

EVALUATION OF

THE OCB GREEN INITIATIVES

July 2026

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All evaluators contracted by the SEU adhere to the SEU Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Green Initiatives is a funding envelope, established in 2023 by MSF Operational Centre Brussels (OCB), to support operational teams in reducing the environmental footprint of operations while maintaining and improving quality of care. Beyond funding individual projects, the envelope was intended to create space for environmental considerations to become part of routine operational planning and decision-making. This evaluation was commissioned to inform decisions about the future role and design of Green Initiatives by examining how it functions as an organisational mechanism for influencing operational practice.

EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation combined evidence from four purposively selected case studies (Yemen, DRC, Sierra Leone and South Africa), each chosen because they illustrated different ways Green Initiatives functions. Case studies were complemented by interviews across operational and organisational levels, documentary review, portfolio analysis, comparative reflections with two other MSF Operational Centres, and workshops with the Evaluation Advisory Group. Together, these sources provided an understanding of how Green Initiatives influenced operational practice, organisational learning and decision-making across OCB.

WHAT THE EVALUATION SHOWS

The evaluation found that environmental initiatives were most likely to gain support when they addressed priorities that operational teams already recognised as important. Environmental benefit alone was rarely sufficient to justify investment. Instead, initiatives gained credibility when they also strengthened operational continuity, improved professional practice, reduced operational risks, supported quality of care, or delivered financial or logistical benefits. This was most visible through solar energy, where initiatives reduced dependence on unreliable electricity supplies and fuel while improving service continuity. However, the same pattern was also evident in initiatives such as Maxi-WATA and Wear with Care, where environmental benefits were closely linked to infection prevention, supply security and professional practice.

The evaluation found that the mechanism favours technical, infrastructure-based initiatives rather than with behavioural or practice-based change. Technical projects typically had clear ownership, established implementation pathways, and offered benefits that can be readily demonstrated, making them easier to develop, justify and implement. These characteristics aligned particularly well with solar projects, helping explain their dominance within the portfolio. By contrast, behavioural and practice-based initiatives often required different forms of leadership, ongoing reinforcement and less tangible measures of success.

The dedicated funding envelope created protected space for investments that country programmes recognised as valuable but struggled to finance through normal operational budgets. The evaluation points to a question about the future role of the envelope - as some initiatives, such as solar, become increasingly established and operationally accepted, OCB will need to consider which investments continue to require dedicated funding and which should gradually become part of routine operational budgets.

Across OCB, participation in Green Initiatives varied considerably, but the evaluation found little evidence that this reflected differences in environmental commitment. Instead, engagement depended largely on organisational conditions. Teams were more likely to engage with Green Initiatives when they had access to technical expertise, practical examples, support networks, clear implementation pathways and confidence that operations would continue long enough for investments to deliver benefits. Conversely, operational uncertainty and limited organisational support often constrained participation.

The evaluation concludes that Green Initiatives has been an effective organisational mechanism for creating space for environmental action within OCB. Its greatest contribution has been enabling environmental considerations to influence routine operational practice and decision-making, rather than simply funding individual environmental projects. The strongest evidence of practice change occurred where environmental initiatives have become recognised operational solutions and where teams had repeated successful implementation, developing confidence through experience. However, these changes remain uneven and are best understood as pockets of changed practice rather than widespread organisational change.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF GREEN INITIATIVES

The evaluation suggests that Green Initiatives has reached an important stage in its development. Looking ahead, the evaluation suggests that future progress depends on strengthening the organisational conditions that allow a broader range of environmental initiatives to emerge, gain legitimacy and become part of routine operational practice.

- **Maintain the strong connection between environmental action and operational priorities.** Green Initiatives gained legitimacy because initiatives helped solve recognised operational problems, strengthened professional practice and improved quality of care. Continuing to position environmental action as a way of improving humanitarian operations appears central to its future success.
- **Make climate adaptation more visible.** Although relatively few initiatives were explicitly framed as adaptation, many already strengthen operational resilience. Making these links more visible could broaden understanding of how adaptation contributes to humanitarian practice.
- **Strengthen organisational support.** Future progress is likely to depend on helping teams identify opportunities, access technical expertise, learn from practical examples and develop proposals. Expanding these forms of support will be particularly important if Green Initiatives is to encourage a wider range of initiatives and operational contexts.
- **Recognise that the role of the funding envelope is evolving.** As established initiatives become part of routine operations, the greatest contribution of a dedicated funding envelope increasingly lies in supporting areas of environmental action where the benefits are harder to measure, implementation pathways are less established, and organisational support remains less developed. This will include encouraging less mature areas of environmental action, supporting innovation and helping new opportunities emerge. This raises a broader organisational question about how regular budgeting and operational planning should evolve if proven environmental investments are expected to become routine practice.

BACKGROUND TO THE GREEN INITIATIVES FUNDING ENVELOPE

This report presents the findings and conclusions of an evaluation of the MSF Operational Centre Brussels (OCB) Green Initiatives funding envelope. The evaluation was commissioned by OCB, managed by the Stockholm Evaluation Unit (SEU), and carried out between December 2025 and June 2026. It examines whether Green Initiatives has effectively embedded environmental responsibility and climate adaptation within OCB operations and informs strategic decisions about its future role and design.

INTRODUCTION

OCB recognises both the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation for the populations it serves and the environmental footprint of its own operations. OCB introduced the Green Initiatives in 2023 as part of its environmental ambitions and in response to a movement-wide commitment to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact while maintaining and improving quality of care for patients.

Green Initiatives is a dedicated funding envelope that supports operational teams to identify, propose and implement initiatives aimed at reducing environmental footprint and strengthening environmental responsibility. Through annual calls for proposals, country programmes are able to seek funding for initiatives tailored to their contexts.

Green Initiatives was never intended to function solely as a project funding instrument. From its inception, the ambition was for the mechanism to act as a catalyst for organisational learning and change. Alongside supporting individual initiatives, it was designed to create space for operational teams to engage with environmental options within otherwise constrained decision-making environments and competing resources, and embed environmental considerations into routine planning, budgeting, and operational decision-making.¹

EVOLUTION OF GREEN INITIATIVES

Since Green Initiatives started, the mechanism has evolved in response to changing operational priorities and a developing understanding of how environmental considerations can be integrated into humanitarian operations. The early funding rounds were dominated by mitigation initiatives, particularly energy-related projects such as solarisation. This reflected readily identifiable opportunities for significant CO₂ footprint reduction at project level as well as an initial interpretation of what constituted a feasible and legitimate Green Initiative.² Over time, the Green Initiatives Working Group expanded the scope of the mechanism to encourage a wider range of environmental themes, with recent funding rounds placing greater emphasis on initiatives that combine environmental footprint reduction with strengthening operational resilience to climate and environmental risks. Across the first three rounds, 66 initiatives were approved from a total of 131 proposals, representing an investment of approximately €9.3 million.³

¹ The roadmap for the OCB Green Initiatives evaluation. Feb 2026.

² Ibid

³ Stockholm Evaluation Unit (SEU). GREEN Terms of Reference October 2025

THE EVALUATION

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this evaluation is to inform strategic decisions about the future role and design of Green Initiatives within OCB. Consistent with this purpose, the evaluation focuses on understanding how Green Initiatives functions as an organisational mechanism for shaping organisational practices and decision-making rather than assessing the performance of individual initiatives.

The evaluation therefore seeks to understand how Green Initiatives has helped create the conditions for environmental responsibility to become more legitimate, more operationally relevant, and more routinely considered within planning, budgeting, and operational decision-making. Particular attention is given to the co-benefits associated with Green Initiatives, such as operational continuity, resilience, and quality of care, recognising that Green Initiatives may generate value through multiple pathways.

Similarly, while the sustainability of individual initiatives remains important, the central concern is whether the capabilities, governance arrangements, relationships, and decision-making practices associated with Green Initiatives are likely to endure beyond individual projects. This includes understanding the extent to which environmental considerations remain dependent on a dedicated funding envelope, individual champions, or favourable circumstances, and the implications this may have for the future role and design of Green Initiatives within OCB. To guide the inquiry, the evaluation was organised around four questions:⁴

1. **Strategic contribution and changes in practice:** How has Green Initiatives shifted norms, and decision-making such that environmental responsibility (and climate adaptation) become normal, valued, and self-sustaining within OCB operations?
2. **Legitimacy and co-benefits:** What are the co-benefits of the Green Initiatives beyond environmental footprint reduction, and how do these shape the perceived legitimacy and value of Green Initiatives ideas within OCB?
3. **Design, governance and organisational capability:** How does the design and governance of the Green Initiatives funding envelope shape participation, prioritisation, learning, and capability across the organisation?
4. **Sustainability and the future of the funding envelope:** How sustainable are the organisational, relational, and capability changes influenced by Green Initiatives, and what role should a dedicated funding envelope play in OCB's future environmental and adaptation strategy?

Rather than treating the questions as separate lines of enquiry, the evaluation explores how they interact within the broader organisational system in which Green Initiatives operates.

