



## Minutes

### Waste Working Group

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Watch the recording here: <https://youtu.be/ExgsQ-vQYdo>

The mission of this working group (WG), through its exchanges and sharing of experience, is to help member organisations take better account of waste and waste management in their projects. This issue requires cooperation between a wide range of players, in order to address the question from upstream (e.g. reducing packaging) to downstream (e.g. improving recycling channels). The aim of this WG is to coordinate its members and the wider humanitarian sector so that waste can be taken into account in the best possible way.

**This session was based on an analysis of the different challenges that its members face, and humanitarian actors in general might face with regards to waste management and share the resources the WG has worked on.**

### 1. The REH and the Working Group

The REH ([Réseau Environnement Humanitaire](#)) is a network of francophone humanitarian and development practitioners, working together to reduce the environmental footprint of aid. It exists since 2012 and formalised in 2021. There are over 300 members, including more than 30 organisations. The network has 4 working groups to operationalise its work:

- One on **waste management**
- One on **sustainable procurement**
- One on **environmental assessments**
- One on **carbon**

The WG exists since September 2022, and its main aim is to support member organisations in taking greater account of waste and waste management in their projects. The space offered in the WG allows for **exchanges of good practices/ways of working** between the members to inform and potentially harmonize.

The WG collaborates with other initiatives such as WREC and Joint Initiative (through mappings) and hulo. Overall, what we have found out is that there is a need for collaboration and mutualization on the field between different organisations and to work with whole sector: development NGOs, UN, private sector, governments

The current members of the WG are: Action Contre la Faim, ACTED, Handicap International/Humanity & Inclusion, Médecins sans Frontières, Electriciens sans Frontières, Oxfam, hulo and Groupe URD.

This session adopted an approach where we presented the main challenges identified by the WG, and shared the resources the WG has been using. The challenges identified are:

- Knowing the **waste framework** + respect and governmental monitoring
- **Knowing your waste** (type and quantity)
- Existence and **identifying** recyclers (and contractualising them)
- **Cost return** when small quantity
- Managing **dangerous waste** (medical, e-waste...)
- What to do when there are no local recyclers?
  - o Working with the **informal sector**
  - o Implementing **reverse logistics** to capital

- o Managing **transboundary movements**

**Last year's HNPW session** gave details on the specific issues and what it entailed for the organisation. **This year's session** focussed more on the potential solutions and resources shared within the WG.

## 2. Knowing the waste framework

Being able to know the legislation and regulations around waste management is often something that comes up as an issue, as it is a first step in waste management. Some of the resources that were shared amongst the members and that have been useful to the WG:

- [GSMA: E-Waste Legislative Framework](#)
- [Global Plastic Laws](#) as an extensive database and resource library focused on plastic legislation that has been passed around the world.

The WG had a session more focused on transboundary movements where the WFP came to explain their experiences on the legislative framework, see [WFP experiences](#) in Somalia and DRC.

## 3. Knowing your waste (type and quantity)

- PIRAC<sup>1</sup> developed [a tool to estimate the quantities of tertiary and secondary packaging waste](#) on humanitarian context. It helped them have details on the waste assessment of their major procurement as well as looking at solutions regarding a context without any local recycling factory. They have also had a look at transboundary transfer of waste. [Their full study is available.](#)
- ACF also made [a presentation of their work done in Madagascar for waste management](#). In particular they were able to detail their different waste quantities, such as fleet, office or kitchen waste.
- MSF came to present their garage waste characterization guide with the members. It is based on WREC's [Waste or Material Characterization Exercise Guidance](#).

## 4. Existence and identifying recyclers (and contractualising them)

Once you know your type of waste, you have to find out if it is possible to recycle them, and so, to know if there are recyclers available in your area. [WREC has created a mapping of recyclers](#) in different areas where humanitarians work. It is a collaborative effort, where organisations collaborate with them in order to obtain the information and maintain it up to date. There is a [new questionnaire](#) facilitated by Hulo to update the information online.

The WG decided to connect people conducting assessments to conduct them together. The WG has had feedback on a joint visit by Hulo and MSF to Burkina Faso, RCA focused on e-waste. They have also heard back from WFP's experience. The WG has also developed a shared Excel to find common opportunities amongst its members:

Organisation	Nom de personne ref GT Dechet	Email personne ref GT Dechet	Localisation (pays/région)	Villes couvertes par les évaluations	Type de déchets évalués	Niveau d'avancement de l'évaluation (planifiée / en cours/ finalisée)
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Madagascar	Tana, Tulear, Ambovombe	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, cartouche, metal, dechet dangereux	contractualisé et exploration de partenaire en province
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Myanmar	Yangon, Sittwe	Plastique, papier, metal, dechet dangereux	contractualisé + exploration de partenaire en province
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Nigeria capitale + Yobe state	Abuja, Maiduguri, Postiskum	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, metal, dechet dangereux	contractualisé et exploration de partenaire en province
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Bengladesh	Dhaka, CoxBazar	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, metal, dechet dangereux	contractualisé
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Sierra Leone	Free town	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, cartouche, metal, dechet dangereux	Evaluation en cours
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Liberia	Monrovia	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, cartouche, metal, dechet dangereux	Evaluation en cours
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Côte d'Ivoire	Abidjan	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, cartouche, metal, dechet dangereux	Evaluation en cours
ACF	Céline HEIM	<a href="mailto:cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org">cheim@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>	Mozambique	Maputo	DEEE, batterie, plastique, papier, cartouche, metal, dechet dangereux	Evaluation en cours
Hulo	Philine	<a href="mailto:philine.moucheront@hulo.coop">philine.moucheront@hulo.coop</a>	Burkina Faso	Ouaga	DEEE	Finalisé
Hulo	Philine	<a href="mailto:philine.moucheront@hulo.coop">philine.moucheront@hulo.coop</a>	RCA	Bangui	Plastique, papier, carton, déchets verts, verre	Finalisé
Hulo	Philine	<a href="mailto:philine.moucheront@hulo.coop">philine.moucheront@hulo.coop</a>	Liban	Beirut	DEEE et plastiques	Finalisé

<sup>1</sup> Plateforme d'Intervention Régionale d'Amériques-Caraïbes (PIRAC) – French Red Cross

## 5. Managing dangerous waste (medical, e-waste...)

Dangerous waste has been a big topic of discussion amongst the group members.

