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ECT WASH — Lessons Learned

Institutionalizing the Climate and Environment Charter at ASB S-SEA

Country
INDONESIA

Organisation
ASB SOUTH &
SOUTH EAST ASIA

Duration
28 APRIL 2024 - PRESENT



BACKGROUND

This document reflects upon institutionalising the Climate and Environment Charter within ASB S-SEA, a humanitarian organisation based in Indonesia. This initiative emerged from an identified need to bridge a knowledge gap regarding global climate and environmental policies among the staff and partners of ASB S-SEA. While climate action is integral to ASB S-SEA's mission, it became evident that a deeper understanding and practical application of these policies were required, particularly in light of the rising threat posed by climate-related disasters—especially concerning access to clean water and sanitation, which are critical areas of ASB's operations. The urgency to enhance community resilience amidst these escalating challenges further emphasised the significance of this initiative.

In April 2024, ASB S-SEA formally endorsed the Climate and Environment Charter, representing a crucial step in its commitment to environmental sustainability. This commitment was operationalised through a series of targeted activities aimed at raising awareness and embedding the principles of the Charter within the organisation. These activities commenced with promotional efforts during National Disaster Preparedness Day 2024, followed by further outreach at the Seger Waras program launch in May 2024. Internalisation of the Charter was facilitated by integrating its core tenets into the National Team Meeting (NTM) agenda in August 2024, where preliminary drafts of targets and action plans were developed.

To formalise these plans, a dedicated drafting team, representing various departments within ASB S-SEA, was convened to engage in substantive discussions to finalise the Charter's specific targets and actionable steps. A public campaign, employing both internal and external communication channels—including poster displays during Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Month—further contributed

to amplifying the Charter's message. External expertise was sought through consultations with the Climate Charter Secretariat to ensure alignment with global best practices. To enhance accessibility, the Charter was translated into Bahasa Indonesia, thereby facilitating better comprehension among local partners and communities. Furthermore, ASB S-SEA engaged with government representatives at both the regency and village levels to introduce the Charter and foster collaborative partnerships. The organisation also actively advocated for integrating the Charter's principles into the operational plans of the Village DRR Institution, aiming to influence local policies and programs.

The implementation process transpired in two distinct phases: promotion and institutionalisation. The promotion phase concentrated on elevating awareness and generating enthusiasm for the Charter among both ASB S-SEA personnel and external stakeholders. Conversely, the institutionalisation phase focused on embedding the targets and actions outlined in the Charter into the organisation's policies, programs, and operational practices, thereby ensuring long-term commitment and sustainability.

"Humanitarian organisations must adapt to the increasing risks and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis through concrete actions, one of which is implementing a humanitarian response that comprehensively considers and mitigates the effects of climate change. The endorsement of the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations strengthens our commitment to safeguarding the lives and rights of current and future generations while managing resources ethically and responsibly to minimise environmental impact", stated Nasrus Syukroni, Project Manager of the Seger Waras programme (ECT WASH in Indonesia).

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KEY LESSONS LEARNED

The endeavour to institutionalise the Climate and Environment Charter presented challenges and successes. A primary challenge was the translation and contextualisation of the Charter's terminology into Bahasa Indonesia to ensure resonance with a diverse audience, particularly at the village level. Securing buy-in and commitment from other organisations, especially local partners, to endorse and actively adopt the Charter also proved challenging. Internally, it was imperative to obtain strong policy and regulatory support within ASB S-SEA to facilitate the practical implementation of the Charter, necessitating careful navigation of existing organisational structures and processes.

Despite these challenges, several significant successes were achieved. Six action targets derived directly from the Charter were drafted, establishing a robust foundation for ASB S-SEA's climate action initiatives. Promotional activities generated heightened interest in the Climate Charter among other organisations, indicating potential for broader adoption. Most notably, the initiative catalysed the adoption of environmentally conscious practices within ASB's daily operations and field activities. These practices included practical measures such as utilising condensate from air conditioning units for irrigation, actively engaging in tree planting initiatives, promoting the use of filtered water for consumption, and implementing various other eco-friendly measures.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these experiences, ASB S-SEA recommends several key actions for other humanitarian agencies embarking on similar journeys. Setting realistic and achievable targets is paramount, ensuring they align with available resources and organizational capacity. Creative and engaging promotional strategies are essential to reach a broad audience and cultivate a deeper understanding of climate issues. Full integration of the charter's principles into all program stages, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation, is crucial. Meaningful community involvement, particularly the inclusion of vulnerable groups, in decision-making processes related to climate and environmental issues is vital for equitable and sustainable outcomes. Investing in capacity development for both staff and partners, providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge related to climate and environmental management, is essential. Finally, forging strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders – including governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society organizations – can amplify impact and create a more collaborative approach to climate action. By sharing these lessons learned, ASB S-SEA hopes to inspire and empower other humanitarian actors to embrace environmental stewardship and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable future for all.