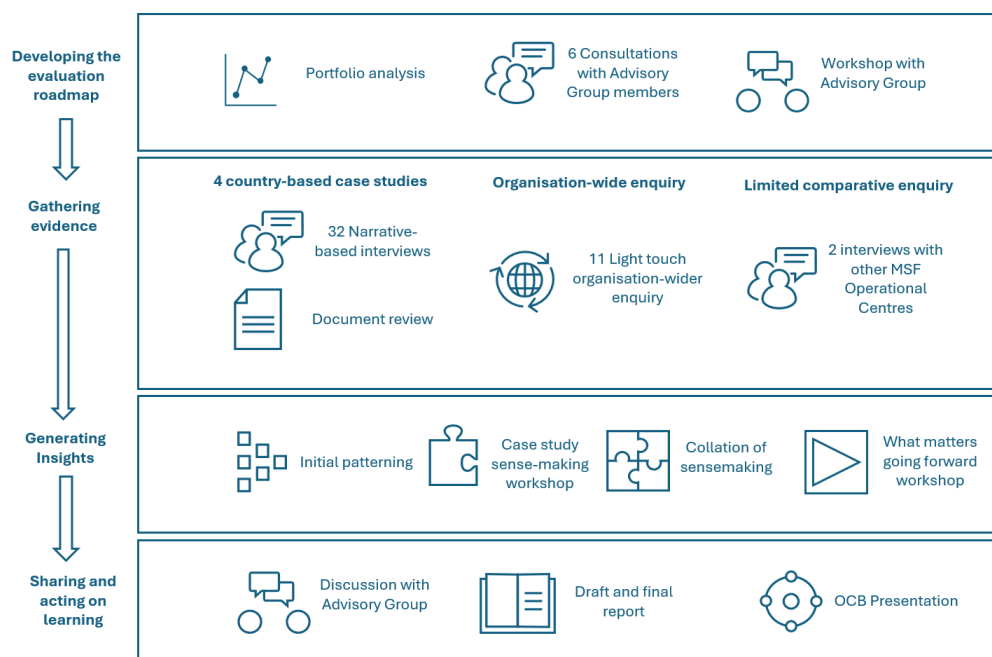
⁴ See Annex A for full Evaluation question framework, including rationale and definitions of terms in the questions.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION APPROACH

Recognising that Green Initiatives aims to function not only as a funding envelope but also as an organisational mechanism, the evaluation adopted a systems-informed approach focused on understanding how Green Initiatives influences organisational practices, decision-making, and learning.⁵

Figure 1: Graphic representing the evaluation process and methods



GATHERING EVIDENCE

The evaluation combined five sources of evidence: (1) four country case studies (Yemen, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and DRC); (2) interviews with Working Group members, operational support functions, and low-engagement contexts; (3) documentary review of proposals, Working Group assessments, capitalisation reports, and related materials; (4) portfolio analysis covering Green Initiatives submissions and approvals across funding rounds; and (5) two comparative interviews with other MSF Operational Centres with similar environmental funding mechanisms.⁶ The four case studies were purposively selected to reflect different experiences of Green Initiatives across OCB. This allowed the evaluation to explore how and why the mechanism functioned differently under different conditions. Each case study combined semi-structured interviews with documentary review. In total, 43 interviews were conducted across multiple OCB organisational levels, including project, country, Cell, regional, and headquarters staff. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the evaluation

⁵ See Annex B for fuller description of evaluation approach and methodology

⁶ The comparative MSF Operational Centres were Operational Centre Paris (OCP) and Operational Centre Amsterdam (OCA).

process and methods, Figures 2 and 3, below, show the number and organisational demographics of the evaluation interviewees.

Figure 2: Total number of interviews per case study and with operational support staff at HQ or regional levels

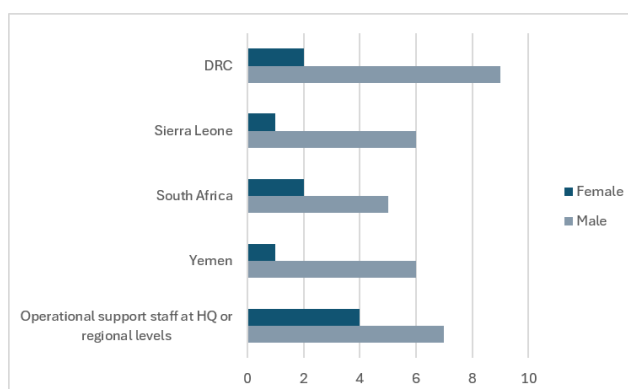
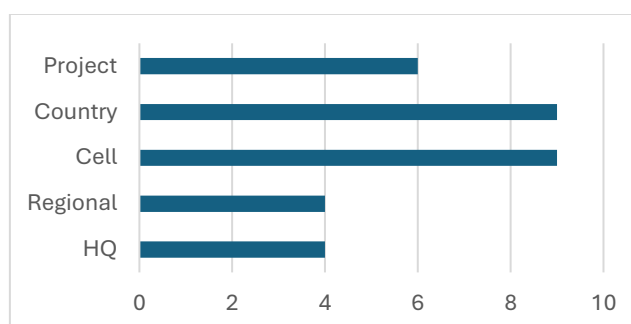


Figure 3: Distribution of all case study interviews per position



GENERATING INSIGHTS

Analysis proceeded in stages. First, evidence was analysed within each case study to develop an interpretive account of how Green Initiatives had evolved and been experienced within that context.⁷ Second, findings were compared across cases to identify recurring patterns and important differences. These emerging interpretations were explored alongside the interviews with HQ and regional support staff before then being explored through two facilitated workshops with members of the Evaluation Advisory Group. The first workshop focused on interrogating and refining emerging case-level interpretations, while the second explored the organisational conditions shaping engagement with Green Initiatives and their implications for its future development.

⁷ See Annex C for case study summaries

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The findings should be understood as recurring patterns, tensions, and organisational conditions rather than measuring how widespread views or experiences are across OCB. In addition, the evaluation focused on understanding how Green Initiatives may have contributed to changes; it was not designed to attribute changes.

The evaluation team made limited and deliberate use of a Large Language Model (LLM). Responsibility for the evaluation analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and final report remained with the evaluation team. See Annex B for further description of AI use.

The remainder of the report is structured in five parts. Section 4 provides a descriptive overview of the Green Initiatives portfolio. Section 5 presents the evaluation findings, Section 6 considers what these findings suggest about the organisational conditions shaping Green Initiatives, Section 7 reflects on the future of the envelope, and Section 8 concludes by answering the four evaluation questions.

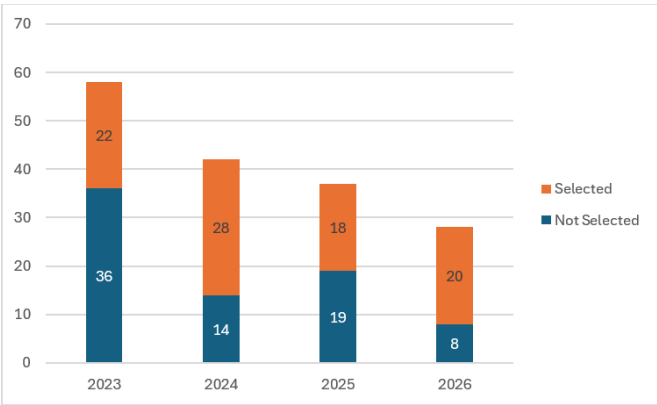
PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

A portfolio analysis was undertaken covering all Green Initiatives proposals submitted between 2023 and 2026. Below, we present a selection of the analysis, serving as descriptive, contextual information for the findings that follow.

PORTFOLIO TRAJECTORY

Figure 4 below provides an overview of the scale and trajectory of the Green Initiatives portfolio. Between 2023 and 2026, Green Initiatives received 165 proposals, of which 88 were selected for funding. The number of proposals the Working Group received has fallen each year, dropping from 58 proposals in 2023 to 28 in 2026. At the same time, the proportion of proposals that were selected has increased. In 2023, fewer than half of all proposals were approved (22 out of 58), while in 2026 around seven out of every ten proposals were selected (20 out of 28). This suggests that although fewer proposals are being submitted, a larger share of them are meeting the selection criteria and receiving funding.

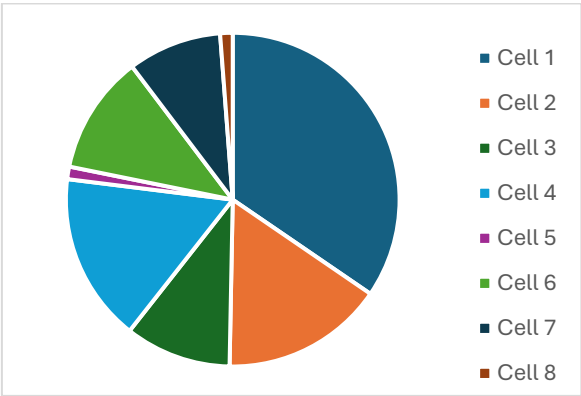
Figure 4: Submitted and selected proposals by year



CELL PARTICIPATION

Engagement with Green Initiatives has been spread across OCB, but some cells have been much more active than others in developing and submitting proposals. Cell 1 accounted for the largest number of submissions, followed by Cells 2 and 4. Other Cells submitted substantially fewer proposals, with Cell 5 submitting only two proposals during 2023–2026. EPool didn’t submit any proposals.

