

worm

**Waste in humanitarian Operations:
Reduction and Minimisation**

D2.1 Sustainability Criteria – Policy brief

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
ACF	Action Against Hunger
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EC	European Commission
ESPR	Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation
FRC	Finnish Red Cross
HOs	Humanitarian Organisations
IAPG	Inter-Agency Procurement Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMC	International Medical Corps
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MiC	Markets in Crisis
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
QSE	Quality, Social, Environmental
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
UN	United Nations
VNRC	Viet Nam Red Cross Society
WORM	Waste in humanitarian Operations: Reduction and Minimization



WPs	Work Packages
WREC	Waste management & measuring, Reverse logistics, Environmentally sustainable procurement & transport, and Circular economy



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BACKGROUND ABOUT WORM

WORM aims to design guidelines and support actions for circular economy in the humanitarian sector. It integrates bio-based technological solutions, leverages procurement for waste reduction, improves waste management methods and prioritises the sustainable livelihoods of waste pickers. WORM focuses on two selected settings: field hospital deployments and humanitarian livelihood programmes with a waste picking component. Following a collaborative and multi-actor approach, WORM brings together medical and humanitarian organisations, procurement service providers, logistics providers, waste management services and academic partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a deliverable of the WORM Project, funded under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No 101135392.

The aim of this document (D2.1) is to establish a sustainable procurement framework and identify sustainability criteria for the evaluation of product groups in humanitarian procurement. This includes (1) analysing the status quo of sustainable procurement; (2) presenting a sustainable procurement framework; and (3) highlighting the need for market classification to be included within the sustainable procurement framework.

This deliverable first describes the current state of sustainable procurement in the humanitarian sector, including assessing the extent in which sustainable procurement criteria is embedded into procurement procedures, how criteria is used to evaluate sustainability, different verification mechanisms used by organisations, and willingness-to-pay more for sustainable products. Next, a comprehensive sustainable procurement framework is presented, which includes focus areas for sustainable procurement policies and strategies at organisational level. This forms the basis of the sustainable procurement process and feeds into supplier evaluation criteria (environmental, social, and economic) and product evaluation criteria (material composition, product design, and production processes). Following this, a general approach for market classification is proposed to help guide HOs in deciding which sustainability criteria should be enforced within different markets. This includes indicators to identify market level maturity and the role of supplier engagement and capacity building to support a transition towards sustainable procurement.

The findings in this deliverable are based on an extensive literature review and analysis of procurement guidelines within the humanitarian sector, interviews with procurement and sustainability specialists, and a workshop (MS2.1) held with humanitarian actors to present and validate the proposed sustainable procurement framework.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

WORM aims to support the humanitarian sector in procuring items more sustainably. This document describes current practices related to sustainable procurement, introduces a framework to guide practitioners in purchasing more sustainable products, including criteria to evaluate products, and describes the need to assess local market capacities to supply sustainable products.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change and environmental degradation are top drivers of humanitarian needs and human suffering (UN 2021b). In response, environmentally sustainable procurement has been identified as a key focus area and lever for change for several reasons. Firstly, procurement accounts for roughly 60-80% of

humanitarian expenses (Moshtari et al. 2021; Stumpf et al. 2023), with the production and manufacturing processes of the items purchased significantly contributing to the overall environmental footprint of the life cycle of the product (Logistics Cluster 2024; Moshtari et al. 2021). Secondly, procurement can be seen as a gatekeeper to sustainable supply chains as decisions made upstream often have notable influence on downstream supply chain operations and waste management processes (Anjomshoae et al. 2023; Joseph et al. 2024; Moshtari et al. 2021). Thirdly, embedding environmental sustainability into procurement processes also allows humanitarian organisations (HOs) to reduce their overall environmental impact despite the challenges commonly related to humanitarian operations, such as high uncertainty and limited time, where decisions need to be made quickly with little information. Finally, increasing attention towards sustainable procurement within the localisation agenda has the potential to support building local capacity, climate change resilience, and sustainable local development.

Many HOs seek to promote sustainable procurement by considering environmental and social factors alongside quality and financial costs (ICRC and IFRC 2021; Logistics Cluster 2023). While “sustainable procurement” is often used in reference to environmental sustainability, the term encompasses social, economic, and environmental factors. Common dimensions of sustainable procurement include resource use and environmental impacts, waste management, quality and durability, localisation, operational efficiency, social development, economic viability, transparency and accountability, as well as measures to support innovation (described in detail in D1.1). However, while several social (e.g., no child labour) or economic (e.g., fair wages) criteria are mandatory, implementation of environmental criteria remains limited, often lacks systematic integration into procurement practices, and there is uncertainty about the significance of environmental factors compared to traditional criteria (Anjomshoae et al. 2023; Laguna-Salvadó et al. 2019; Tuomala et al. 2022).

To move towards systematically embedding environmental sustainability into humanitarian procurement, HOs need a clear set of guidelines, indicators, and criteria that are flexible enough to be applied to various contexts, products, and situations. “*Flexible enough to be applied*” is an essential component which would allow HOs to require adherence (e.g., from suppliers) to the specific criteria instead of the status quo in which they are often applied ad hoc, as described in the following sub-section. The goal of this deliverable, as part of the overall objectives of the WORM project to enhance sustainability in humanitarian operations, is to define and describe concrete sustainability criteria to evaluate products/product groups in humanitarian procurement. The rest of the document is structured as follows: in the next paragraphs we describe the current situation related to environmentally sustainable procurement in the humanitarian sector; next we introduce a comprehensive sustainable procurement framework and provide more detail on specific sustainability criteria for product evaluation; then, we introduce the need for market classification and propose a general framework to integrate this into sustainable procurement practices; finally, we conclude with the next steps of the project.

1. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT IN THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

To better understand how sustainability is integrated into procurement processes in the humanitarian sector, WORM/KLU carried out extensive analysis on the current state of practice, with a special focus on the health sector (e.g., items procured for the field hospital setting). The first part of this research entailed conducting interviews with different HOs (n=9), including United Nations (UN) and non-UN, donors (n=2), and experts on sustainable procurement within the humanitarian or health sector (n=3). This analysis was combined with an extensive literature review on sustainable procurement, including collecting information on procurement practices from end-users (ACF, CRS, FRC, ICRC, IMC, NRC, VNRC) and the wider public sector, as well as the scientific literature. The findings of this literature review are summarized in D1.1.

Additionally, as part of WP 2 and MS2.1, WORM conducted a workshop with humanitarian actors to present and discuss potential criteria to be implemented under sustainable procurement guidelines. More than fifty participants joined the workshop, including donors (29%), sustainability experts from HOs (31%), procurement officers from HOs (25%), academics and experts in sustainable procurement (11%), and others, such as finance experts (4%). A summary of the workshop is provided in the Workshop Report: *Development of a Sustainability Procurement Framework: Towards Humanitarian Procurement for Long-Term Impact* (see appendix).

As previously described, social and economic dimensions of sustainability are often more systematically embedded into humanitarian procurement. Thus, this section targets environmental aspects, as this will also be the primary focus for the sustainability criteria for product evaluation. The findings presented in the following paragraphs describe how and when environmental sustainability is systematically embedded into humanitarian procurement, identifies how criteria are applied and validated, and reflects on the willingness-to-pay more for environmentally sustainable products.

1.1. Systematic integration of environmental sustainability into humanitarian procurement

Traditional objectives of HOs (e.g., saving lives, relieving suffering, and cost-efficiency) are embedded within their operations (Haavisto and Goentzel 2015) and often guide procurement decision-making towards less expensive, quicker options. Additionally, social and economic criteria are often more systematically embedded into humanitarian activities, as previously described. However, environmental criteria are often applied selectively and remain limited, optional, and context specific (Anjomshoae et al. 2023; Laguna-Salvadó et al. 2019; Tuomala et al. 2022). Furthermore, environmental considerations typically require a long-term perspective, as the impacts of operations (e.g., climate change and environmental degradation) are not easily recognized directly following the activity (Besiou et al. 2021; Zarei et al. 2019). For this reason, it is also sometimes challenging to effectively weigh the trade-offs of environmental, social, and economic sustainability during the decision-making process and in some cases environmental sustainability is considered at odds with humanitarian priorities of quick delivery at a low cost (Haavisto and Kovács 2014; Joseph et al. 2024).

HOs are increasingly recognizing the importance of taking a long-term, holistic approach (IFRC 2023; Salem et al. 2024; UNEP 2022), yet the degree to which environmental sustainability is systematically considered in humanitarian procurement also depends on factors such as operating conditions, context, response type (e.g., development or disaster), organisational priorities, resources, and the maturity of the HO in terms of sustainability (Zarei et al. 2019).



In terms of the systematic integration of environmental sustainability criteria in procurement procedures, HOs can be categorised into four phases: 1) environmental sustainability is not considered; 2) optional with non-systematic mechanism to evaluate; 3) optional with systematic mechanism to evaluate; and 4) mandatory with a systematic mechanism to evaluate. Figure 1 illustrates the phases in which environmental sustainability criteria is included and enforced in procurement procedures.

