the IFRC framework, green response is an approach to humanitarian action that 'emphasises stronger accountability towards affected populations by actively promoting alternative, more environmentally beneficial solutions in addressing needs' and by 'extending the fundamental humanitarian principle of "do no harm" to the environment and ecosystems which the people we seek to assist are reliant on'.

This stream will explore how humanitarian action affects the environment and how humanitarian actors can move towards a tangibly greener response.

Why is this important?

The need for stronger global commitment and action to mitigate the effects of climate change is undeniable. Our current global trajectory of a rapidly warming climate demonstrates that human life – particularly the lives of the most vulnerable – is increasingly at stake. Global commitments and actions are needed to drive change at the speed and scale required to mitigate negative impacts. The humanitarian system is no exception. We need to see a measurable reduction in harmful impacts by the humanitarian sector on the climate and environment.

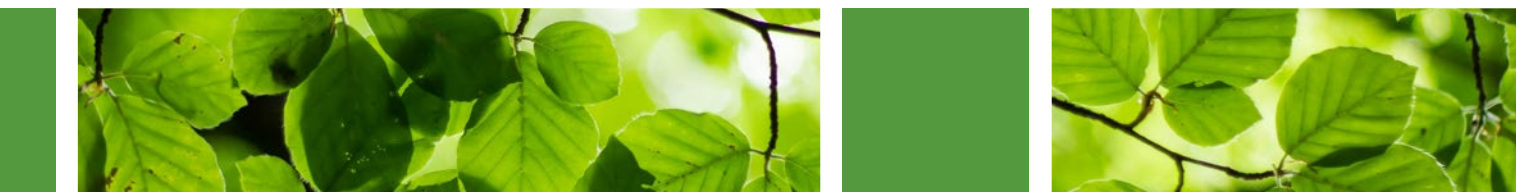
What are we exploring?

- How does humanitarian action impact on the environment?
- What could a green humanitarian response look like?
- How can humanitarian actors move towards a tangibly greener response? What do we mean by greening the system?




The role of behavioural science in understanding the pathways to a greener future

Behavioural science is a cross-disciplinary field that incorporates behavioural economics, neuroscience and social and cognitive psychology. We are drawing on behavioural science in developing our research approach, methodologies and tools. These insights will help us to understand what behaviours are driving unsustainable practices and how we can influence positive behaviour change towards an environmentally friendly humanitarian system.



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