



Joint Position Paper

Staff from ADRA Mali discussing NEAT+ results
© ADRA Germany / Dorothea Kulla

SAVE OUR NEAT+

Safeguarding Environmental Standards in Humanitarian Action

July 2026

Abstract

Humanitarian action is increasingly shaped by climate and environmental risks, yet the tools needed to assess and manage these risks are being weakened. Established instruments such as the **Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+)**—a widely used environmental screening tool—are at risk due to funding cuts and shifting priorities. This undermines project quality, increases long-term costs, and raises risks for avoidable environmental harm. As a field-tested, user-friendly and standardised tool, NEAT+ plays a critical role in mainstreaming environmental considerations in humanitarian action. Without sustained support, the sector risks fragmentation, loss of expertise, and declining environmental standards. This paper calls on donors, leading humanitarian organisations, and policy makers to secure NEAT+ as a core humanitarian instrument by assigning dedicated, multi-year funding and advancing coordination mechanisms for its unified development.



Why NEAT+ Matters

- ▶ **From environmental commitments to practical action**
- ▶ NEAT+ is a **free, open-source and rapid environmental screening tool** developed jointly by humanitarian and environmental actors.
- ▶ It enables humanitarian teams to:
 - ▶ Identify environmental risks early in project design
 - ▶ Conduct screening without requiring dedicated environmental specialists
 - ▶ Generate standardised results and mitigation options
 - ▶ Integrate environmental considerations into WASH, Shelter, Food Security and other programming
 - ▶ Determine where more detailed environmental assessment is needed
- ▶ **NEAT+ turns environmental commitments into operational decisions.**

- ✓ NEAT+ is integrated with KoboToolbox to facilitate data collection and analysis.
- ✓ Humanitarian workers can complete the assessment on-site in Excel
- ✓ The app allows real-time data entry in the field
- ✓ NEAT+ uses a scoring system for different environmental factors with each question associated with specific environmental indicators
- ✓ Based on calculated risk levels, the system flags high risk areas, translating numerical scores into qualitative risks (low, medium, high).

NEAT +

Environmental Sensitivity Module Questionnaire

Please select the most appropriate answer from the light blue cell. Clarification is provided in pop up windows when clicking on the respective cell. When answering questions, consider the current state; however, if this will change in the immediate future (e.g. due to intervention), select the future option.

Profile of area	
What is the population of the area being assessed?	>25,000
What best describes the type of settlement(s) in the area being assessed?	Displaced population dispersed within host community
Are there displaced people in the area being assessed?	Yes
What is the distance to the nearest international border?	

Conditions of the camp or camp-type settlement	
Please skip this question and leave the response blank (non-camp setting, not relevant)	
Please skip this question and leave the response blank (non-camp setting, not relevant)	
Please skip this question and leave the response blank (non-camp setting, not relevant)	

Profile of displaced population	
What proportion of the population in the area being assessed are displaced people?	
What is the distance of the displaced people from their origin?	
Do the displaced people and host community share similar cultures?	
How likely is it that the displaced people will remain in this location?	

Crisis event	
What best describes the crisis event?	
How much time has passed since the crisis began?	

