

Environmental Officer Profile

Various Locations

Grade: Mid (P3) and Senior (P4) Level Positions

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect and assist refugees and other persons of concern. It is constantly seeking talented, compassionate candidates with high-integrity to strengthen its capacity to respond urgently to crises with the right skills. Given the nature of UNHCR's work, it is essential that its workforce has the right mix of skills and qualities to fulfil its mandate.

UNHCR is committed to ensuring sustainable environmental management in its operations to improve the protection and wellbeing of our Persons of Concern (PoCs). In this regard, the Environment Unit at UNHCR in Geneva oversees a broad range of related projects and coordinates the overall environmental policy and enhancement of environmental management in the field through technical guidance, situation analysis and environmental impact assessments. UNHCR's engagement in energy and environment is receiving increasing attention globally. As displaced persons rely on the natural resources surrounding them, there is a need to address environmental issues starting from the emergency phase, which is the most critical period for UNHCR operations. Decisions made at this time will have a major bearing on both the type and scale of refugee-related environmental impacts in subsequent operational phases.

UNHCR is looking for talented individuals for the Environmental Officer profile to enhance its ability to implement environmental interventions as soon as possible during the emergency phase of a response. The Environmental Officer assists the UNHCR emergency team and the host government in mainstreaming environmental factors into the refugee-hosting arrangements to be made during the emergency phase. The incumbent ensures that environmental issues are considered in the response plan, assesses the environmental conditions and analyze how and to what extent those situations negatively affect the environment and formulate specific projects for reducing or arresting these impacts in consultation with the relevant government agencies, NGOs, UN agencies and sectoral specialists such as shelter, sanitation, water, livelihoods and others. S/he advocates for establishing environmentally-sound refugee assistance arrangements and make recommendations which need to be followed up in the care-and-maintenance phase. Incumbents may be based in the field or in the Country Offices depending on the nature of emergency and security.

Typical functions may include:

- Participate in site selection and collect and analyses baseline environmental data that can inform site planning and development
- Collect and analyze existing data and information concerning the status of the environment in the refugee hosting areas;
- Identify environmental assets and threats related to the emergency phase and establish managements plans and SOPs to minimize environmental impacts
- Assess environmental conditions in the selected camps, and assess how and to what extent those situations are affected by the presence of refugees. Define key areas of environmental concern (e.g. deforestation, rangeland degradation, soil erosion, water conservation, biodiversity, wastes, etc.);
- Interview representative of refugees and local populations from all segments of these populations, to examine their relationship with the surrounding environment;
- Liaise with technical sectors (shelter, sanitation, water, livelihoods, energy, etc.) with a view to minimizing environmental impacts associated with projects and activities in the emergency phase. Where necessary propose environmental projects to rehabilitate initial environmental damage and generate a sense of responsibility among refugee populations;
- Contact relevant government agencies, both central and local, NGOs, UN agencies, research institutions and local academic institutions to obtain refuge-related information and these institutions' recommendations for preventive and mitigation measures. If possible, establish and maintain a network of strategic partnerships to ensure complementary and efficiency gains in assessment, design and implementation of environmental programmes;
- Propose measures for reducing or arresting the impact of refugees on the environment;
- Devise a strategy for monitoring of the environmental impact of refugees and refugee operations;
- Identify skill and knowledge gaps related to environmental issues among UNHCR and partners, including refugees and locals and address these through training and capacity building.
- Prepare a report and make recommendations which need to be followed up in the care-and-maintenance phase.

Minimum Qualifications and Professional Experience Required:

For positions at the P3 level

- Education: Degree in Forestry, Agroforestry, Rural Energy, Climate Change and Geography, Environmental Science, or Natural Resource Management.
- Job experience: Minimum 5 years of relevant (international) job experience with graduate degree (equivalent of a Master's), 6 years with undergraduate degree (equivalent of a BA/BS); at least 2 years of international working experience in development and/or humanitarian settings; at least 3 years of experience dealing with environmental issues.
- Languages: Proficiency in English is required.

For positions at the P4 level

- Education: Degree in Forestry, Agroforestry, Rural Energy, Climate Change and Geography, Environmental Science, or Natural Resource Management.
- Job experience: Minimum 8 years of relevant (international) job experience with graduate degree (equivalent of a Master's), 9 years with undergraduate degree (equivalent of a BA/BS); at least 4 years of international working experience development and/or humanitarian settings; at least 5 years of experience dealing with environmental issues.
- Languages: Proficiency in English and knowledge of a second UN language (Arabic/ Chinese/French/Russian/Spanish) at B2¹ is required.

To apply, please visit: [International vacancies](#).

The UNHCR workforce consists of many diverse nationalities, cultures, languages and opinions. UNHCR seeks to sustain and strengthen this diversity to ensure equal opportunities as well as an inclusive working environment for its entire workforce. Applications are encouraged from all qualified candidates without distinction on grounds of race, colour, sex, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

¹ See <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).