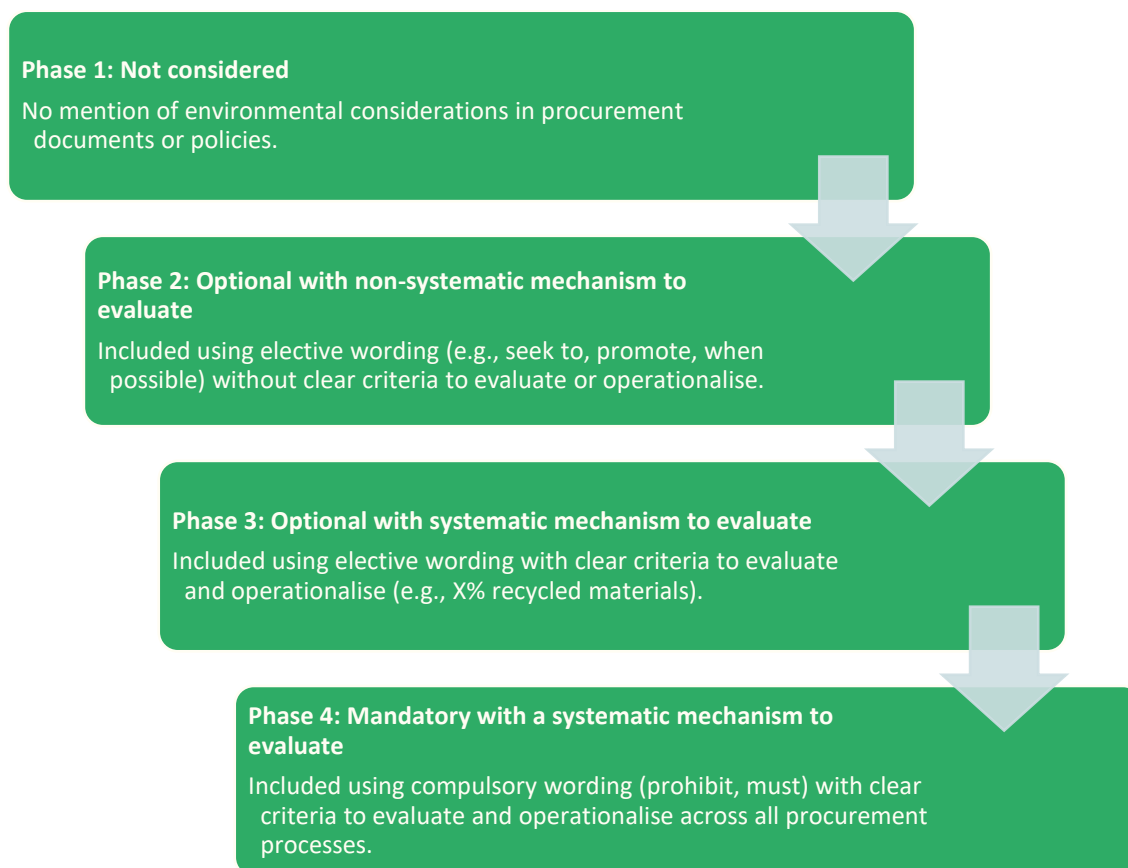


Figure 1 Phases in which environmental sustainability criteria are included and enforced in procurement procedures by end-users and interview respondents.

Most HOs include a limited scope of environmental criteria in procurement practices and fall between Phase 2 and Phase 3. This means that it is most often optional to include environmental dimensions into procurement decisions. Furthermore, the level of implementation may also vary depending on the product/category. Standard criteria are typically not applied universally throughout the organisation and may be less likely to be included in certain contexts like local procurement or emergency (fast-track) situations, as well as be dependent on regulations from donors or local governments.

1.1.1. Mandatory environmental considerations

A few HOs have mandated the inclusion of environmental sustainability in procurement decisions for specific products/contexts. None of the HOs included as part of this research (which represent some of the most mature in the sector) have mandatory requirements for environmental sustainability with comprehensive criteria to evaluate and operationalise across *all procurement processes*. However, there was a consensus during the workshop on the importance of integrating mandatory environmental criteria into procurement policies. Many include a few broader environmental considerations (e.g., reducing

waste), but it is not often clear how this is measured or evaluated. At the operational level, some HOs enforce policies for suppliers, such as a code of conduct, or by integrating environmental sustainability into procurement procedures through bid analysis and technical specifications. For instance, the Quality, Social, Environmental (QSE) approach applied by several HOs aims to ensure compliance with quality, social, and environmental standards.

1.1.2. Optional environmental considerations

Most HOs, however, include environmental considerations into procurement principles, but do not enforce strict adherence. Some may have a systematic mechanism to evaluate criteria (Phase 3), while others do not (Phase 2). This may involve considering environmental sustainability based on specific conditions such as order quantity, financial amount, or guaranteed order volumes within a designated timeframe. While some HOs encourage suppliers to integrate environmental dimensions into operations, strict adherence to guidelines is not mandatory. Some HOs utilise questionnaires to gauge suppliers' sustainability practices and may develop baselines for market maturity, indicating future mandatory requirements in revised tenders. In most cases, however, environmental sustainability is recommended but should be adapted to the context and feasibility of the procurement process.

1.1.3. Little or no environmental considerations

However, in some instances, environmental sustainability remains limited in sourcing decisions and is rarely implemented. While it may be referenced in procurement guidelines, there is no operational protocol to implement environmental practices. Furthermore, for HOs at the beginning of the journey, there may be no reference to environmental sustainability in their procurement guidelines.

1.2. Using criteria to evaluate sustainability

The integration of criteria, specifically those relating to environmental sustainability, depends on organisational sustainability maturity and other factors such as item type, importance, and supply risk. HOs often integrate sustainability into decision-making by evaluating the supplier in addition to the item. Some allocate points or implement bonus systems for considering environmental dimensions. Furthermore, procurement guidelines typically define thresholds or pass/fail criteria based on quality or technical specifications and enforce zero-tolerance policies for specific criteria like hazardous waste, pollution, or corruption. Most HOs also identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to sustainable procurement that can be integrated into the program level.

1.2.1. General vs. sector-specific criteria

Sustainability criteria can be general, sector-specific, or item-specific. For example, the integration of sustainability criteria may be different in medical procurement compared to food, shelter, or fleet. This can be due to several factors such as market availability, technical specifications, quality concerns, or international standards. Furthermore, certain criteria may be more relevant to some sectors than others, such as synthetic fertilizer use in food production or the use of certain plastics to produce medical devices.

1.2.2. Zero-tolerance criteria

Zero-tolerance criteria is typically associated with social factors such as the prohibition of child and forced labour, corruption, and bribery or access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities. In terms of environmental considerations, the implementation of zero-tolerance criteria is still in its infancy. Instead, even the most mature HOs in terms of sustainability use words such as “encourage, prefer, or support”. Most, however, do include zero-tolerance criteria for the use of hazardous chemicals and substances.



1.2.3. Emergency procurement

In the case of emergency procurement, HOs (understandably) prioritise quick procurement over environmental sustainability, which may include opting for faster methods such as air transport. A few HOs indicate the need for better planning and preparedness to try to lessen the environmental burden during emergency procurement. The importance of planning and preparedness in supply chain management was also stressed during the workshop. The participants noted that a proactive approach, including considering sustainability in emergency and humanitarian interventions can have a significant impact on overall sustainability goals.

1.3. Verification mechanisms for sustainability

HOs employ various mechanisms to assess the sustainability performance of items. Achieving complete transparency, however, poses a significant challenge, and issues around verifying supplier information were highlighted in the workshop and during interviews. Most do not mandate verification, and the reliability of verification mechanisms varies depending on several factors. Many HOs advocate for increased verifiable evidence to track sustainability performance and enhance decision-making. Verification mechanisms can be categorised into two types: internal and external.

1.3.1. Internal verification mechanisms

Many HOs develop their own verification mechanisms to assess the sustainability performance of suppliers and items. These may include self-developed tools, assessment methods, or structured questionnaires. Internal verification often involves evaluating suppliers' sustainable sourcing practices, assessing their environmental impact, and verifying compliance with sustainability standards and criteria. A few HOs also conduct on-site audits or integrate environmental factors into existing quality audits to monitor sustainability performance.

1.3.2. External verification mechanisms

HOs also employ external verification mechanisms, either independently or in conjunction with internal methods, to assess the environmental impact of purchased items. This might involve relying on third-party standards like ISO 14000 to indicate environmentally beneficial qualities. Additionally, verification systems may be utilised across multiple HOs through joint initiatives or agreements, promoting the adoption of harmonised standards across the sector. In some cases, eco-labels (which certify specific standards) may also be used to verify the sustainability of items purchased.

1.4. Willingness-to-pay more for sustainable products

Some HOs are indeed willing to pay more for sustainable products, although this willingness can vary based on factors such as budget constraints, donor preferences, and the perceived long-term benefits of sustainability. While adherence to quality and technical specifications remains a priority for most organisations, there is a growing recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability in procurement decisions.

1.4.1. Systematic willingness-to-pay more

Some HOs have integrated a systematic willingness-to-pay more strategy into their procurement processes. This might involve implementing an organisational-wide price premium for greener products. By redefining "best value for money" to include sustainability considerations, several HOs acknowledge that the lowest price does not always equate to the best value and indicate that sustainable products may

offer cost savings and operational efficiencies in the long run, despite higher upfront costs. This also includes a “total cost of ownership” approach, in which external costs linked to environmental, social, or economic impacts (i.e., externalities) are also considered.

1.4.2. Context-specific funding mechanisms

In many cases, willingness to pay more for sustainable products is often context-specific and influenced by factors such as the budget of the requesting country and donor priorities. HOs may prioritise sustainability in procurement decisions based on specific program requirements and the affected population. Additionally, donors may play a significant role in funding sustainable procurement initiatives, particularly if they prioritise environmental sustainability in their funding criteria.

1.4.3. Donor perspective

Challenges related to donors is a frequent argument heard from many HOs, however during the workshop donors expressed that this may be due to a lack of communication and coordination rather than a willingness-to-support on their part. Namely, donors mentioned that it is difficult to integrate sustainability requirements into procurement without a direct influence over the products purchased and that in some cases there are limitations posed by existing procurement regulations. They also noted a need for better communication and trust between donors, HOs, and suppliers to facilitate an open dialogue and innovative solutions. Additionally, they voiced that investing in coordination and collaboration initiatives – such as the Inter-Agency Procurement Group (IAPG), Waste management & measuring, Reverse logistics, Environmentally sustainable procurement & transport, and Circular economy (WREC), hulo, and DG ECHO’s Emergency Stocks – was also a strategic investment despite limited funds.

2. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Sustainable procurement is a holistic concept that goes beyond the operational task of procuring products, encompassing policy and strategic objectives towards embedding sustainability within the organisation. It includes indicators and criteria to assess the overall sustainability of the supply chain across social, economic, and environmental dimensions, evaluate suppliers (i.e., specify what is mandatory for suppliers to adhere to), and evaluate products/product groups that HOs procure. WORM builds off the UN Sustainable Procurement Indicators (UN 2021a) to develop a framework to promote sustainable procurement and identify criteria to assess sustainability for suppliers and product groups, as illustrated in Figure 2. This is combined with the newly established Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) introduced by the European Commission in July 2024 (EU 2024), and adapted to the humanitarian sector. The approach also includes scaling adherence to defined criteria based on market maturity to support local development in regions where HOs are often most active and there is still limited attention paid to sustainable products (discussed in Section 3), which was also noted as a key focus area in the workshop.

Firstly, the procurement policy and strategy form the basis to embed sustainability into procurement and provides necessary guidance on evaluation criteria for suppliers and products. In general, the focus areas included in the procurement policy and strategy tend to imply a broader scope and longer-term perspective than supplier and product evaluation. Within the overarching procurement policy and strategy, WORM proposes a dual approach to sustainable procurement – supplier *and* product evaluation – which allows for both flexible and comprehensive assessment.