Figure 5: Proposals submitted by Cell, 2023–2026

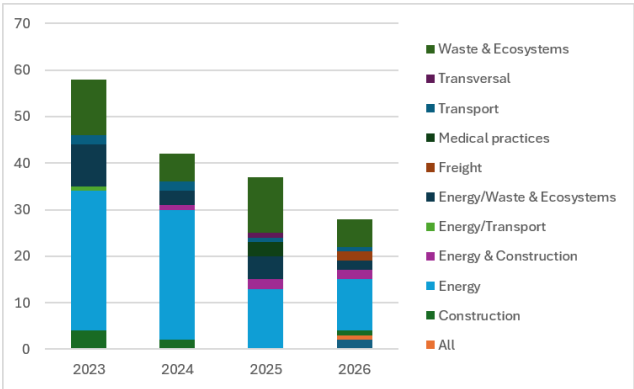


DIVERSIFICATION OF PROPOSAL DOMAINS OVER TIME

Energy has been the dominant focus of Green Initiatives proposals throughout the period, accounting for 82 of the 165 proposals submitted between 2023 and 2026. In the early years, the high number of energy-related proposals, particularly solarisation, reflects the Green Initiatives Working Group’s emphasis on the reduction of CO₂ emissions.

Over time, proposals emerged across a wider range of domains, including waste and ecosystems, construction, transport, freight and medical practices. This diversification became more visible from 2025 onwards, with more proposals combining different domains and addressing a broader range of environmental challenges. This broadening occurred alongside changes in the Working Group’s guidance, which increasingly encouraged proposals addressing climate adaptation and operational resilience. While energy remained the largest area of activity, the portfolio increasingly reflected a broader range of environmental concerns and operational entry points.

Figure 6: Green Initiatives proposals by domain, 2023–2026



FUNDING ALLOCATION BY DOMAIN

Energy projects accounted for the largest share of both proposals and funded initiatives, receiving approximately €5.9 million of the €10.7 million allocated through Green Initiatives between 2023 and 2026. Additional investment was directed towards initiatives that combined energy with construction or waste and ecosystem management objectives, reflecting the prominence of energy-related interventions within the portfolio.

Figure 5: Submitted, selected and budget allocated by domain, 2023–2026

Reduction Domain	Submitted	Selected	Allocated Funding (€)
Energy	82	51	5,879,566.19
Energy & Construction	5	4	1,343,024.00
Energy/Waste & Ecosystems	19	7	1,272,389.00
Waste & Ecosystems	36	12	1,066,772.36
Other	3	2	369,000.00
Construction	7	3	267,900.00
Medical practices	3	3	192,000.00
Freight	2	2	146,000.00
Transversal	1	1	98,500.00
Transport	6	3	51,065.00
Energy/Transport	1	-	-
Grand Total	165	88	10,686,216.55

At the same time, funding was allocated across a broader range of environmental domains. Investments were made in waste and ecosystem management, construction, medical practices, freight, transport, and transversal initiatives, although at a much smaller scale than energy-related projects. The portfolio therefore reflects both a strong concentration of investment in energy and a gradual broadening of the types of environmental initiatives supported through the mechanism.

FINDINGS

FINDING 1

GREEN INITIATIVES GAIN TRACTION AT OCB WHEN INITIATIVES HELP SOLVE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS, STRENGTHEN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, OR OFFER RECOGNISED VALUE.

Green Initiatives gained most traction when the initiative was connected to priorities that operational teams already recognised as important. Green Initiatives proposals that were selected were not justified through environmental footprint reduction alone. Initiatives became credible when they also addressed operational issues, such as operational continuity, autonomy, cost, quality of care, or infection prevention.

In Yemen and DRC, this was most visible through solar energy. Solar systems were not primarily valued as environmental innovations. They were valued because they helped stabilise electricity supply in settings where fuel shortages, damaged infrastructure, insecurity, or generator dependence created operational risk. In Yemen, solar was a response to unreliable power, overheating generators, fuel constraints, and the need to keep services functioning. In DRC, solar power reduced dependence on transporting fuel through insecure areas, lowered generator dependence, and minimised disruptions to care in health facilities that had previously relied on generators around the clock.

In South Africa, the only selected Green Initiative was the Butterworth solar project. This emerged in response to severe load-shedding and consequent risks to diagnostics, medication storage, and disruptions to care. Although environmental issues mattered to country staff, the initiative gained traction because electricity failure was affecting day-to-day operations.

The Sierra Leone case study demonstrates that legitimacy can be derived from a broad range of practical co-benefits. Maxi-WATA, a local chlorine production initiative, gained credibility because it reduced dependence on imported chlorine, lowered supply chain vulnerability, reduced risks linked to transporting and storing hazardous materials, and supported continuity for the Ministry of Health after MSF handover. Wear with Care, an initiative to rationalise glove use, became legitimate when it was framed as correct infection prevention and control practice rather than simply as a waste reduction initiative. In both cases, environmental concern became acceptable through professional and operational value.

This finding is also supported by interviews with operational support staff at HQ and regional levels (support staff). Several interviewees described Green Initiatives as “operations-led”, suggesting that country teams tend to see the mechanism as a way to solve practical problems rather than as a separate environmental agenda. OCB’s operational identity shapes legitimacy - environmental initiatives are more likely to be taken seriously when they complement humanitarian priorities, and help operations work better, more safely, or more reliably.

Conditions shaping the finding

Several conditions shape this finding. First, guidance documents, proposal templates, webinars, and selection processes consistently encouraged teams to present environmental initiatives in terms of operational relevance, efficiency, quality of care, return on investment, and measurable impact. Environmental ambition is not absent in the guidance, but the guidance emphasises the need to translate ambition into more familiar terms that OCB can support.

A second condition is how proposals were assessed. The Working Group were clear that a negative operational impact was a red line. This seems to have made it easier for the Working Group to prioritise proposals that improved operations than proposals with neutral operational effects. Initiatives were easier to support when they demonstrated operational gains as well as environmental benefits.

A third condition is the ability to easily show results. Initiatives with visible, measurable, and reportable benefits were easier to justify. Solar, for example, could be linked to fuel and cost savings, reduced generator use, return on investment, and carbon reduction. By contrast, initiatives that focused on waste reduction, procurement practices, medical behaviour, or “do no harm” principles often were harder to demonstrate.

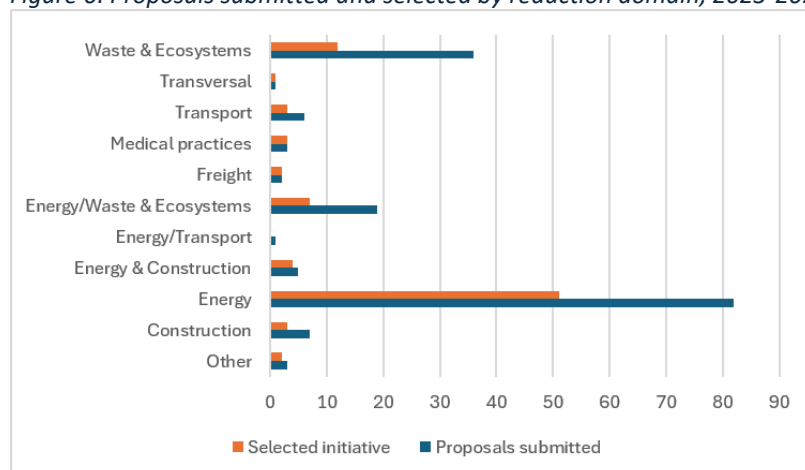
Tension

This finding highlights a tension within the Green Initiatives - the same conditions that helped Green Initiatives gain support may also narrow what is seen as a strong proposal. Initiatives that reduce environmental harm but do not address a recognised operational, medical, or professional priority may struggle to gain attention, particularly outside the energy domain. Importantly, Sierra Leone reinforces and broadens this finding. Rather than gaining support through energy resilience, initiatives became legitimate through infection prevention, professional practice, chlorine supply, and responsible handover. This suggests that expanding Green Initiatives beyond energy may depend less on raising environmental awareness and more on helping teams show how environmental initiatives support priorities that already matter within OCB.

FINDING 2

TECHNICAL, MEASURABLE, INFRASTRUCTURE-BASED INITIATIVES ARE BETTER ALIGNED WITH THE GREEN INITIATIVES ENVELOPE THAN BEHAVIOURAL, PRACTICE-BASED, OR LESS VISIBLE FORMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES.

The evaluation found that the current design of Green Initiatives is substantially better suited to technical, measurable infrastructure initiatives than behavioural or practice-based change. This is visible across both the portfolio and case studies. As seen in Figure 8 below, energy initiatives account for the largest share of both proposals and selected initiatives, with 82 proposals submitted and 51 selected. Projects linked to energy, including Energy & Construction and Energy/Waste & Ecosystems, also made up a large share of the selected portfolio. By contrast, domains such as medical practices, freight, transport, and transversal initiatives appear only in small numbers.