The WG had a presentation from GPA focused on e-waste and displacement setting : [Introduction to E-waste in Displacement Settings](#) and about [off-grid solar solutions](#).

Some resources were shared among the members on how to manage dangerous waste. Some were developed by organisations in the humanitarian sector:

- [ICRC study on garage waste](#)
- [Booklet](#) for Safe management of hazardous waste in WFP workshops
- [MSF guide](#) "public health engineering in precarious situation"
- An '[Environment in humanitarian action](#)' [training kit by the JEU](#) with a specific chapter on waste management

Some resources from outside the sector were also shared:

- [Handbook](#) for e-waste management international best practices & case studies
- [Policy practices for e-waste management](#), tools for fair and economically viable extended producer responsibility to train the teams on those kinds of waste
- E-waste Training [Manual](#)

**Regarding some specific issues about solar waste, the WG decided to create a subgroup on this topic which aim to develop quick guidelines on how to properly manage those waste.**

## 6. What to do when there are no local recyclers?

On this subject, it's obviously a bit harder, yet there are some resources that the WG wanted to share:

- [Jl's Procurement decision tree](#) to reduce the environmental impact of humanitarian packaging, very useful to make choices about
- [Presentation of Plastic Odyssey's](#) work and their factory ship, where they can take waste and recycle it on the ship

Related to transboundary movements when there are no other options, the WG had a presentation by:

- [Recyclamed's](#) services which is a firm specialized in medical and dangerous wastes which presented how they manage the transboundary transfer of waste
- WFP's experience with regards to transboundary movement and lessons learned
- A shared Excel has been created amongst the WG members to share when successful crossings have been made → to identify potential opportunities of mutualisation
- [Short e-learning module](#) on the Basel Convention, which is regulated the transboundary movement

## 7. Conclusion

Overall, there are still many issues related to waste management in humanitarian settings. In particular:

- There is a wide variety of risks and complications related to waste management
- There is a big need for **pooling of resources and waste** → working with hulo
- Organisations, which have differences in access to resource, need to share best practices and coordinate, through such WG, and with the WREC amongst others
- In order to be able to integrate waste management and its costs, it is important that orgnaistaions start budgeting for waste management at project level. This can be linked to ECHO's MERs.
- **Importantly, even in times of budget restrictions (as is the case now), waste management cannot be an option, as it can pose serious health and environmental risks that needs to be mitigated**

**Q:** Regarding the informal sector for recycling, maybe a guidance would be useful to improve the work with them, help them to grow and help NGOs to improve their waste management?

**R:** In a few countries, we must work with the informal sector, because of team resources, time constraints or funding, and we make it work. In other contexts, we were struggling to work with the informal sector. But indeed, having perhaps tools and guidance for the team would be useful, as sometimes they just

<p>don't have the capacity/time to lead on such activity. In Nigeria, we sensitized a group of waste pickers and they finally set up a small company with the registration. It was an opportunity because the context was favourable, and finally a good success. Other contexts can be more challenging...</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> Do you have ever included dedicated budgets lines in your proposal for waste management?  <b>Answer by ACF:</b> For programme activities, in some countries, we start to integrate a certain percentage in the program, or to recover this general cost or to have like a budget line like an envelope for the waste management. It's a work in progress.  <b>Answer by Hulo:</b> It is also important to advocate for shared resources on the environment, especially right now, as budget are shrinking, but it is hard to convince donors.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> For the WG: Do you intend to work on more social behavioural challenges? It seems to be a main issue about waste management.  <b>Answer by Hulo:</b> Indeed, in the projects we are doing through the Joint Environment Initiatives, we can see that some of the major barriers are related to behavioural changes. There is a need to be working on this, yet we have not explored this topic too much as of now.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> What are the reactions of donors for the budget line about waste management?  <b>Answer by ACF:</b> it was sometimes requested to restructure the budget. So, they needed to decrease the line that was proposed, but some of them accepted. In any case, it was really important to give explanation. We also requested to reserve a certain lump sum in the general budget of the country mission.</p>
<p>Concern shared their experience, where for example for specific types of waste, they try to encourage their teams and local NGOs to team up and share costs, to transfer waste that needs to be treated to authorized plants, which are often located in capital cities. That's an example specifically for Chad, but they are also working on it in other locations.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> Do the WG have some perspectives for the coming years?  <b>A:</b> Solar waste is one of our main topics for now. But it could also be interesting to link with the development stakeholders, like the World Bank which is working on the field.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> What to choose between carbon footprint reduction and waste management? What do donors think on this issue?  <b>R:</b> That's a hard question! One thing to underline is that waste can cause some serious risks especially for dangerous waste, and so it is a little bit hard to choose between carbon footprint reduction and waste management, because in some cases really don't have a choice.  <a href="#">ECHO has some specific requirements on waste management</a> but less so for carbon footprint.  Also, waste is a good way to start for awareness raising purposes, as it's something concrete, it's something that people can see, whereas it's a little bit harder to raise awareness on carbon footprint.</p>

**Thank you all for joining, and if you have any questions, you can reach out to [dechets@environnementhumanitaire.org](mailto:dechets@environnementhumanitaire.org)**