Based on insights from the interviews and workshop, suppliers, for example, typically offer a wide variety of products, which may also vary in terms of their sustainability performance. On the other hand, HOs



may procure more sustainable products from suppliers, which do not necessarily integrate sustainability into their practices. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate suppliers and products using different indicators to have a full understanding and support informed decision-making. Another main difference between the two evaluation categories is that supplier evaluation encompasses dimensions of sustainability on the company level, including social, economic, and environmental dimensions, while the product evaluation includes components related to the product itself. Criteria at the product level are also mainly focused on the environment, although adherence may also have an influence on social and economic sustainability (e.g., use of locally recyclable materials).

The following sub-sections provide more detail on the indicators included under the various categories. This framework was presented to the workshop participants and their feedback is provided in the Workshop Report (see appendix). The criteria for product evaluation will be further elaborated on and applied within the humanitarian sector in further tasks T2.2 (Integration of sustainability criteria in a procurement platform) and T2.3 (Procurement guidelines and technical specifications).

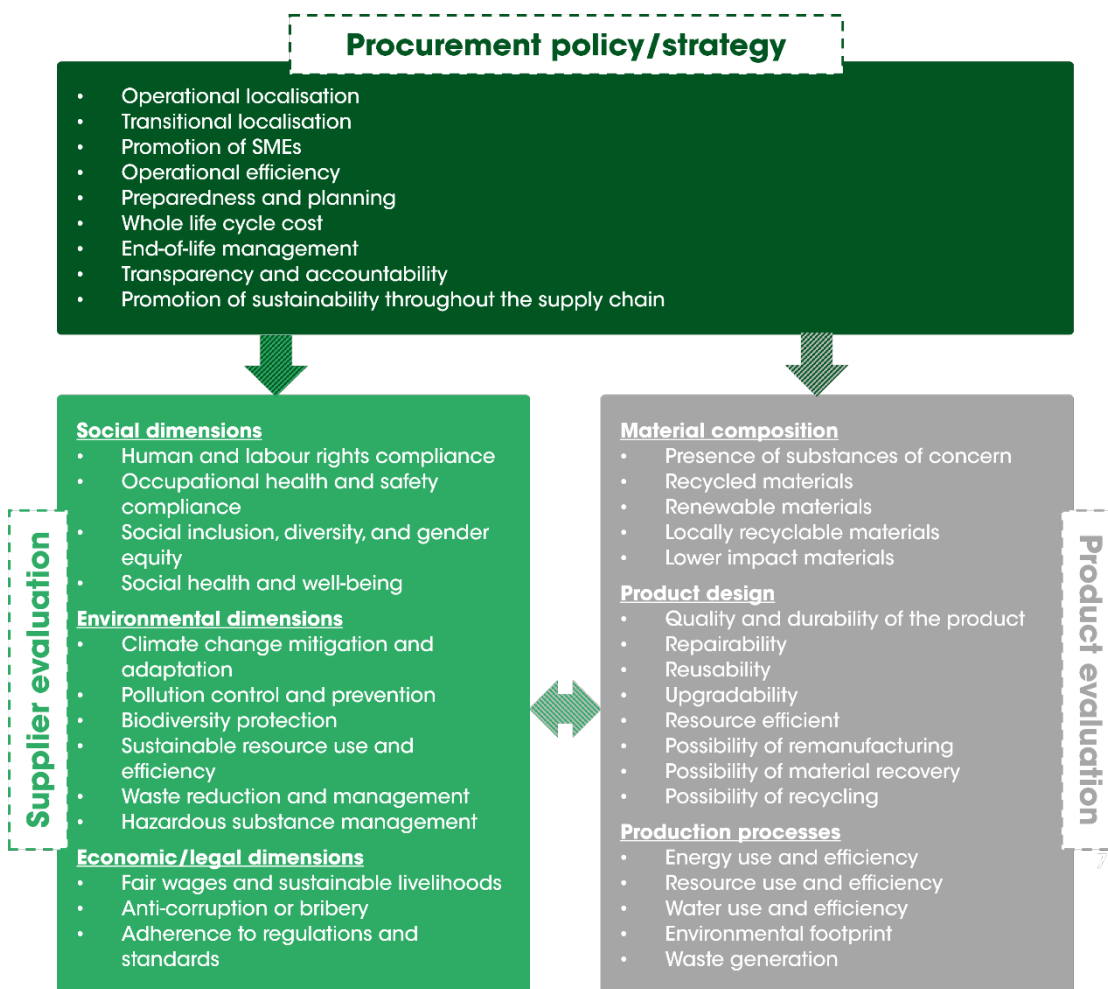


Figure 2 Three components of sustainable procurement framework dimensions.

2.1. Procurement policy and strategy

The top section of the figure represents the procurement policy and strategy at an organisational level, which will provide guidance for supplier and product evaluation. This includes dimensions such as:

- **Operational localisation** (e.g., purchasing items from local actors)
- **Transitional localisation** (e.g., empowering local actors)
- **Promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)** (e.g., preference to procuring from SMEs)

- **Operational efficiency** (e.g., implementing strategies to reduce stock movements)
- **Preparedness and planning** (e.g., prepositioning near disaster-prone areas)
- **Whole life cycle cost** (e.g., using a life-cycle costing methodology in the financial evaluation)
- **End-of-life management** (e.g., collecting waste following disaster response)
- **Transparency and accountability** (e.g., supplier monitoring and auditing)
- **Promotion of sustainability throughout the supply chain** (e.g., providing resources for purchasing more sustainable products)

2.2. Supplier evaluation

The bottom left section of the figure identifies the indicators for supplier evaluation during procurement, which may also interact with sustainability at the product level. Based on the UN Sustainable Procurement Indicators, this includes dimensions such as:

Social dimensions

- **Human and labour rights compliance** (e.g., no child labour)
- **Occupational health and safety compliance** (e.g., safe working conditions)
- **Social inclusion, diversity, and gender equity** (e.g., women-owned businesses)
- **Social health and well-being** (e.g., labelling for hazardous chemicals)

Environmental dimensions

- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation** (e.g., using energy efficient technologies)
- **Pollution control and prevention** (e.g., proper wastewater management)
- **Biodiversity protection** (e.g., promote sustainable production)
- **Sustainable resource use and efficiency** (e.g., using recycled materials)
- **Waste reduction and management** (e.g., proper waste management plan)
- **Hazardous substance management** (e.g., proper storage of hazardous chemicals)

Economic/legal dimensions

- **Fair wages and livelihoods** (e.g., providing living wages to employees)
- **Anti-corruption and bribery** (e.g., zero-tolerance for bribery)
- **Regulations and standards** (e.g., adherence to international standards)

2.3. Product evaluation

The bottom right section of the figure identifies the indicators for product evaluation during procurement. These indicators aim to assess the sustainability of the product throughout its entire life cycle, as illustrated in Figure 3. This implies that products are designed considering different sustainability factors during not only production, but also during use and end-of-life. As previously mentioned, these are adapted from the ESPR framework to the humanitarian context. Some of the indicators presented may also feed into two parts of Figure 3, such as the use of recyclable materials during production and the possibility of recycling at end-of-life. The proposed product level criteria also address the feedback given by participants during the workshop, namely that there is a need for measurable indicators for sustainability and that product specifications should comply with EU directives. This includes dimensions such as:

Material composition

- **Presence of substances of concern** (e.g., no hazardous chemicals)
- **Recycled materials** (e.g., recycled plastics)
- **Renewable materials** (e.g., bio-based materials)

- **Locally recyclable materials** (e.g., materials that can also be recycled at the location in which they reach their end-of-life)
- **Lower impact materials** (e.g., less intensive raw materials to produce)

Product design

- **Quality and durability of the product** (e.g., longer life span)
- **Repairability** (e.g., easily repaired with local technologies)
- **Reusability** (e.g., can be reused after initial end-of-life phase)
- **Upgradability** (e.g., easily upgraded using local technologies)
- **Resource efficient** (e.g., low energy needs to operate)
- **Possibility of remanufacturing** (e.g., can be refurbished)
- **Possibility of material recovery** (e.g., materials can be recovered to make new products)
- **Possibility of recycling** (e.g., materials can be recycled at end-of-life)

Production processes

- **Energy use and efficiency** (e.g., low energy needs to produce)
- **Resource use and efficiency** (e.g., waste materials can be reintroduced)
- **Water use and efficiency** (e.g., low water needs to produce)
- **Environmental footprint** (e.g., low carbon footprint to produce)
- **Waste generation** (e.g., limited waste generated in production)

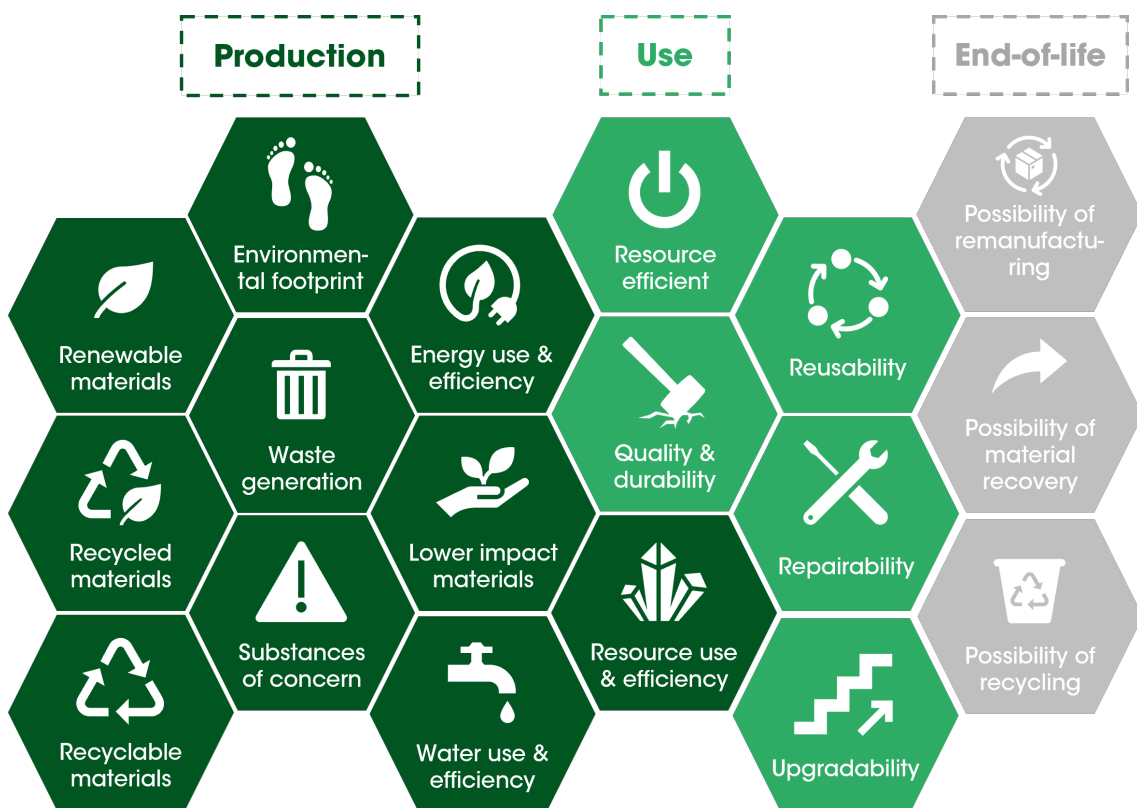


Figure 3 Production evaluation indicators adapted from the ESPR framework broken down by different life cycle phases (EU, 2024).