Figure 6: Proposals submitted and selected by reduction domain, 2023-2026

This does not mean that energy projects were selected simply because they were energy projects. Rather, solar fitted the Green Initiatives particularly well. They had clear technical ownership, usually within logistics or energy teams. Their benefits could be measured through fuel savings, reduced generator use, cost savings, return on investment, and carbon reduction. They also had a relatively familiar implementation pathway: assess the need, procure the system, install it, monitor use, and maintain it.

The case studies illustrate this pattern. In DRC, solar aligned with existing logistics and engineering expertise and generated visible operational benefits. Fourteen of twenty-one DRC proposals were energy-related, while many waste, ecosystem, and transport proposals were not selected. In South Africa, the only successful proposal (out of 2 submitted) was the Butterworth solar project. Interviewees contrasted this with the rejected sensitisation proposal, which focused on building environmental awareness, and carrying out environmental audits to identify opportunities to reduce environmental impact. The rejection of this proposal was interpreted by the team as evidence that technically clear infrastructure proposals were simply easier to legitimise and get over the line. The dominance of solar initiatives was so pronounced that some case studies interviewees had the impression that the Green Initiatives was a source of funding just for solar. This may itself have reinforced the concentration of proposals in that domain.

The opposite pattern is visible for behavioural, practice-based, or less visible forms of environmental change. Wear with Care in Sierra Leone shows that these initiatives can become legitimate and successful, but they require different conditions. Wear with Care depended on changes to clinical routines, observation, training, audits, and reassurance around infection prevention risks. It was not a one-off technical installation; it required ongoing attention and professional endorsement. Interviewees in DRC, similarly, contrasted solar with behaviour-change initiatives, describing behaviour-change as requiring more coordination and more sustained reinforcement.

As we saw above, the Maxi-WATA and Wear with Care initiatives in Sierra Leone were successfully approved and implemented – they gained traction because they were linked to operational and medical benefits. Although the Green Initiatives Working Group actively encouraged diversification, the underlying architecture of Green Initiatives still appeared to favour initiatives that look like technical projects.

Conditions shaping the finding

Several organisational conditions help explain why Green Initiatives favours technical and infrastructure-based initiatives. First, as indicated above, technical and infrastructure initiatives often have clear organisational ownership, recognised expertise, and established implementation pathways; these conditions were favoured by the Working Group during selection. By contrast, behaviour-change initiatives frequently cut across multiple functions (medical, logistics, procurement, infection prevention, and everyday staff routines). This makes ownership less obvious and implementation harder to organise.

Second, the Green Initiatives is better suited to initiatives whose benefits can be demonstrated clearly and within a relatively short period. This makes infrastructure investments easier to justify than initiatives with changes in practice, where results may be harder to isolate and measure.

Third, infrastructure initiatives fit easily into a clearly structured process of planning, funding, implementation, and completion. Behavioural and practice-based initiatives require ongoing reinforcement, supervision, and local ownership, which often extends beyond the lifespan of a discrete project.

Qualification

An important qualification to this finding is that the success of solar initiatives should not be assumed across all contexts. For example, Brazil tried to implement a solar-powered boat initiative, which struggled with issues of maintenance, charging logistics, exposure to sun, and ultimately the project wasn't successful. Even well-established environmental approaches therefore remain dependant on local feasibility and context.

This finding reinforces a broader point. If Green Initiatives wants to support a wider range of environmental reduction domains, it may need different forms of assessment, support, ownership, and learning. This applies to initiatives that are less technical, and less immediately measurable, and also to initiatives that gain legitimacy through different organisational priorities, such as professional practice, quality of care or resource management.

FINDING 3**THE GREEN INITIATIVES ENVELOPE CREATED SPACE FOR INVESTMENTS THAT WERE DIFFICULT TO FUND THROUGH NORMAL OPERATIONAL BUDGETS.**

Green Initiatives created a funding route for investments (that reduced the environmental footprint) that country programmes often struggled to finance through ordinary operational budgets. This was especially clear for initiatives that required a large upfront investment but delivered benefits over time. The envelope did not only provide money; it created permission and space to act on ideas that were understood as useful but difficult to prioritise within the regular budgeting system.

DRC illustrates this clearly. Interviewees described solar ideas as having been “in the drawers” before Green Initiatives because they made operational and economic sense but were difficult to finance through annual budgets. Solar investments reduce fuel use and costs over time, but the upfront capital costs were hard to absorb in ordinary project budgets. One interviewee described having to use

“budgetary fiction” when trying to fit solar into normal budgeting processes. Green Initiatives created a separate route through which these investments became feasible.

Similarly, in Yemen, interviewees described Green Initiatives as a “backup budget” that enabled investment in infrastructure beyond the short-term planning horizon. Solar investments were valued because they strengthened operational continuity and reduced fuel dependence, but the country team reported that the investment would have struggled to compete against immediate medical priorities if they had to be financed through regular operational budgets. The envelope therefore helped protect investment in future operational resilience from being crowded out by urgent day-to-day demands.

In Sierra Leone, the same logic operated. Green Initiatives created space to address issues that were recognised but difficult to prioritise, including overuse of personal protective equipment and the sustainability of chlorine supply systems. These were not necessarily large infrastructure investments in the same way as solar, but they still required time, attention, and resources that might otherwise have been displaced by more immediate operational pressures.

Operational support staff at HQ and regional levels reinforced this interpretation. Several described Green Initiatives as a workaround for the constraints that ordinary budgets placed on environmental improvement, or longer-term investments. One interviewee reported, “If environmental initiatives have to compete inside normal project budgets, they will not happen, because operational teams are under pressure and anything not immediately necessary gets squeezed out”.

Figure 8, above, shows the kinds of initiatives the envelope has selected, supporting the point that the envelope has often been used for investment-type initiatives.

Conditions shaping the finding

The main condition shaping this finding is the annual budgeting cycle. Project and country teams plan and manage budgets one year at a time, but many Green Initiatives investments deliver benefits after several years. This creates a mismatch between when costs are incurred and when benefits become visible. Green Initiatives loosens this constraint by allowing investments to be assessed through a different time horizon. A second condition is that even when environmental initiatives offer clear operational benefits, they often compete with more urgent concerns. The Green Initiatives envelope offers a mechanism to protect environmental investments from having to compete with normal budgeting decisions.

Interviewees suggested several alternative funding approaches, including treating Green Initiatives funding as an internal loan repaid through future savings, using co-funding arrangements between Green Initiatives and Operations, and ring-fencing a percentage of country budget to initiatives that reduced environmental impact. These suggestions show that the budgeting constraint is real and widely recognised by operational staff.

Tension

A key tension is present with this finding. Several senior colleagues questioned whether activities that have already proven their value (such as solar) should continue to rely on Green Initiatives. If these activities are now operationally accepted and financially sensible, should they still require a separate environmental funding mechanism, or should they become part of normal operational budgets? There was no clear agreement on this, but some interviewees argued that protected funding remains necessary because environmental initiatives will continue to lose out to immediate medical and

operational priorities. Others felt that continued reliance on Green Initiatives risks delaying the harder task of embedding environmental responsibility into routine planning and budgeting.

The finding indicates, therefore, that a separate envelope is both useful and fills a gap in OCB's budgeting system. It also raises questions about its future role - as some initiatives become more established, OCB will need to decide which initiatives still need protected funding and which should become part of normal operational responsibility.

FINDING 4

TEAMS' ENGAGEMENT WITH GREEN INITIATIVES DEPENDS ON WHETHER THEY HAVE THE TIME, CAPABILITY, NETWORKS, AND CONFIDENCE THAT THEIR OPERATIONS WILL CONTINUE.

As shown in the portfolio overview, figure 5, participation in Green Initiatives has been unevenly distributed across Cells. The case studies and interviews with organisational support staff suggest that this variation is shaped by differences in capability, support networks, expected duration of the project, and the capacity to turn environmental ideas into proposals that could be justified, approved, and implemented.

This was visible in the more active case studies such as DRC and Yemen. In DRC, engagement with Green Initiatives was extensively supported by a combination of high Cell-level interest, regional support, and country logistics capability. Interviewees described the project teams as stretched and often unable to develop ideas alone. One interviewee summarised this by saying that "coordination should do the thinking." This does not mean project teams were uninterested; rather, it shows that engagement required people with enough time, technical knowledge, and the organisational position to convert ideas into fundable proposals. In Yemen, solar systems were able to move forward because teams had relevant technical experience, a strong operational need, and enough confidence that investments would remain useful over time. Although Yemen was a highly constrained setting, insecurity itself did not prevent engagement. What mattered was that the operational need was clear, the technical pathway was understood, and the benefits were expected to remain relevant.

The opposite dynamic was visible in South Africa and Cell 5. In South Africa, reduced operations and changing priorities left less space for teams to engage with Green Initiatives. In Cell 5, countries such as Brazil, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela faced uncertainty about whether projects would continue, expand, relocate, or close. Under these conditions, teams had less confidence that a Green Initiative would be worth the time and effort needed to prepare and pursue it. Additionally, interviewees also described Cell 5 as being somewhat disconnected from the Green Initiatives 'networks'. Time zone challenges made it harder for countries to participate in presentations, workshops, and informal exchanges where ideas and experiences were shared. As a result, teams had fewer opportunities to access examples, build connections, and develop proposals.

