Sustainable Logistics Planning and Monitoring

Environmental Checklist

This series of questions can be used as a check-list to focus on key areas for consideration in the humanitarian sector:

- What environmental risks do your organisation's activities pose?
- Do the materials you use pose any danger to the environment, staff or beneficiaries?
- Do you know what impact the material that you supply (including its disposal) and services you provide have on the environment?
- Do you know the quantity or type of waste you produce?
- Do you know how this waste is disposed of or what the cost is?
- Is your organisation operating the most cost-effective method of controlling or eliminating pollution risk?
- Are there hidden benefits such as greater efficiency, or even straightforward business opportunities (for example, commercial utilisation of waste) from adopting alternative methods of controlling or eliminating the pollution risk?
- Are you aware of existing environmental standards and legislation in the country in which you are operating?
- What arrangement do you have for monitoring compliance with environmental legislation?
- Is senior management actively engaged in ensuring that proper attention is given to environmental considerations in your organisation?
- Could you improve your environmental image to the donors and employees?
- Are you highlighting your environmental performance to donors?

Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

Logistics and transport activities have been identified as having a major impact on the environment. Consequently, authorities have started to develop significant legislation at both national and international level. Targets for improving environmental performance have been set by the international community via a range of international agreements and meetings, from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at Rio+20 in 2015 and the climate change related meetings of the Kyoto Protocol, in particular the Paris Accord. International agreements of particular relevance to logistics personnel include the Basel-Rotterdam-Stockholm conventions on management of wastes, the Montreal Protocol on protecting the ozone layer (covering substances including air conditioning gases) and the Minamata convention on phasing out mercury.

Environmental impacts are best managed using a systematic approach that helps organisations to understand all their impacts and address them in some sort of priority order. The most common tool is an environmental management system (EMS), and the best known approach to EMS is laid out by the International Organisation of Standards (ISO) 14000 series of standards. The ISO 14000 family addresses various aspects of environmental management and have been adopted by more than 300,000 organisations worldwide. The first three standards deal with environmental management systems (EMS).

- **ISO 14001:2015** Guidance for requirements for an EMS.
- **ISO 14004:2016** General guidelines on implementation.
- **ISO 14005:2019** Guidelines for a flexible approach to phased implementation.

The other standards and guidelines in the family address specific environmental aspects, including:

- Labelling.
- Performance evaluation.
- Life cycle analysis.
- Communication and auditing.

These standards provide a framework for managing environmental issues rather than establishing performance requirements. The process that starts with a senior management commitment and the creation of an environmental policy and leads on to:

- Documenting environmental impacts, prioritising them and setting goals for improvement.
- Awareness.
- Planning how stakeholder obligations (including legal requirements) and targets will be met.
- Implementation (including operational controls).
- Training and communicating with staff.
- Control of relevant documentation.

Monitoring

Once an EMS is set up, it is then formally monitored through an auditing process, which will identify any missed targets, procedures not followed or new procedures needed, and document corrective actions required to ensure the EMS meets its objectives. Managers are required to engage in this process and review the system performance on a regular basis. Performance review may lead to the policy or objectives being changed or updated, in light of the audit reports or changes in circumstances. This process should encourage a commitment to continuous improvement in environmental management as well as ensure that the organisation is not exposed by failing to meet its legal and moral obligations.

Performance Measurement

Organisations with environmental management systems will attempt to monitor their performance, and simple measures might include:

- Volume of fuel used to keep an operations running over a defined period of time, including:
  - Operating vehicles.
  - Running generators.
  - (If possible) fuel used by third party transport providers.
- Proper maintenance and repair of equipment, including:
  - Monitoring the changing/degrading performance of generators and vehicles.
  - Monitoring consumption of dependant/support equipment (tyres, filters, etc).
  - Proper disposal of waste oils and lubricants.
- Proper transport utilisation, including:
  - Avoiding sending vessels empty or partially loaded.
  - Sharing transport resources with other agencies.
  - Understanding international transport needs, especially items transported by air.
- Setting targets for reducing waste reduction, including:
  - Minimising spoilage and expiration of stored items.
  - Reducing packaging requirements for relief items.

- Environmentally friendly disposal of expired commodities.
- Ensuring a proper disposition plan for all items.