3. Market classification

The framework described above represents a comprehensive overview of relevant dimensions of sustainable procurement. Ideally, they should be required for all procurement decisions. However, HOs often face several limitations regarding sustainable procurement, especially in less mature markets where they often aim to procure from. This was also a main challenge identified in the workshop in which many HOs highlighted the difficulty in implementing sustainability criteria at a local level due to barriers such as limited supplier capacity, lack of local production, inconsistent quality, and different regional standards.

Thus, it is necessary to recognize that not all criteria may be feasible to enforce for all markets and strict adherence may limit competition. Understanding how to adapt the proposed sustainable procurement framework to different local contexts not only allows for a wider range of procurement opportunities, but it also can help to support building local capacities and guide suppliers in all regions of the world to shift towards more sustainable products and processes. Here it is also key to address the differences between more traditional transactional (e.g., purchasing local items) and strategic (e.g., including sustainability criteria) procurement, in which the former is often the focus while the latter is neglected.

To address this challenge, WORM identifies the need for market classification within the scope of the sustainable procurement framework. This approach entails assessing and classifying the local market and identifying the appropriate market classification, engaging with suppliers, and building local capacity to empower local actors and encourage market maturity. While this is not explicitly a task for the WORM project, we present a basic framework for market classification as a basis for further development below as it is clearly an integral part of supporting sustainable procurement and local development at the long-term. The proposed market classification system is also developed and adapted based on the Markets in Crisis (MiC) working group (MiC 2022).

The following paragraphs describe this process in more detail and propose a market classification approach. The end goal will also be to identify which product and supplier evaluation criteria are mandatory depending on which type of market classification, which would also allow HOs to more systematically implement sustainable procurement procedures.

3.1. Assessing and classifying the local market

Currently, a typical approach to determine the appropriateness of procuring from a specific market is often framed as binary: either the market can fulfil the procurement needs or it cannot (and thus international procurement is necessary). This approach does not support sustainable development for local markets and often implies preference to international markets as HOs make sustainability criteria mandatory.

In response, several HOs have emphasised the need to assess the local market to understand the availability of environmentally sustainable products and tailor approaches to the specific context of each region or country based on local market capabilities, regulatory environments, and supplier limitations. This includes incremental implementation through a stepwise approach by setting achievable targets and gradually expanding the scope as suppliers and internal teams become more capable. This would increase equity for local suppliers while also providing clear guidance on what HOs are looking for regarding sustainability in procurement. Table 1 presents a basic framework for market classification and identifies ways in which HOs can interact and enforce sustainable procurement criteria on the market based on the level of classification. For example, a market classified as Level 3 would provide sufficient supply to address all the product evaluation criteria presented in Figure 3. However, a market classified at Level 2 would be able to provide sufficient supply to adhere to most/some of the evaluation criteria and requires

support, while a Level 1 market would only be able to adhere to some/none of the sustainability criteria. As the criteria is further developed within the WORM project, we aim to also identify and validate which specific criteria can be applied to each market level.

Table 1: Framework for market classification, interaction, and adherence to sustainability criteria for product evaluation.

TYPICAL BINARY MARKET CLASSIFICATION	LEVEL OF MARKET CLASSIFICATION	INTERACTION WITH THE MARKET ¹	ADHERENCE TO SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT CRITERIA
Functioning market	3	Using markets	Market can adhere to all sustainability criteria
Non-functioning market	2	Supporting markets	Market can adhere to most/some sustainability criteria
	1	Market system change	Market can adhere to some/none of sustainability criteria

¹Based on (MiC 2022)

3.2. Supplier engagement

A key component across all market level is engagement with suppliers. Engaging with suppliers through workshops and collaborative initiatives to help them better understand and meet sustainability criteria was also identified as a necessary step during the workshop. This is especially relevant in less mature markets where suppliers require additional support to meet sustainable procurement requirements. It is also important to note that alignment with suppliers who produce products themselves will be different than with suppliers who serve as distributors. At an operational level, supplier engagement can take a two-step approach: (1) sharing knowledge about key sustainability issues with suppliers; and (2) leveraging suppliers' expertise of the local market, including challenges and opportunities. To support market maturity, a shift is needed to work with suppliers to make them part of the solution rather than setting unrealistic standards and expectations.

3.3. Capacity building

Aligned with the goal of shifting from purely transactional to strategic procurement, investing in the capacity of procurement teams and suppliers is crucial. This can be done through training, workshops, and continuous engagement. In a Level 1 market, for example, local capacity is not sufficient to adhere to some or any of the sustainable procurement criteria. However, building this local capacity is not only dependent on engaging with suppliers, but also includes other relevant actors, such as local sustainability experts, external partners, development organisations, and/or governments. Simply purchasing from local suppliers may help to support the local market from a short-term perspective but may not necessarily contribute to the long-term goals of building local capacities and could create a reliance on humanitarian aid to sustain demand. Thus, identifying ways to increase local capacity and empower local actors should also be a focus area within the realm of sustainable procurement, especially for less mature markets.

4. Next steps

The sustainable procurement framework introduced in this document forms the foundation of the further tasks in WP2: T2.2 (Integration of sustainability criteria in a procurement platform) and T2.3 (Procurement guidelines and technical specifications). In T2.2 WORM (led by Solvoz) will further develop specific sustainability criteria related to product evaluation, together with support of procurement and medical product specialists, to integrate into their open-access e-procurement platform for humanitarian actors. This will be followed by T2.3, in which WORM (led by Solvoz with support from end-users (ACF, CRS, FRC, ICRC, IMC, NRC, VNRC)), will develop procurement guidelines to assist in scoping tenders and the development of technical specifications, including those for alternative materials (e.g., bio-based) and products offered to HOs.

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worm

**Waste in humanitarian Operations:
Reduction and Minimisation**



Funded by the
European Union

The logo for 'worm' is written in a bold, green, lowercase sans-serif font. The letter 'o' is stylized with a green leaf-like shape extending from its bottom. The letter 'r' has a green leaf-like shape extending from its bottom. The letter 'm' has a green leaf-like shape extending from its bottom. The background of the cover features a white plastic bag filled with crumpled white paper and several white surgical masks, with a green line-art drawing of a worm's head and body overlaid on the top left.

**Waste in humanitarian Operations:
Reduction and Minimisation**

Appendix to D2.1 Workshop Report

**Development of a Sustainability Procurement
Framework: Towards Humanitarian
Procurement for Long-Term Impact**

Date of delivery: **27/06/2024**

Author(s): **Claire Barnhoorn**

Institution: **Solvoz, the Netherlands**



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Figure 1: WORM logo **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

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Table 1: This is an example of table. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**



1. Introduction and general information

The humanitarian sector faces increasing pressure and interest to integrate sustainability into procurement processes. As the world needs to cope with environmental challenges, a rise in conflict, and resource scarcity, sustainable procurement is essential to ensure that aid delivery minimises negative impacts on the environment and promotes social and economic benefits. Thus far, it has been challenging to build a consensus on practical criteria to enable sustainable procurement practices in the humanitarian sector. This workshop gathered a diverse group of stakeholders (NGO and UN specialists, academic experts, and donors) to discuss and define the most effective criterion categories for sustainable procurement in the humanitarian sector.

1.1. Objectives of the workshop

- To increase awareness and inform on the importance of sustainable procurement practices in the humanitarian sector.
- To understand the sustainability objectives of different stakeholder groups, in addition to main challenges and areas for opportunity.
- To evaluate and identify key categories of sustainability criteria that can be adopted across the humanitarian sector.

1.2. Invitations and invitation process

The workshop was announced on the communication channels of WORM and several of the partners. Personal invitations have been sent to members of various stakeholder groups, invitations through the partners were sent and announcements made via social media (main channel: LinkedIn).

The max number of participants was set between 40 and 50 including the organisers. Important to have enough procurement and sustainability specialists to capture the challenges from their work perspectives. Stakeholders identified (important to note the decision was made not to invite suppliers/companies in this dialogue):

- Donors
- Sustainability officers from NGOs + UN agencies
- Procurement officers from NGOs + UN agencies
- Academics and experts in sustainable procurement

1.3. Participation

- **48 participants joined the Workshop (in total 55 joined, but 7 out of those were repeating participants, that left and rejoined later during the workshop), with a maximum of 41 participants at the same time in the workshop.**
- Out of the 48 participants – **39 were active users**, defined as responded to one or more of the polls during the webinar
- We had **30 poll questions** (SLIDO questions) – **with an average engagement of 15,7 poll responses per participant** (some only responded to a few, some to many)
- **MIRO board** was used in the second workshop activity, unfortunately, due to a technical issue was not able to capture all the input, which instead has been reported in writing in this report.