EPool highlighted a different version of the same issue. Here, the challenge was about speed. Green Initiatives was designed around the planning and implementation cycles of regular projects managed by Cells. EPool operates to a different rhythm with emergency deployments moving faster than the Green Initiatives proposal and selection process. The issue is, therefore, not a lack of environmental interest from EPool, but a mismatch between the pace of EPool operations and the way Green Initiatives works.

It is important to note that low engagement in Green Initiatives does not mean low environmental concern. South Africa, Cell 5, and EPool all showed interest in OCB's environmental reduction. This strengthens the finding that engagement depends not only on motivation, but also on whether teams have the time, support and operational conditions needed to turn concern into a Green Initiatives proposal.

Conditions shaping the finding

Several conditions help explain why some teams were better able to engage with Green Initiatives than others. First, Green Initiatives places strong reliance on country and project teams and Cells to identify opportunities and develop proposals. In practice, proposal development often depended on a small number of motivated or technically capable individuals, most often at the Cell level. Second, support networks matter. Ideas often spread through technical referents, regional support staff, and LogCells. Where teams had access to advice, examples, and practical support, ideas were easier to develop. Where these connections were weaker, as in Cell 5, opportunities could remain unseen or feel too difficult to pursue. Third, teams were more willing to invest effort when they expected operations to continue long enough for benefits to be realised. In DRC and Yemen there was confidence in the expected duration of projects. This was not the case in South Africa and with Cell 5 countries, where closure, suspension, or uncertainty made longer-term initiatives harder to justify. Fourth, Green Initiatives was designed to match the pace of routine operations managed by the Cells. In fast-moving contexts such as EPool, proposal, review, and approval processes were too slow for the opportunities available.

Tension

Again, the finding highlights an important tension. Green Initiatives aims to encourage broad engagement, and its model assumes that ideas will emerge from operational teams. However, teams do not equally have the time, expertise, or network access to generate the ideas. This creates a risk that engagement becomes concentrated where teams have capability, confidence, or supportive relationships.

All this highlights an important design issue. If Green Initiatives wants broader and more diverse participation, OCB may need to do more than offer funding and guidance. It may need to provide more tailored support, better ways to help teams develop ideas, and more flexible options for contexts where time, skills, support networks, or confidence in the future of operations are limited.

FINDING 5

PARTICIPATION IN GREEN INITIATIVES IS NOT A RELIABLE INDICATOR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT ACROSS OCB.

As seen above, and as illustrated in figure 5 in the portfolio analysis, there was a highly uneven pattern of participation in Green Initiatives across cells. Across 2023–2026, Cell 1 submitted 57 proposals and had 28 selected initiatives, while Cell 2 submitted 26 and Cell 4 submitted 27. By contrast, Cell 5 submitted only two proposals, with one selected. This uneven distribution is important, but it should not be interpreted as an indication of lack of environmental engagement or commitment. It shows where Green Initiatives has been taken up as a funding mechanism, not the full range of environmental activity occurring across OCB.

The case studies and additional interviews shed some light on this. South Africa had limited engagement with Green Initiatives, submitting only two proposals and implementing one selected project. Yet interviewees described several environmental actions taking place outside the mechanism, mainly in terms of reducing energy consumption such as lighting replacement and air-conditioning modifications. These activities indicate environmental concern and practical action.

Similarly, portfolio data show that Cell 5, and related countries, had very low engagement with Green Initiatives. However, interviews with Cell 5 did not suggest an absence of environmental interest. Rather, as reported above, projects were often closing, shrinking, suspended, or strategically uncertain. In that context, whilst teams recognised environmental issues, they reported a struggle to justify the time and effort required to develop Green Initiatives proposals.

EPool provides another example. EPool has not engaged with Green Initiatives, but interviewees did not describe funding or lack of environmental interest as the main obstacles. As highlighted above, Green Initiatives was designed for the planning and implementation cycles of regular Cell-managed projects - while EPool focuses on rapid emergency response.

The opposite pattern is also important. DRC was one of the most active countries in the portfolio, with 21 DRC-specific proposals across several domains. Yet even there, environmental activity was broader than the funded portfolio. Interviewees and Working Group members referred to activities outside Green Initiatives, including waste management, rainwater collection, and plastic sorting. This reinforces the same point from the other direction: even high participation in Green Initiatives does not capture the whole environmental picture.

Conditions shaping the finding

We can identify several conditions that explain why participation in Green Initiatives cannot be treated as a direct indicator of environmental engagement. First, the mechanism captures only activities that need and fit the dedicated funding route. Lower-cost or easier-to-roll-out environmental initiatives may be handled within normal operations and, according to some Working Group members, some proposals may be rejected as they should be covered through ordinary budgets. This means the portfolio is a record of what required separate support, not a record of environmental action. However, this distinction was not always clear to project and country teams. Some interviewees described uncertainty about why certain initiatives were expected to be funded through routine budgets while others were considered appropriate for Green Initiatives.

Second, the mechanism is better suited to some operational rhythms than others. EPool and short-term operations or contracting or strategically uncertain contexts may engage less because Green Initiatives does not match their tempo or planning horizon. Lastly, some activities are just understood as good energy efficiency, procurement improvement, or cost-saving rather than as environmental action. For example, the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) team within the Logistics Department described promoting energy-saving measures, insulation, and reduced energy consumption as part of their normal technical role, both before and alongside Green Initiatives. Therefore, if environmental work is embedded in everyday decisions, it is not visible within Green Initiatives.

FINDING 6

REPEATED IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCCESSFUL GREEN INITIATIVES HAS HELPED SOME TEAMS SEE ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES AS PRACTICAL OPTIONS, BUT THIS HAS NOT LED TO WIDESPREAD CHANGES IN PRACTICE.

The clearest evidence for this finding is obviously in energy. In Yemen and DRC, repeated implementation of solar initiatives helped solar become a more familiar part of infrastructure planning. Over time, teams did not see solar as a special environmental project, it became a practical option to consider when dealing with unreliable electricity, fuel dependence, and extensive generator use. In Yemen, this was described as a shift away from assuming generators were the default solution. In DRC, solar and energy autonomy were described as becoming more routine in infrastructure discussions.

This is an important but limited change. Green Initiatives did create learning through experience - teams saw that an initiative has operational value as well as contributing to footprint reduction, and they are more likely to consider a similar initiative again. This change seems strongest where there has been repeated implementation, visible results, technical support, and clear operational benefit.

However, familiarity with one type of environmental initiative should not be mistaken for broader organisational change. Solar has become a more routine option when discussing energy and infrastructure investments - with repeated experience influencing future choices. However, similar shifts are much less visible across other environmental domains.

Sierra Leone provides a useful example. Maxi-WATA demonstrated that an initiative designed to reduce environmental footprint could also deliver operational benefits. Interviewees reported that the approach was later implemented through project budgets in Congo, suggesting that learning had travelled beyond the original Green Initiatives project. However, examples such as this remain relatively isolated. They do not yet show the same degree of repeated adoption or routine consideration that has emerged around solar.

The evidence therefore points to pockets of changed practice rather than broad changes in how environmental options are considered across OCB. Learning that an environmental initiative can deliver operational benefits does not automatically lead to wider adoption. Teams still operate within organisational conditions that prioritise immediate medical needs, annual budgeting cycles, operational pressures, and competing demands on time and attention. As a result, even where staff recognise the value of environmental initiatives and have positive experience of them, they may still struggle to prioritise, fund, or implement them. Successful experience can expand what teams consider possible, but it does not remove the wider constraints that shape operational decision-making.

Conditions shaping the finding

Several conditions shape this finding. First, repeated experience matters. Teams are more likely to consider an environmental option when they have already seen it work. Second, practical evidence matters. Solar became easier to consider because teams could see the operational benefits and measure the results. Third, support matters. Familiarity did not spread by itself; it depended on technical referents, LogCells, regional support, and people who could help turn experience into future options.

WHAT THE 'LANDSCAPE OF FINDINGS' SUGGESTS

GREEN INITIATIVES HAS OPERATED AS AN ORGANISATIONAL MECHANISM, NOT JUST A PROJECT FUNDING MECHANISM

Green Initiatives has influenced more than the delivery of individual projects. The findings show that it created space for environmental considerations to enter operational discussions, infrastructure decisions, and, in some cases, professional practice. For example, environmental considerations became intertwined with discussions about fuel dependence, energy reliability, operational continuity, and facility design. The findings also suggest that Green Initiatives created opportunities for environmental considerations to influence medical practice, such within the Wear with Care initiative. The dedicated funding envelope also created opportunities to explore environmental and operational solutions that might otherwise have struggled to compete with immediate medical priorities and annual budget pressures. Overall, while evidence of wider organisational change remains mixed, the evaluation suggests that Green Initiatives has created space for environmental considerations to become part of how some teams plan, make decisions, and respond to operational challenges.

ENGAGEMENT WITH GREEN INITIATIVES WAS SHAPED PRIMARILY BY ORGANISATIONAL CONDITIONS RATHER THAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOTIVATION.