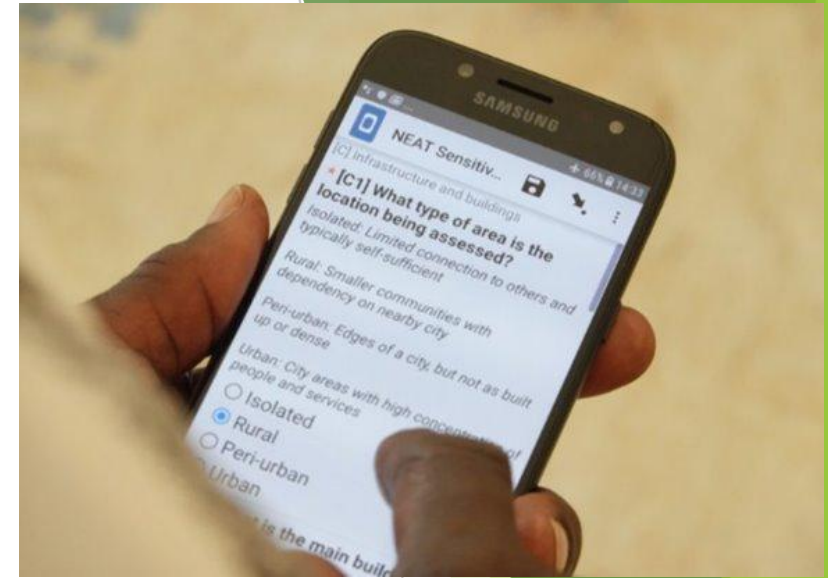
Infrastructure and buildings	
What type of area is the location being assessed?	
What is the main building construction materials used for the majority of host communities?	
What is the main building construction materials used for the majority of displaced communities?	
What is the building density in the area being assessed?	
What type of access is there to the area being assessed?	
Are there any access restrictions?	
Are there industrial (production, processing, storage) facilities nearby or upstream?	

[<](#)
[>](#)
[...](#)
[Sensitivity Questionnaire](#)
[Sensitivity Additional Info](#)
[Sensitivity Summary](#)
[Shelter Module Introduction](#)
[Shelter Questionnaire](#)

Hint
This is the linear distance to an international border with another country. In coastal areas, the sea or ocean can be considered as the international border.

The Systemic Value

- ▶ **NEAT+ is more than an individual project tool**
- ▶ Without shared environmental screening approaches:
- ▶ **Fragmentation increases**
→ organisations use different tools, checklists - or no screening at all
- ▶ **Comparability decreases**
→ donors cannot consistently compare environmental risks between proposals
- ▶ **Expertise is lost**
→ declining technical positions mean loss of institutional knowledge
- ▶ **Accountability weakens**
→ projects conducting thorough assessments may appear “riskier” than projects that simply fail to identify risks.
- ▶ A shared tool such as NEAT+ therefore supports **standardisation, transparency, learning and better donor decision-making.**



Donor engagement and feedback

- ▶ **DG ECHO**
- ▶ *Save Our NEAT+* shared as a follow-up to our previous dialogue on **Do No Environmental Harm**
- ▶ Continued interest in environmental mainstreaming and practical environmental screening
- ▶ Engagement is continuing with the **new DG ECHO focal points** following staff transitions
- ▶ **German Federal Foreign Office / other donors**
- ▶ Position paper used to open conversations on the **long-term sustainability of environmental screening**
- ▶ Key question increasingly moving from “*Should environmental screening be supported?*” to “*How can the infrastructure behind it be sustainably financed?*”
- ▶ **Emerging messages from our engagement**
- ▶ Strong value in maintaining a **common, practical screening approach**
- ▶ Funding needs extend beyond tool development to **hosting, maintenance, governance, training and technical support**
- ▶ Environmental requirements need to be matched by **resources that enable organisations to implement them**
- ▶ Opportunity for greater **donor coordination rather than isolated short-term funding**

Our Call for Action

- ▶ **SAVE OUR NEAT+**
- ▶ We call on humanitarian donors to provide:
- ▶ **Dedicated, multi-year funding** to safeguard, maintain and further develop NEAT+.
- ▶ We call on policy makers to:
- ▶ **Recognise environmental screening as a minimum standard** for responsible humanitarian action and systematically integrate it into funding mechanisms.
- ▶ We call on the humanitarian community to:
- ▶ **Strengthen joint ownership and harmonisation** and prevent fragmentation and further loss of capacity.
- ▶ **Do No Harm must include Do No Environmental Harm.**
- ▶ Environmental screening is an investment in **better projects, lower risks and more sustainable humanitarian action.**