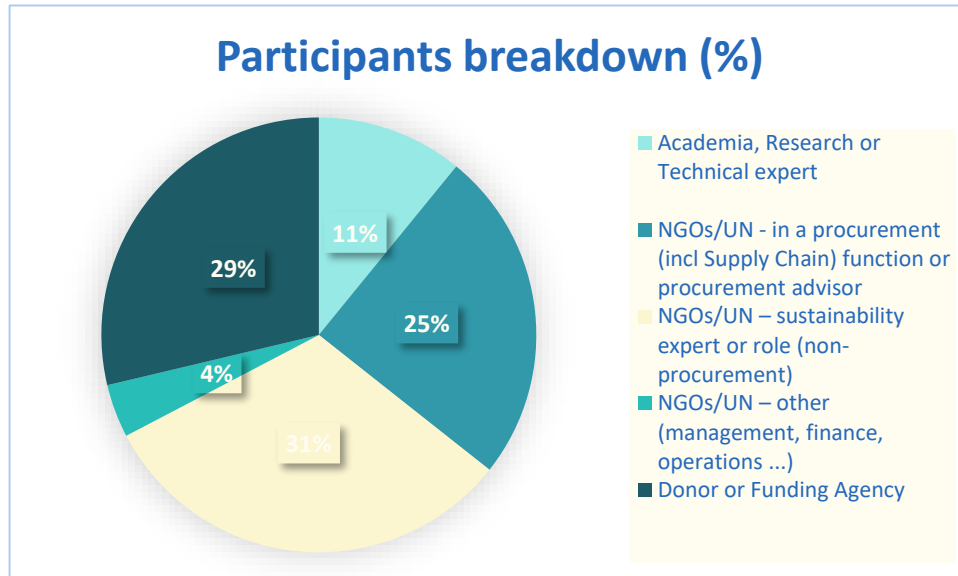


Figure 1: Participants breakdown of WORM workshop - Sustainable Procurement - 25th of June 2024

1.4. Summary of the workshop

The workshop was hosted by Claire Barnhoorn (CEO Solvoz) and Karolina Kalinowski (Sustainability lead at DG ECHO) with as a speaker Sarah Josephs (Postdoctoral researcher at Kuhne Logistics University) and presenter of research framework Yumiko Abe (Technical sustainability lead Solvoz).

Breakouts were facilitated by:

1. Karolina Kalinowski & Claire Barnhoorn (Donor breakout session),
2. Sarah Josephs & Brian Huempel (Sustainability breakout session),
3. Yumiko Abe & Valentina Taglioni (Procurement and Humanitarian breakout session)

1.5. Agenda of the workshop



Agenda

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Introducing WORM consortium and project | (2 min - Claire Barnhoorn) |
| 2. Purpose and objectives of the workshop today | (1 min) |
| 3. Status quo of the practice of sustainable procurement | (5 min - Sarah Joseph) |
| 4. Working towards the proposed sustainability criteria framework | (15 min – Yumiko Abe) |
| 5. Workshop 1: Priority framework dimensions selection | (25 min) |
| 6. Workshop 2: What is done, where are opportunities,
in stakeholder group breakouts | (25 min) |
| 7. Discussion and closing | (20 min) |



Figure 2: Agenda of the Workshop

2. Opening notes:

The workshop participants were welcomed by Claire Barnhoorn, before handing over to Karolina Kalinowski (the sustainability lead from DG ECHO) who made the opening notes. In her opening notes, Karolina emphasized the critical role of procurement in aligning with environmental and logistics policies. Most humanitarian funding is spent on procurement, which significantly contributes to the sector's greenhouse gas emissions, particularly through scope three emissions. Therefore, sustainable procurement is viewed as a key lever for positive change, highlighting the importance of today's discussion.

Karolina acknowledged that while DG ECHO does not directly control its partners' procurement decisions, the organization is committed to promoting sustainable procurement practices. This includes supporting the Interagency Procurement Group (IAPG) by funding its secretariat to investigate donor rules that may inadvertently hinder the implementation of sustainable practices. Understanding these roadblocks is crucial for facilitating a shift towards more sustainable humanitarian operations.

The innovative funding approach of this project [WORM] was highlighted, which is financed through the EU's research and development budgets rather than traditional humanitarian funds. This strategy exemplifies the potential to tap into broader financial resources to support research and innovation in humanitarian aid, encouraging others to seek similar opportunities.

3. Status quo in sustainable procurement from Research

Sarah Joseph, a postdoctoral researcher at Kühne Logistics University, provided an overview of sustainable procurement in the humanitarian sector. Key points included:

1. **Research and Analysis:** Over the past year, research involved interviewing various humanitarian organizations and analyzing tender documents to understand how sustainability is integrated into procurement.
2. **Sustainability Criteria:** Sustainable procurement involves environmental, social, and economic considerations. There's often uncertainty about the importance of sustainability criteria compared to traditional ones like quality or price. Social and economic criteria (e.g., no child labor, anti-bribery) are usually mandatory and systematically embedded, while environmental criteria (e.g., use of recycled materials) are less consistently integrated.
3. **Constraints and Integration:** Embedding sustainability in procurement is crucial for reducing the sector's social, economic, and environmental impacts. However, during emergencies, quick decision-making often clashes with the need for sustainable options. If sustainability is systematically embedded in procurement policies, it can reduce the time needed to find sustainable options.
4. **Procurement as a Gatekeeper:** Procurement decisions are pivotal for ensuring sustainable supply chains and responses. The transition to sustainable procurement requires unified efforts from donors, organizations, and suppliers.
5. **Sustainability Spectrum:** Environmental sustainability in procurement decisions can range from being completely ignored to being mandatory with systematic evaluation mechanisms. Most organizations fall between optional, non-systematic, and optional, systematic mechanisms.
6. **Implementation Variability:** Implementation levels vary by product or category, and even mature organizations might not apply sustainable practices universally, especially in local procurement or emergencies.
7. **Collaborative Efforts:** Highlighted collaborative projects include the WREC project, joint initiatives by IAPG, REH, QSE group, HULO and UNGM, which focus on sustainable humanitarian practices.
8. **Scaling Up:** The workshop aims to scale up sustainable procurement, making it easier for less mature organizations to adopt sustainable practices. The goal is to establish standardized yet flexible guidelines for humanitarian procurement, facilitating exchanges of best practices and collaborative efforts with donors and suppliers.

The main emphasis was the importance of collaboration and the exchange of best practices to drive sustainable procurement in the humanitarian sector.

4. Towards a sustainable procurement framework for humanitarians

Yumiko Abe, the technical sustainability lead of Solvoz, presented on the importance and challenges of sustainable procurement within the humanitarian sector. Here are several of the key points. For more information, we refer to the slides as used in the workshop, available through the WORM website.

Background and Perspective: Yumiko Abe has an academic background as an environmental scientist and experience as a technology transfer specialist. She emphasized bringing perspectives from outside the humanitarian sector to address sustainability challenges.

Sustainability Challenges: Sustainability is a complex, continuous effort. It requires long-term commitment and often shows slow, incremental progress. The humanitarian sector, accustomed to short-term relief, faces challenges in adopting long-term sustainability objectives.

Incremental Improvements: Small, continuous improvements in sustainability (e.g., reducing CO2 footprint or plastic use by a small percentage annually) can lead to significant long-term benefits. However, this requires a time frame and mindset shift within the sector.

Ripple Effect: Starting sustainability efforts within an organization can create a ripple effect, leading to broader sector-wide improvements. Collaboration within the sector amplifies these efforts.

Global Sustainability Framework: The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, established in 2015, guides global sustainability efforts. There are 17 goals, 169 targets, and 247 indicators used by various sectors to achieve common sustainability objectives.

Current Global Status: The 2023 UN report indicates that many countries are behind schedule in achieving the 2030 SDG agenda. High-income countries show high SDG performance but also high consumption rates, contributing to global greenhouse gas emissions and plastic waste export.

Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP): Public purchasing power can drive positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. SPP policies often start with energy-consuming equipment due to easier measurement of success. Examples include Mongolia's hospital lighting project that reduced electricity consumption by over 50%.

UN and EU Frameworks: Yumiko presented frameworks from the UN and EU for guiding sustainable procurement practices. The UNDP indicators target specific SDGs and focus areas like pollution prevention, sustainable resource use, climate change mitigation, social health and well-being, and economic dimensions.

EU Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation: This regulation extends to almost all products and emphasizes product lifetime extension and economic opportunities through reuse and repair. Focus areas include renewable material content, recyclable material content, energy efficiency, waste management, and toxicity issues.

Survey on Sustainability Perception: Preliminary results from a sustainability perception survey show that OECD countries emphasize environmental dimensions, while non-OECD countries focus on economic dimensions. More responses are needed for statistically significant analysis.

Adapting Sustainable Procurement Frameworks: The humanitarian sector can adapt frameworks from the UN and EU to include additional focus areas like renewable and recyclable material content, energy efficiency, and waste management. Strict criteria for toxicity are crucial due to less advanced waste management practices in developing countries.

Conclusion: Yumiko summarized the discussed focus areas and stressed the importance of translating these into procurement language to guide sustainable procurement practices within the humanitarian sector.

5. Workshop activity 1: From UNSP Indicators and ESPR Dimensions into a holistic matrix: priority setting

During the workshop, the UN SP Indicators (Sustainable Procurement Indicator Framework from the UN <https://www.ungm.org/Shared/KnowledgeCenter/Pages/SustProIndicators>) were discussed and the

new ESPR (Ecodesign Requirements from the European Commission). Sustainable procurement is a holistic concept that goes beyond the procurement task, encompassing policy and strategic objectives toward sustainability embedded within the organization. It includes criteria for supplier assessments and the sustainability of the supply chain, specifying what suppliers need to adhere to, as well as technical and product specifications. The UN SP Indicators, in particular, integrate elements from all these areas. To facilitate discussion on responsibilities and support for sustainable procurement, in the workshop a draft matrix was presented as part of the WORM 2-year project (see slides of webinar for more information). This matrix maps out these components and their respective responsibilities. Following the presentation, participants individually voted on each sub-dimension using SLIDO to determine whether each should be mandatory or recommended. This voting aims to prioritize elements to help move forward from merely recommending to potentially mandating actions. The collected feedback will be analyzed and considered in the subsequent phases of the project.