The evaluation found little evidence that low participation in Green Initiatives reflected a lack of environmental commitment. Instead, engagement was shaped by organisational conditions:

- Green Initiatives guidance and selection criteria favour initiatives with clear operational value.
- What can be measured and easily reported (CO₂ emissions, cost reduction, return on investment etc) is easier to justify.
- The regular short-term, annual, OCB budgeting logic makes investments in some initiatives difficult to prioritise or finance, pushing teams to use Green Initiatives.
- Teams' confidence in the continuity of country operations shapes whether Green Initiatives investment feels worthwhile
- The tempo of the Green Initiatives process works better for regular projects than fast moving emergencies.
- Developing ideas for Green Initiatives depends on access to examples, expertise and support.
- Initiatives with clear technical ownership, existing expertise, and implementation experience allowed some Green Initiative ideas to progress easier than other ideas.

These conditions help explain why some contexts engaged heavily with Green Initiatives while others did not, despite evidence of environmental concern across both groups.

SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH GREEN INITIATIVES DEPENDED ON SEVERAL CONDITIONS ALIGNING SIMULTANEOUSLY

Engagement with Green Initiatives was most likely when several of the above conditions come together at the same time. For example, solar initiatives 1) had clear operational value, 2) produced visible and measurable benefits, 3) had clear technical ownership, 4) fitted OCB's existing technical capabilities, and 5) most often operated in contexts where there was sufficient confidence that operations would continue long enough for benefits to be realised. Solar projects therefore became easier to develop, justify, fund, and implement because multiple enabling constraints were reinforcing one another. Similarly, Maxi-WATA and Wear with Care gained traction because several conditions aligned simultaneously - showing that this logic is not limited to energy initiatives. Environmental action becomes easier to support when multiple enabling conditions make them actionable.

THE SAME CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT ALSO SHAPE THE LIMITS OF GREEN INITIATIVES

Many of the conditions that helped Green Initiatives gain traction may have also shaped its limits. For example, energy initiatives were so dominant because of the operational value, measurable benefits, clear ownership and established implementation pathways. But these same conditions may make other types of environmental action harder to support, especially behavioural initiatives. This helps explain why Green Initiatives has not yet produced broader consideration of environmental initiatives across OCB.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION IS SHAPED BY PRACTICAL CHOICES RATHER THAN PERFECT SOLUTIONS

The findings also suggest that Green Initiatives was often about identifying initiatives that offered practical improvements within the realities of humanitarian operations. For example, with solar, interviewees recognised concerns about coltan extraction, battery disposal, maintenance, and recycling, yet these concerns were weighed alongside reduced fuel dependence, improved energy reliability and fewer disruptions to care. Environmental decisions were therefore not presented as choosing between "green" and "non-green" options, but as making better environmental choices that remained operationally workable. This pragmatic approach appears to have been an important part of how Green Initiatives gained legitimacy within OCB.

Going forward, rather than trying to generate greater environmental commitment, the challenge for Green Initiatives is how to broaden the range of environmental actions that can become legitimate, actionable, and supportable within OCB.

GOING FORWARD

The second evaluation workshop with the Advisory Group looked at the conditions shaping the findings. It offered an opportunity to reflect on what Green Initiatives may need to pay attention to going forward. The following section draws on aspects of this conversation. It also brings in a comparative reflection with similar initiatives run by OCP and OCA.

The main message about the future of Green Initiatives is that its future direction should be based on protecting what has worked while adjusting the conditions that have made some types of initiatives easier to support than others. The following sections explore the conditions that may help broaden the range of initiatives the mechanism is able to support.

CONNECTING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION TO VALUED ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES SHOULD REMAIN AT THE CENTRE OF GREEN INITIATIVES

The evaluation indicates that Green Initiatives gained most support when it helped address operational priorities that teams cared about. This included helping solve operational problems, strengthening professional practice, or offering recognised value. Similar reflections emerged in discussions with other MSF Operational Centres (OCs). Both OCA and OCP described solar initiatives gaining traction because teams could clearly see operational benefits. At the same time, both OCs noted that other areas, such as waste management, insulation and behaviour change, had proven harder to advance because their benefits were less visible, less immediate or more difficult to demonstrate.

Discussion in the workshop, therefore, suggested that going forward Green Initiatives should be anchored in this enabling condition – Green Initiatives should be promoted as “solutions that are useful for projects” not only in climate goals. Communication about the funding envelope should reflect this, emphasising Green Initiatives as solutions that solve operational problems whilst also showing that they reduce OCB’s environmental footprint. Therefore, Green Initiatives should not move away from its benefit to operations - if anything, this link appears central to its future. The challenge is to help illustrate the link between more kinds of environmental action and operational benefit, not just energy projects.

RECOGNISING ADAPTATION IN EXISTING INITIATIVES

Adaptation was not a major focus within the evaluation findings. Most initiatives within the case studies were presented primarily as efforts to reduce OCB's environmental footprint. However, adaptation repeatedly emerged during the workshop. Indeed, participants reflected on the fact that adaptation is currently less visible and less developed within Green Initiatives than mitigation-focused initiatives. One participant highlighted the importance of helping teams understand what adaptation looks like in practice and providing examples that can be recognised and adapted across contexts

At the same time, it’s important to understand that adaptation may not always appear as a distinct category of activity. Across the case studies, initiatives gained traction because they addressed practical operational concerns such as reliable energy supply. These concerns were rarely framed as adaptation challenges. Similarly, OCA also noted that many initiatives were justified in terms of

operational continuity, rather than being explicitly described as adaptation measures. However, in practice, these challenges have multiple causes, including conflict, economic pressures and climate-related stresses. This is likely to become more important as climate change increasingly affects operating environments.

This may offer a useful way of thinking about adaptation within Green Initiatives. Rather than treating adaptation as a separate category of action, it may be more useful to recognise how many initiatives already contribute to resilience in changing and uncertain climates. Existing Green Initiatives therefore provide examples that can help make adaptation more tangible and relevant to operational teams.

FUTURE DIRECTION IS LIKELY TO DEPEND MORE ON STRENGTHENING SUPPORT AND VISIBILITY THAN ON INCREASING AVAILABLE FUNDING

The findings suggest that engagement with Green Initiatives depended on whether teams can see possible ideas, connect them to operational needs, and turn them into proposals. This was also reflected in the workshop. Several participants highlighted that idea generation depends on exposure to examples, leadership, knowledge and support. They questioned how the Working Group could make this more evenly distributed across countries. Similar experiences were described by OCA. In OCA, solar projects accelerated once countries could see examples from elsewhere and access specialist support, while other areas such as insulation and waste management advanced more slowly because the expertise, implementation support and practical examples were less developed. A workshop participant pointed to differences between areas of work - logistics and environmental health have clearer support, while medical initiatives lack the same level of support.

Identifying environmental opportunities is, therefore, not solely a project-level activity. Technical referents, specialist teams and organisational networks often played an important role in recognising opportunities, sharing experience between contexts, and helping teams develop proposals. Future direction may therefore depend on helping projects identify possible environmental actions, and on making better use of this wider organisational capability so that ideas can surface, circulate and develop more consistently across OCB. The evaluation also suggests that these support needs may not be the same across all operational contexts. Contexts such as emergency operations and partnership-based models may require different ways of identifying and developing environmental opportunities than those provided through the current Green Initiatives process.

THE FUNDING ENVELOPE REMAINS VALUABLE, BUT ITS PURPOSE MAY BE EVOLVING

The evidence suggests that the Green Initiatives funding envelope created a protected space for ideas that might otherwise be pushed aside by annual budgets and urgent operational pressures. Workshop participants recognised this and noted that the envelope allowed teams to avoid choosing between related investments, such as insulation and solar panels, when ordinary budgets could not easily cover both. The separate tracking of Green Initiatives spending was also noted as useful and can be helpful when sourcing restricted funding.

At the same time, it was also emphasised that Green Initiatives was never intended to become a permanent parallel system. The initial idea was to provide a way of stimulating new practices and creating momentum around environmental action. However, neither of these two arguments means the envelope should disappear now.

Instead, it suggests that the value of the envelope may be changing. In the early years, the Green Initiatives helped create space for investments such as solarisation and energy efficiency. Looking forward, its greatest value may lie in supporting initiatives where the benefits are harder to measure, and implementation routes are less clear. Similarly, OCA and OCP are both having discussions about whether dedicated funding is still required for some energy investments, noting that a dedicated mechanism remains important for activities where benefits are less visible, implementation is more complex, or organisational incentives remain weak. Additionally, workshop participants highlighted contexts such as emergency operations and partnership-based models where the existing Green Initiatives mechanisms may not yet provide sufficient space for environmental initiatives to emerge. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the rationale for a dedicated funding envelope remains strong. At the same time, the evaluation raises a broader organisational question: if established initiatives such as solar are expected to move into routine operational budgets, what needs to change to make this possible? Interviewees also suggested that this could prompt exploration of different ways of financing established environmental investments, while retaining dedicated support for areas where environmental action remains harder to initiate.