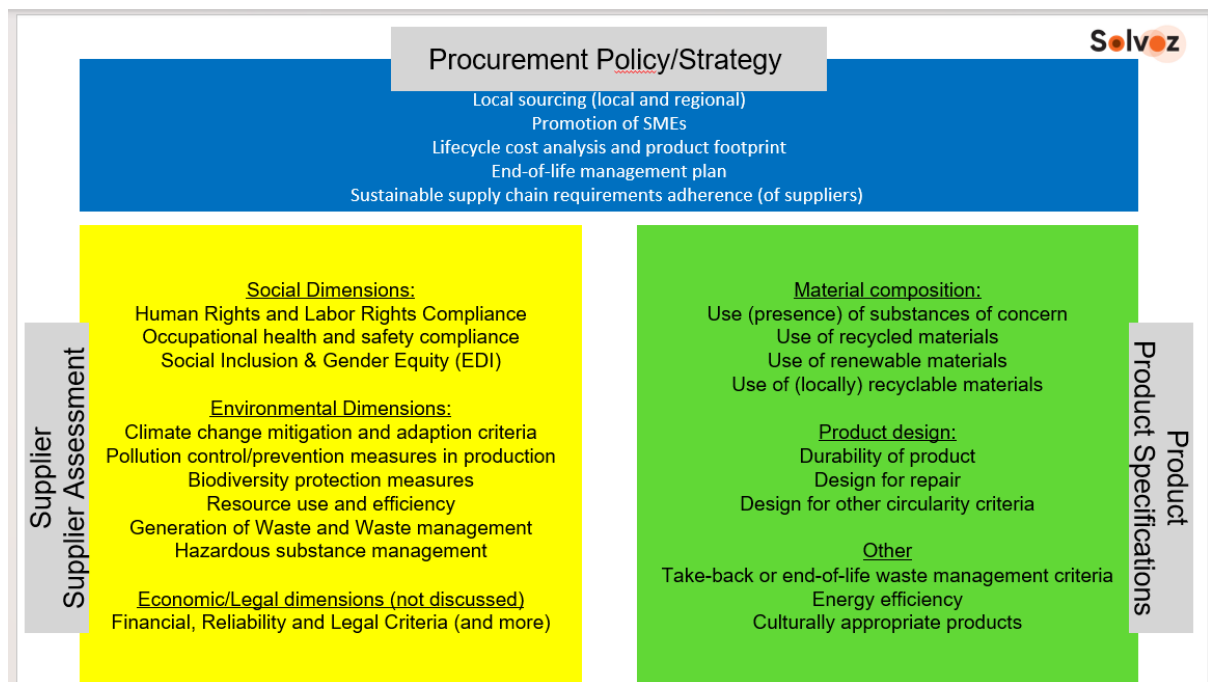


Figure 3: Three components of sustainable procurement framework dimensions - as presented during the workshop on 25th of June 2025 (WORM Project)

6. Voting results of participants on various dimensions of sustainable procurement.

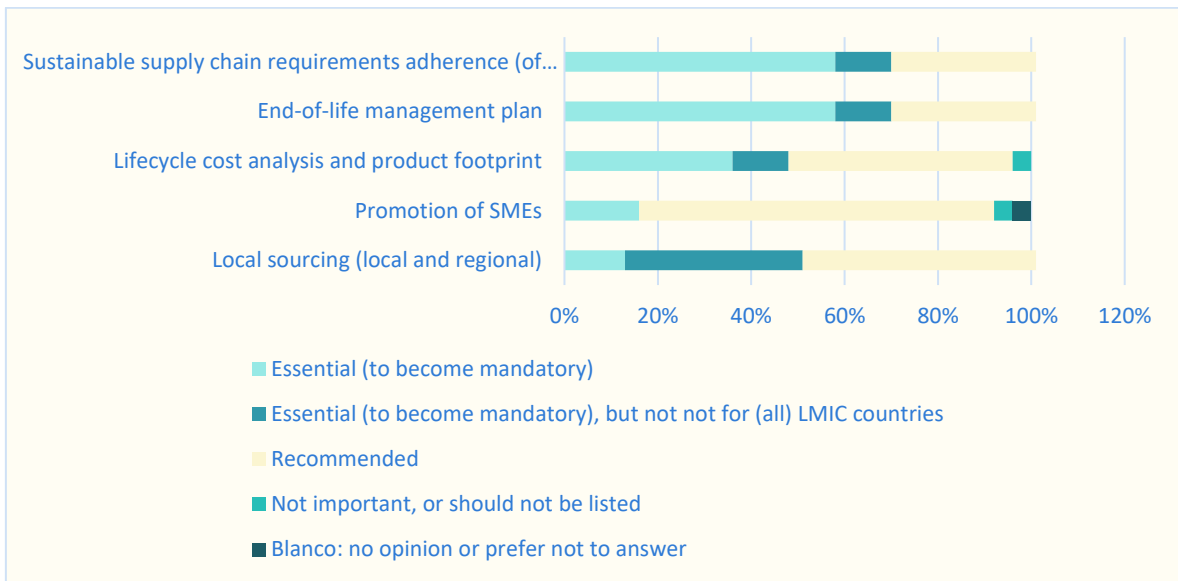


Figure 4: Voting results of dimensions on Policy & Strategy for humanitarian sustainable procurement categories (WORM Workshop 25th of June 2024)

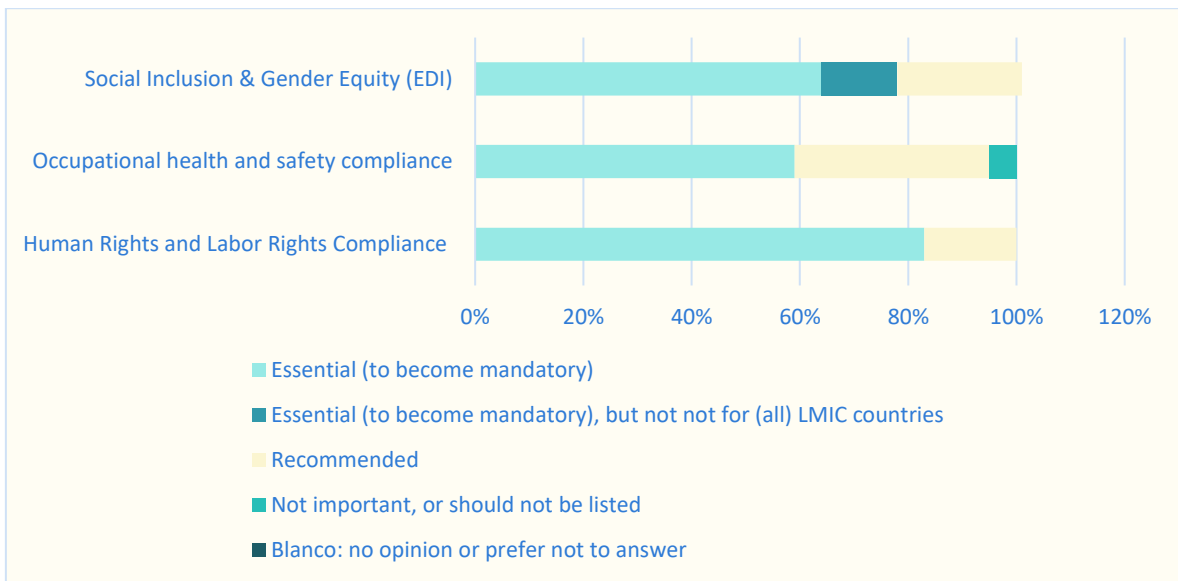


Figure 5: Voting results of dimensions on Supplier Assessment (Social subdimension) for humanitarian sustainable procurement categories (WORM Workshop 25th of June 2024)

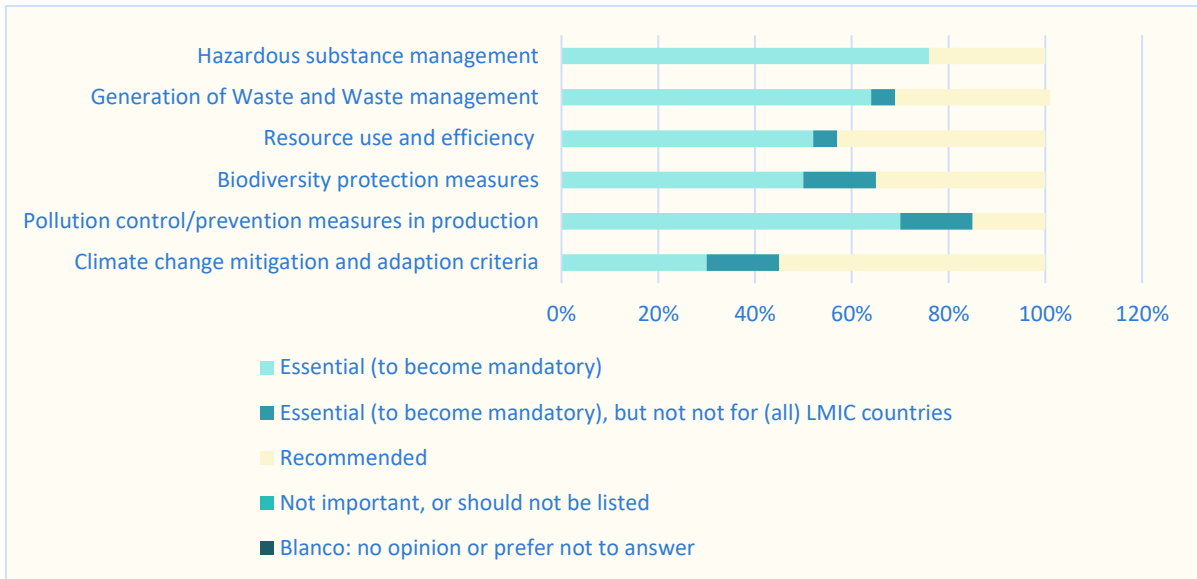


Figure 6: Voting results of dimensions on Supplier Assessment (Environmental subdimension) for humanitarian sustainable procurement categories (WORM Workshop 25th of June 2024)

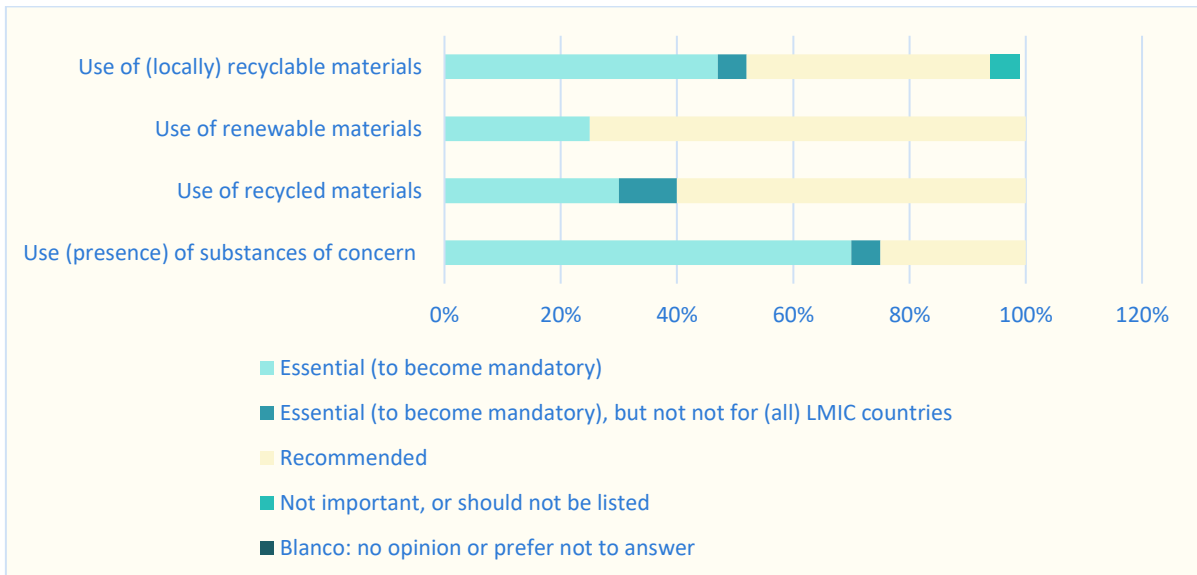


Figure 7: Voting results of dimensions on Product Specifications (subdimension material composition) for humanitarian sustainable procurement categories (WORM Workshop 25th of June 2024)

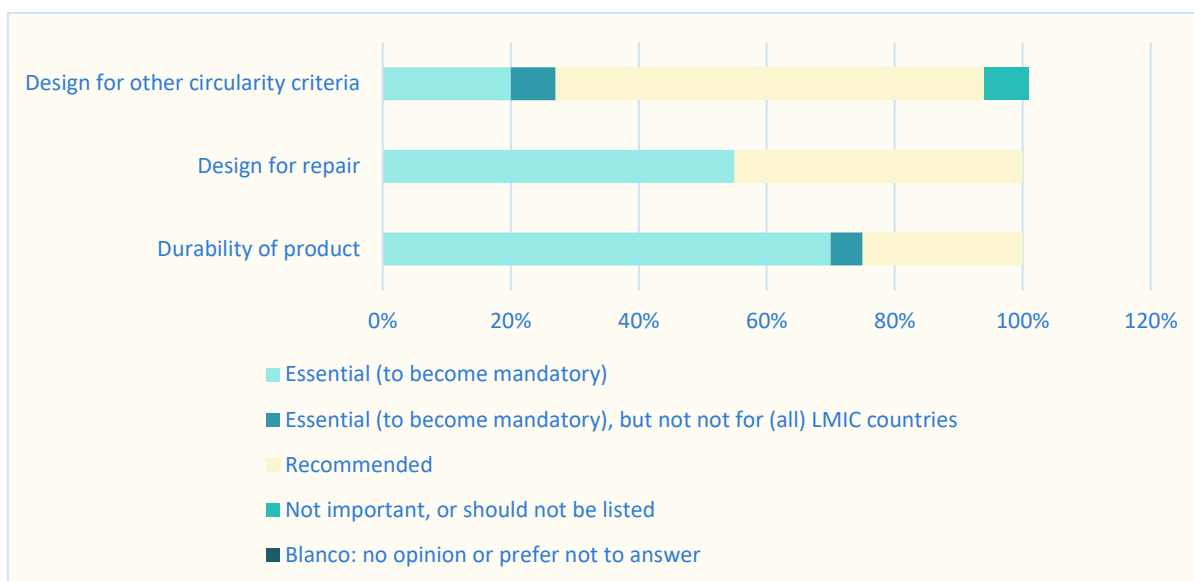


Figure 8: Voting results of dimensions on Product Specifications (subdimension design) for humanitarian sustainable procurement categories (WORM Workshop 25th of June 2024)

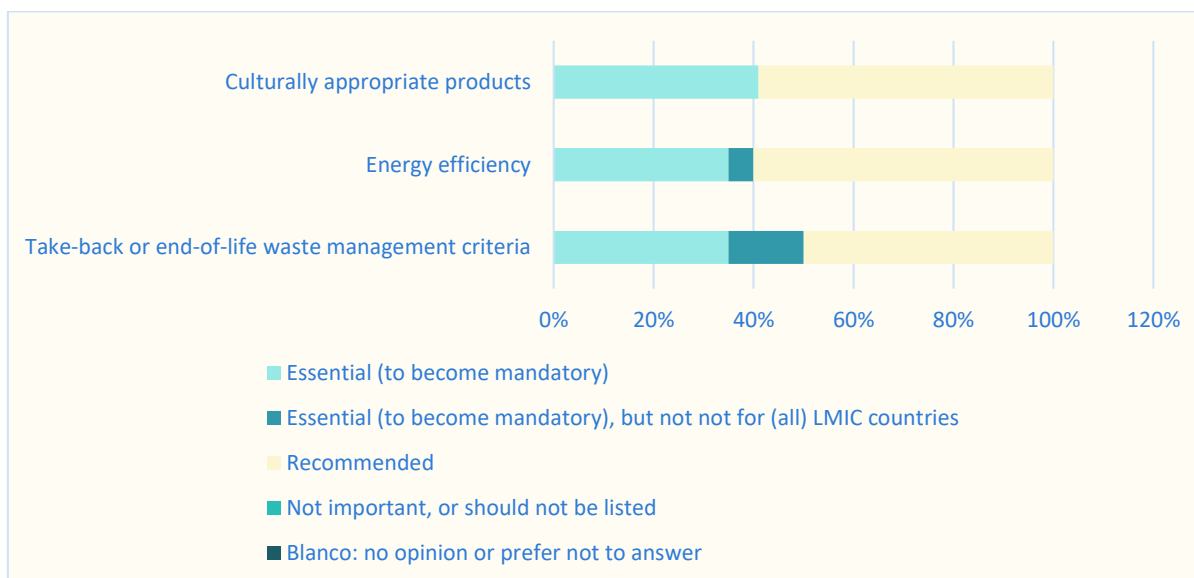


Figure 9: Voting results of dimensions on Product Specifications (subdimension: other) for humanitarian sustainable procurement categories (WORM Workshop 25th of June 2024)

7. Summary Breakout Rooms – Workshop activity 2

7.1. Summary of Breakout room Sustainability Experts

The breakout session on sustainability expertise brought together participants with diverse backgrounds to discuss best practices and challenges related to sustainable procurement policies, supplier assessments, and product specifications.

7.1.1. General feedback on main components

Mandatory Environmental Requirements: There was a consensus on the importance of integrating mandatory environmental criteria into procurement policies.

Supplier Assessment: Emphasis was placed on the necessity of assessing the market to understand the availability of environmentally sustainable goods and services. Additionally, investing in supplier capacity and conducting sustainability risk assessments were identified as crucial steps.

Product Specifications: It was noted that product specifications should comply with EU directives, and there is a need for engaging program teams and donors to understand the challenges and alternatives associated with environmentally sustainable products.

7.1.2. Challenges and Opportunities

Transactional vs. Strategic Procurement: The discussion highlighted that many procurement officials tend to focus on the transactional aspect, often neglecting the strategic side that includes sustainability criteria. There is a need to emphasize strategic procurement to ensure comprehensive sustainability integration.

Supplier Fatigue: It was noted that repeated requests from multiple organizations can overwhelm suppliers. The proposal of a shared platform for supplier assessment was discussed as a means to standardize requirements and reduce duplication.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: The potential for cross-sector collaboration was recognized as a way to leverage collective expertise and resources, making sustainable procurement more efficient and impactful.

Capacity of Procurement Teams: Limited resources, capacity, and expertise in procurement teams were identified as significant challenges. Embedding sustainability systematically into procurement processes was suggested as a solution to alleviate these issues.

Awareness of Sustainability: Increasing awareness and understanding of sustainability among procurement teams and stakeholders was deemed necessary for the development of effective policies.

7.1.3. Key Insights

- Procurement officials need to consider the broader impact of their activities, including community benefits and sustainability criteria, rather than just focusing on acquiring goods.
- A shared platform for supplier assessment could streamline processes, reduce redundancy, and make it easier for suppliers to meet sustainability criteria.
- There is a need to standardize supplier sustainability criteria to enhance efficiency and effectiveness across the sector.
- Collaboration across sectors can help in leveraging collective expertise and resources, thus improving the implementation of sustainable procurement practices.
- Developing systematic and embedded sustainability practices within procurement processes can help address capacity and resource limitations.

Participants were encouraged to continue adding notes and insights to the Miro board, which will be captured for further study and follow-up. The session concluded with an agreement to move back to the main room for a broader discussion.

7.2. Summary of Breakout room: Donors and Funders

In the breakout room, the main focus was on discussing initiatives and challenges related to the Sustainable Procurement framework in the humanitarian sector. One participant highlighted the strategic investment in coordination efforts despite limited funds, noting the success of the IAPG initiative and the importance of sustainability in operations, other initiatives mentioned were WREC, HULO as well as the DG ECHO's Emergency Stocks. Other participants highlighted the key and essential work of the ESQ group.



One participant emphasized the need for knowledgeable personnel within organizations to address sustainability comprehensively, suggesting a shared resource approach to centralize expertise.

7.2.1. Experiences Shared by Participants:

- Participants discussed their involvement in various sustainable procurement initiatives and the need to balance sustainability with cost considerations.
- Some participants shared experiences where direct interaction with suppliers led to better understanding and improvements in product sustainability.
- Successful coordination and collaboration with different humanitarian organizations were highlighted as crucial for advancing sustainable procurement.

7.2.2. Key Challenges:

- Participants noted the difficulty of integrating sustainability requirements into procurement processes without direct influence over the products purchased by partners.
- The complexity of ensuring transparency and traceability in the supply chain, particularly with local and regional procurements, was a significant challenge.
- There was a concern about the limitations posed by existing procurement regulations, which sometimes hinder the adoption of more sustainable solutions.
- Participants expressed the need for better communication and trust between humanitarian organizations and suppliers to facilitate open dialogue and innovative solutions.
- The lack of direct contact with suppliers and the need for a neutral platform for discussions were identified as barriers to effective sustainable procurement.
- Issues around verification of supplier information were highlighted, for example verifying recycled content in products and the need for direct supplier engagement to ensure sustainable practices.

7.2.3. Key Insights and Recommendations:

Investing in coordination and collaborative initiatives was seen as a smart way to maximize impact with limited funds.

The importance of creating standardized and transparent supplier assessments was emphasized as a means to improve supply chain sustainability.

Developing an open-access catalog of sustainable product specifications could help humanitarian organizations make more informed procurement decisions.

The need for a dedicated team or resources within organizations to focus on sustainability was highlighted to ensure effective implementation. However it was reflected too that this can not be realized within all organisations, as a balance of resources is required.

Finally, it was underscored that fostering dialogue between humanitarian organizations and technical experts is crucial for developing better solutions. Procurement regulations often hinder direct communication, and it was suggested that neutral platforms facilitated by donors could bridge this gap. Emphasis was also given to addressing the communication barriers and enhancing collaboration between stakeholders. Finally, notes were made about the frequently heard argumentation about donor requirements to prevent a shift towards sustainable procurement and the need to obtain an overview towards those requirements in order to get a better understanding to address this.