CONCLUSION

EQ1. STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION AND CHANGES IN PRACTICE

Green Initiatives has made environmental responsibility more visible within operational decision-making, but it has not become routine across OCB. The strongest evidence of change is in solar where initiatives have repeatedly demonstrated operational value. In Yemen and DRC, solar is increasingly considered in decision-making processes. As teams gained experience of solar, it became accepted as a practical solution rather than as a separate environmental project. However, these changes remain uneven. There is not yet an OCB reflex to consistently consider environmental and climate-related alternatives – there were pockets of changed practice rather than widespread organisational change.

EQ2. LEGITIMACY AND CO-BENEFITS

The legitimacy of Green Initiatives has been shaped largely by its ability to deliver benefits beyond environmental footprint reduction. Initiatives gained traction when they supported priorities that teams already valued. This was visible across all case studies. Solar initiatives gained support because they addressed energy reliability and fuel dependence and Maxi-WATA and Wear with Care gained support because they improved infection prevention, supply security, and professional practice. The evaluation concludes that operational, medical and professional co-benefits have been central to the credibility and acceptance of Green Initiatives within OCB.

EQ3. DESIGN, GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

The straightforward design of Green Initiatives has helped generate participation and learning, but participation has depended heavily on organisational conditions. Engagement was strongest where teams had access to technical expertise, support networks, implementation pathways, and confidence that operations would continue long enough for benefits to be realised. The envelope has been particularly well suited to technical, measurable and infrastructure-based initiatives. At the same time, these features have also made some initiatives easier to support than others.

EQ4. SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF THE FUNDING ENVELOPE

Green Initiatives offered protected space for environmental investments that struggle to compete with short-term operational priorities and annual budgeting. This has been one of its most important contributions. Repeated implementation has normalised some environmental options, and changes in practice within specific domains. However, these changes remain dependent on supportive conditions and have not become fully widespread. The rationale for a dedicated funding envelope remains strong. At the same time, the role of the envelope is changing. Looking ahead, its value lies increasingly in creating space for less established areas of environmental action, supporting contexts where existing systems provide limited support, and helping new opportunities emerge.

FINALLY...

Overall, the evaluation finds that Green Initiatives has been an effective mechanism for creating space for environmental action within OCB. It should be understood as one part of OCB's wider Climate, Environment and Health approach. While the funding envelope has created space for learning and practical change, the evaluation suggests that moving beyond pockets of change will require action at more than one level. Green Initiatives can strengthen many of the conditions identified in this evaluation, including support, visibility, learning and idea development. However, wider uptake will also depend on organisational conditions that sit beyond the funding mechanism itself, including budgeting practices, operational planning and routine ways of working.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: EVALUATION QUESTION FRAMEWORK

This is the Evaluation question framework that was developed for the Evaluation Roadmap to guide the evaluation. The intent was to answer the overarching Evaluation Questions, with the sub-questions guiding the enquiry, but not to answer all the sub-questions directly.

Evaluation question	Rationale and definitions	Sub-questions
EQ1. Strategic contribution (Mindset Shift & embeddedness) How have the Green Initiatives shifted mindsets, norms, and decision-making conditions such that environmental responsibility (and climate adaptation) become normal, valued, and self-sustaining within OCB operations?	This frames the evaluation toward exploring changes in mental models, norms, and default practices. “Mindset shift” is understood as a shift in how operational decisions are habitually framed - specifically, whether staff increasingly have the reflex to consider environmental and climate-related alternatives as part of routine. This definition recognises that the most meaningful change may not be a new concern for the environment, but the normalisation of asking, “Could this be done differently, and would that bring additional benefits?”	1.1 How has the Green Initiatives helped clarify or reframe what “environmental responsibility” means in a humanitarian medical context? 1.2 How have Green Initiatives influenced the integration of environmental and resilience considerations into routine decision-making, planning, and budgeting beyond the funding envelope? 1.3 What new capacities, relationships, feedback loops, or pathways of influence have emerged between HQ, Cells, country, and project teams? 1.4 What tensions or trade-offs between environmental ambition and operational imperatives have surfaced, and how have these been navigated? 1.5 Where has Green Initiatives funding embedded durable change, and where has it functioned primarily as a one-off project mechanism?

EQ2. Co-benefits & legitimacy What are the co-benefits of the Green Initiatives beyond environmental footprint reduction, and how do these shape the perceived legitimacy and value of Green Initiatives ideas within OCB?	Legitimacy and perceived value are central to the uptake and sustainability of Green Initiatives, sometimes more than carbon metrics alone. Co-benefits are therefore examined as a key source of legitimacy: where Green Initiatives are perceived to deliver tangible operational (including financial), clinical, or risk-reduction benefits, they are more likely to gain buy-in, influence decision-making, and function as a credible strategic mechanism within OCB.	2.1 What non-environmental co-benefits have emerged (e.g. quality of care, operational resilience, autonomy, risk reduction, staff motivation)? 2.2 How have Green Initiatives strengthened operational resilience to environmental and climate risks (e.g. water systems, infrastructure, logistics)? 2.3 How do perceptions of co-benefits and/or strengthened operational resilience influence buy-in, credibility, and willingness to engage? 2.4 How have the durability, continued use, or non-use of Green Initiatives interventions influenced perceptions of their legitimacy and degree of embeddedness?
EQ3. Design, governance and organisational capability How does the design and governance of the Green Initiatives funding envelope shape participation, prioritisation, learning, and capability across the organisation?	Learning for similar or future Green Initiatives mechanisms lies in understanding system design and capability distribution, rather than looking at efficiency metrics.	3.1 How have the proposal, selection, and support processes influenced who participates and which kinds of initiatives are prioritised, 3.2 Where do proposals most commonly stall (e.g. Country Team–Cell interface, Working Group stage), and why? 3.3 What differentiates highly-engaged Cells and countries from those that engage less? (e.g. leadership, staffing continuity, proposal-writing capability, technical support) 3.4 how could selection processes and support mechanisms might be adjusted to strengthen quality and effectiveness across lower-engaged Cells 3.5 How is learning from high-performing Cells, countries, or domains captured and institutionalised? 3.6 Would (and what) other metrics could help reduce scepticism, whilst keeping reporting to a minimum?

		3.7 What decision-making structures enable learning from one cycle of initiatives to influence the next? 3.8 To what extent does repeated selection represent scaling of good practice versus repetition by the same actors? 3.9 Why does the portfolio remain so strongly concentrated in energy-related domains? Why are domains such as medical practices, transport, freight, and transversal initiatives underrepresented? (e.g. broader institutional barriers, unclear eligibility, or perceived lower footprint reduction benefits).
EQ4. Sustainability and the future of the funding envelope How sustainable are the organisational, relational, and capability changes influenced by Green Initiatives, and what role should a dedicated funding envelope play in OCB's future environmental and adaptation strategy?	Examines sustainability in organisational terms, rather than financial sustainability or the durability of individual initiatives. And it explores what role a dedicated funding envelope should play in extending and sustaining these changes in a volatile operational context.	4.1 How sustainable are relational, cultural, and capability shifts? 4.2 Why does 2024 represent a high-water mark for selection? What do the declining and uneven selection in later years reflects (saturation of ideas, rising selection quality thresholds, increasing capacity constraints), maturation and consolidation, or does it reflect proposal fatigue and unmet support needs? 4.3 To what extent is the Green Initiatives envelope functioning as a catalytic, transitional mechanism or a necessary ongoing protection for environmental priorities? 4.4 What are the implications of integrating environmental investments into core operational budgets? 4.5 Should future design differentiate more clearly between experimentation, scaling, and consolidation funding? 4.6 Would further domain-specific calls or country-targeted support reduce the current concentration effects? 4.7 Where and how should Green Initiatives focus for the 2027 round of funding (on a new topic, on sustainability of previous initiatives)?

ANNEX B: EVALUATION APPROACH

Recognising that Green Initiatives functions not only as a funding envelope but also as an organisational mechanism, the evaluation adopted a systems-informed approach focused on understanding how Green Initiatives has influenced organisational practices, relationships, decision-making, and learning. The evaluation was primarily concerned with contribution rather than attribution; seeking to understand how Green Initiatives may have helped create, reinforce, or sustain observed changes, rather than attempting to isolate its effects from the many other factors shaping OCB operations.

The evaluation was informed by three principles. First, it adopted a critical perspective that sought to examine not only where Green Initiatives gained traction but also where participation, legitimacy, or capability appeared constrained. Second, it adopted a deliberative orientation, combining multiple forms of evidence and using collective sense-making to explore alternative interpretations of emerging patterns. Third, the evaluation was designed as a learning process, creating opportunities for reflection throughout the evaluation while maintaining analytical independence and responsibility for conclusions within the evaluation team.