7.3. Summary of the Procurement and NGO/UN Breakout Room

The breakout session focused on discussing sustainable procurement practices among various NGOs and UN agencies. Participants shared their experiences, challenges, and strategies related to integrating sustainability into procurement processes.

7.3.1. Experiences Shared by Participants

Global Sustainability Policies: Organizations emphasized the importance of having a global sustainability policy that is driven from the top down. This includes setting specific requirements and targets for CO2 emissions reduction and supplier sustainability criteria.

Local and Field-Level Challenges: Many organizations highlighted the challenges faced when implementing sustainability criteria at the local level, particularly in less mature markets. These challenges include limited supplier capacity, lack of local production, and differing regional standards.

Supplier Engagement: There was a focus on the need for engaging suppliers through workshops and collaborative initiatives to better understand and meet sustainability criteria. Examples included organizing joint procurement initiatives and conducting workshops in various countries.

Planning and Preparedness: The importance of planning and preparedness in supply chain management was stressed. Organizations noted that a proactive approach, including considering sustainability in emergency and humanitarian interventions, can significantly impact overall sustainability goals.

Measurement and Indicators: Participants discussed the necessity of having measurable indicators for sustainability, such as CO2 emissions and the sustainability of supply chains. However, there were also challenges in obtaining accurate data from suppliers, especially in developing regions.

Incremental Implementation: Several organizations advocated for a stepwise approach to implementing sustainable procurement practices. This involves starting with achievable targets and gradually expanding the scope as suppliers and internal teams become more capable.

7.3.2. Key Challenges

Field-Level Realities: Implementing global sustainability criteria in field operations is challenging due to diverse local conditions and supplier capabilities. For instance, suppliers in some regions may not have the capacity to meet stringent sustainability criteria.

Supplier Fatigue: Frequent and diverse requests from multiple organizations can overwhelm suppliers. A shared platform or standardized criteria were suggested as possible solutions to reduce redundancy and streamline processes.

Local Production and Quality: In some regions, local production may not always be the most environmentally friendly or feasible option. Organizations must balance sustainability goals with practical considerations, such as quality and availability of products.

7.3.3. Key Insights and Recommendations

Collaborative Efforts: Collaboration between organizations can enhance the effectiveness of sustainable procurement practices. Sharing resources, criteria, and platforms can reduce supplier fatigue and improve compliance.

Tailored Approaches: Sustainable procurement strategies should be tailored to the specific context of each region or country. This includes understanding local market capabilities, regulatory environments, and supplier limitations.



Capacity Building: Investing in building the capacity of procurement teams and suppliers is crucial. This can be achieved through training, workshops, and continuous engagement.

Focus Areas and Indicators: Developing a holistic sustainability framework with clear focus areas and indicators is essential. This framework should be adaptable to different products and regions and include stepwise implementation plans.

Continuous Improvement: Sustainability is a journey, and organizations should be prepared to continuously assess and improve their strategies. This includes regularly updating policies, engaging with stakeholders, and incorporating feedback from field operations.

The session concluded with a consensus on the need for ongoing collaboration, tailored approaches, and continuous improvement in sustainable procurement practices. Participants agreed to continue sharing experiences and insights to collectively advance sustainability in procurement across the NGO and UN sectors.

8. Closing

For those interested in staying involved or informed about the next phase of the WORM project, specifically the procurement working package, please let us know. Note that there are 18 project partners involved. Many of these partners were mentioned during today's presentation, reach out for questions in relation to their work, shared programs and moving together further with Sustainable Procurement practices.

The survey link was shared, which is crucial for gathering comprehensive feedback, including the request to distribute it widely within your networks. The more responses WORM will receive from diverse groups, the more robust our outcomes will be, informing the next steps of the project.

The notes, feedback and recordings will be shared through the WORM website and socials.

Everybody was thanked for their valuable contributions and input, and a special thanks was given to Karolina, Sarah and Yumiko for their presentations.



9. Annex 1: Feedback provided by participants through SLIDO

Below is the input from participants (unedited and all anonymous) provided through SLIDO during the workshop. The first question for feedback was at the start of the workshop where participants were requested on their expectations regarding this workshop. The feedback below was provided by the participants in writing, in the SLIDO app, during the voting sessions (workshop activity 1 – chapter 6)

9.1. What do you expect to get out of this workshop today?

- Lessons learned ; Practical tips to incorporate sustainability into the global humanitarian operations
- Share understanding of sustainability in supply
- Closer towards agreement on what sustainability criteria should look like
- Unpack what sustainability criteria means in our context and how to design them best fit for purpose in humanitarian sector
- How other organisations go about this
- Learning how we can advance impactful sustainability/green initiatives in our procurement/SC activities
- To find out most critical barriers in sustainable supply chains.
- Harmonization of sustainability criteria
- Understanding how we can see an increase in sustainability criteria in RFPs
- A better understanding on how we can work together to deliver sustainable procurement
- Understand the scope and ensure collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts
- Learning from others and not reinvent the wheel
- The start of a tool that is practical for in country procurement colleagues
- Expectations from donors on sustainability
- Some agreement on what sustainability criteria look like across the sector ; No duplication of what is already being looked at
- More clarity about sustainability criteria in humanitarian procurement
- How this work fits within the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations
- Catch up with Green procurement initiative in our sector
- Building on what has already been done in the sector
- Understanding of what you are planning and ensuring that it isn't a duplication with others work
- discussing about concrete and quick impact actions that can be implemented

9.2. Feedback on dimension and prioritization of matrix: Policy and Strategies

- Alignment of sustainable policies to different types of procurement (tactical vs strategic) and also with volume thresholds.
- There must be end-to-end Supply Chains reviewed , but not only procurement. As Procurement is one of the areas of integrated Supply Chain Management.
- Share these information among the humanitarian actors
- Sustainable procurement needs to have a buy in strategically from the programme and the senior management.



- Make the most of what's already been done (natural ecology through economy or reflex)/use simple terms to start engage with suppliers
- Context always matters when implementing SP. It's important that policies are allow for flexibility when implementing SP
- Probably obvious - but we are getting better products that are less expensive currently from large manufacturing countries. Would be great to procure more locally, but those industries are typically just not advanced enough
- We can't make one dive fits all the different agencies are all at different stages of this journey and so are the supplier
- Global policies are not always achievable at a local level, and local teams also set their local procurement processes, this has to be considered in the process
- "criterias should be contextualised"
- If we are going to do this, then it should apply across the procurement landscape, noting that some local suppliers may need additional time and help to meet the requirements
- Still seems to be a lot of conflation between localisation and sustainability, when local approach can sometimes be worse, localisation often seen as always better
- Sustainable procurement needs to take into account avoiding harm to the local market and limit procurement within a small number of big suppliers
- Emergency procurement may need some exceptions, not only by a note to file.
- lifecycle cost ==> how to expedite procurement while using those types of data at field level?

9.3. Feedback on dimension and prioritization of matrix: Supplier assessment – social dimension

- Restrictive for local markets and small/medium suppliers
- What about recommended but with a heavier weighting for suppliers if this is met
- Challenge maybe of how to implement these social criteria in culturally influenced parts of the world - food for thought.
- Any such assessments costs money. Are donors willing to pay additional costs?
- Adaptation of essential criteria to the context - in particular on the notion of gender / themes not necessarily intuitive for our suppliers (gender / inclusion question) criteria which will not be answered if not accompanied by workshops
- "There is a lot of debates around pooling suppliers assessment amongst organizations. Interesting to have a study of what part of the process can be pooled?"
- Is it realistic to consider having a standard approach in supplier assessment in humanitarian sector ?"
- need to be adapted to the supplier categories and size (policy or concrete actions)
- Are there any providers that would conduct due diligence on relevant suppliers for all humanitarian organisations at once?
- Better coordination re sanctions would be beneficial for the communities
- We have to take into the account the humanitarian operations and time for informing suppliers, not to mention the local vendors who are not aware of many of the requirements or do not yet at the level to provide any evidence
- Many of these are already in place as part of normal due diligence under safeguarding
- If we apply some of these we may be reducing potential for local sourcing...what is the right balance?

9.4. Feedback on dimension and prioritization of matrix: Supplier assessment – environmental dimension

- More than 80% of GHG emissions happens during manufacturing process. It is necessary to regulate this aspect as demand drives the procurement.
- Use of material is very much linked with waste and therefore the Kaizen principles of production
- Needs a lot of contextual perspective on each individual situation, which can only be achieved by improving knowledge at all levels and allocating sufficient resources
- Easy to wish for lots of these to be mandatory from a desk now... The devil lies in the detail of implementing it all.
- I think it should be aligned and leveraged with government requirements for each country/region.
- "to be adapted to the size and type of suppliers"
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation are very different so should be listed separately
- Please remember that we purchase mainly at local level so we need to take into account the ability of suppliers
- Context considerations are critical
- What global standards can be used for these dimensions?
- Large amount of education / training needed on some aspects. As mentioned on the chat : this is a journey
- Challenging to see why they shouldn't all be mandatory
- A lot to do with manufacturers, our suppliers often have limited powers on these issues / we're pretty far away for the moment from these issues in our discussions with them for the moment
- Requirements will need to be flexible based on the context (global and local)

9.5. Feedback on dimension and prioritization of matrix – product specifications (all sub-dimensions jointly)

- Consider involvement/contribution of recycling or waste management companies to work together with suppliers to establish relevant guidelines
- Criteria do not mean pass/fail. Can also include %
- Evidence based approach not easy in sustainable procurement
- Experience with solar batteries: it's very difficult to get in touch with the manufacturers, who refer you to their resellers (the question of extended producer responsibility and this rule outside Europe!) / another Burkina experience: beware of ministries that refuse to buy tables made from recycled materials, so it's essential to contextualize all this.
- Ensure end to end. Even with product from recycled material, not easy to segregate at the right facility after use.
- Recyclable products are not always accepted in communities. Also on energy how would suppliers know we buy mostly from general suppliers not specialists
- Could we include item modularity when and where possible ?
- consideration of minimum quality level to prioritize local production
- Certifications can be asked
- How will suppliers know what is locally recyclable? These assessments haven't been done broadly enough
- Interesting combination of criteria, from energy efficiency to cultural appropriateness.
- it is extremely hard to identify when recycled material is used : how procurement team could ensure the reality of this ?



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