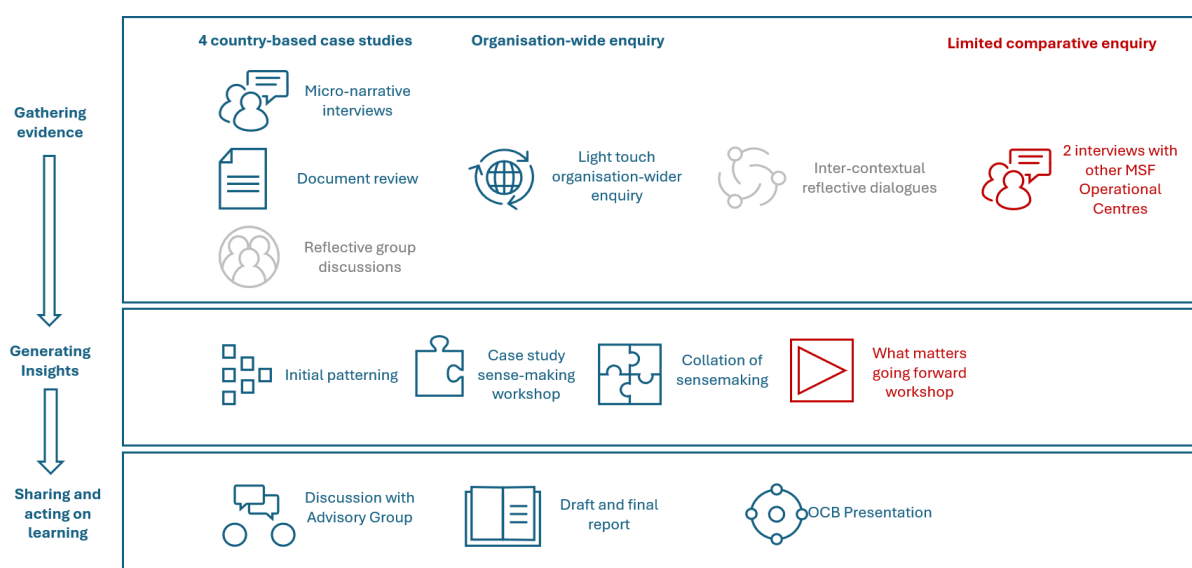
Consistent with this approach, the evaluation methodology combines in-depth, context-sensitive enquiry with selective cross-contextual learning. A case study design is used to examine how Green Initiatives operate within different operational settings, complemented by light-touch organisation-wide enquiry to test resonance, surface 'absence' data (why people didn't engage), and strengthen confidence in emerging patterns. Analysis was staged to support learning and rigour, moving from gathering narratives and pattern identification to facilitated sense-making and evaluator-led synthesis.

Steps and Methods

The evaluation was implemented in three broad stages: gathering evidence, generating insights, and supporting organisational reflection on the findings. These stages were designed to move from in-depth enquiry within specific operational contexts towards cross-case interpretation and organisational-level sense-making. An evaluation matrix was used throughout the process to ensure coherence between the evaluation questions, data sources, methods, and analytical focus. The matrix is provided further below.

Below we illustrate the Steps and methods in a graphic.

Figure 7: Steps and methods



NB: The methods in blue were planned activities carried out, the methods in grey were activities planned but not carried out and the methods in red were activities not initially planned but carried out – see limitations section below.

1. Gathering evidence step

1.1 Case studies

Case studies formed the primary method of enquiry for the evaluation. Each case study focused on a country programme and examined its engagement with Green Initiatives over time. Within each case, attention was given not only to specific initiatives, but also to the decision-making processes, relationships, organisational conditions, and interactions between country programmes, Cells, and operational support functions that shaped engagement with Green Initiatives.

The case study approach was selected because the evaluation sought to understand Green Initiatives as an organisational mechanism rather than assess the performance of individual initiatives or quantify environmental results. The case studies provided context-rich insights into how Green Initiatives was interpreted, legitimised, supported, and acted upon in different operational settings. Examining multiple cases allowed the evaluation to explore recurring patterns, important differences, and contrasting pathways through which Green Initiatives operated across OCB.

Four case studies were undertaken: Yemen, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These were selected for their explanatory value and their ability to illuminate different aspects of the evaluation questions. See Box 1 for rationale behind case study selection. Together, the case studies provided contrasting examples of sustained engagement, alternative pathways to legitimacy, stalled participation, and integration beyond the funding envelope.

Within each case study, evidence was gathered through semi-structured interviews and document review. Interviews explored participants' experiences of Green Initiatives through a narrative enquiry, which was used because it allows participants to describe experiences in their own terms and preserves important contextual information that is often lost through more structured questioning. By focusing on what happened, rather than solely on opinions or perceptions, narratives provide

insight into the relationships, decision points, uncertainties, and organisational conditions that shape practice within complex systems. Documentary evidence included Green Initiatives proposals, Working Group feedback, capitalisation reports, and other relevant programme documentation. The purpose of combining interviews and document review was to situate individual accounts within their organisational and operational context and strengthen interpretation of emerging patterns.

Box 1: Case study selection

Case study selection:

Three considerations guided case study selection. First, each case needed to offer explanatory power in relation to one or more of the evaluation questions. Second, the set of cases needed collectively to provide coverage across the evaluation framework, with each case contributing to understanding different dimensions of embeddedness, legitimacy, governance, capability, and sustainability. Third, case selection drew on portfolio analysis to ensure that the cases reflected important variations within the Green Initiatives landscape, including differences in levels of engagement, patterns of participation, thematic focus, and implementation trajectories. Additional considerations included operational context, country programme characteristics, and input from members of the Evaluation Advisory Group.

Using these criteria, and following 1) further portfolio analysis, and 2) recommendations from the Advisory Group for the evaluation, the following country programmes were selected as case studies (see Appendix C for further explanation of case study selection rationale).

Case study (Cell)	Case characteristics and selection rationale	Primary illustrative EQ contribution
Yemen (6) <i>High-engagement, energy-dominant</i>	High-engagement context characterised by repeated proposal submission and approval, concentrated within the energy domain. Selected to explore how environmental considerations become embedded and sustained under acute operational pressure.	EQ1 (Embeddedness and norms) Secondary: EQ3, EQ2
Sierra Leone (2) <i>Non-energy / under-represented</i>	Engagement characterised by successful initiatives outside the dominant energy domain, particularly in transport and waste-related areas. Selected to explore how Green Initiatives gains legitimacy through alternative pathways and to examine whether non-energy initiatives rely on different forms of support, capability, or justification.	EQ2 (Legitimacy through co-benefits) Secondary: EQ3
South Africa (7) <i>Stalled / low success</i>	Low-engagement context characterised by limited proposal activity, low approval rates, and subsequent disengagement from the funding mechanism. Selected to explore factors associated with stalled participation, including governance challenges, capability constraints, competing priorities, and the limits of the funding envelope in sustaining momentum.	EQ3 (Governance, capability, and learning) Secondary: EQ4

RDC / DRC (1) <i>Integration beyond envelope</i>	Early entry (2023) with repeated engagement across multiple years and diversification beyond a single domain (5 different domains). Recommended by the Advisory Group. Cell 1 context is repeatedly identified as high-capability.	EQ4 (Sustainability as an organisational condition) Secondary: EQ1
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Because the evaluation was based primarily on case studies, the findings should be understood as identifying recurring patterns, tensions, anomalies, and organisational conditions rather than measuring how widespread particular views, behaviours, or experiences are across OCB. The purpose of the case studies was to provide explanatory insight into how Green Initiatives functions in practice within different contexts, rather than to produce statistically representative findings.

1.2 Light-touch organisational-wide enquiry

The case studies were complemented by a series of semi-structured interviews with organisational support actors from across OCB. These included Working Group members, operational directors, technical referents, representatives from operational support departments, and other stakeholders with visibility across multiple operational contexts. These interviews provided a broader organisational perspective on Green Initiatives and helped identify organisational dynamics, opportunities, and constraints that became visible when looking across the system as a whole.

Additional interviews were conducted in contexts that sat outside the selected case studies and exhibited limited or no engagement with Green Initiatives. EPool was included as a non-participating context. Cell 5 was selected because countries under its responsibility had engaged only minimally with the funding mechanism, submitting very few proposals over time. These interviews enabled the evaluation to explore conditions associated with non-engagement and disengagement, while also providing visibility into parts of the organisational landscape not captured through the four case studies. They served as important counterpoints to the more engaged contexts represented by the case studies and helped avoid drawing conclusions solely from settings where Green Initiatives had been relatively active. An interview with a Cell 4 representative offered an additional vantage point.

A further two interviews were conducted with staff from OCA and OCP where similar funding mechanisms were being implemented.

1.3 Documentary review and portfolio analysis

Documentary evidence combined in-depth review of Green Initiatives within the selected case study missions with a broader review of portfolio and organisational documentation. Documents included proposals, Working Group assessments and feedback, capitalisation reports, guidance materials, and portfolio data. Documents were used to anchor and triangulate interview narratives, compare proposed and reported implementation trajectories, examine how initiatives were framed and justified, trace decision-making and legitimacy processes, and explore how co-benefits were articulated. The review also supported analysis of recurring patterns, variations, anomalies, and signals of organisational learning across domains, funding rounds, selection outcomes, and levels of investment, providing an important complement to interview evidence and supporting interpretation of findings across the wider Green Initiatives landscape. Portfolio data covering Green Initiatives submissions and approvals across funding rounds were analysed to provide a broader understanding of participation patterns and portfolio characteristics.

1.4 Sampling strategy

The evaluation used purposive sampling of interview participants. Participants were selected for their ability to provide insight into the operation, governance, implementation, and experience of Green Initiatives across different organisational levels and contexts. Sampling sought to include perspectives from country programmes, projects, Cells, operational support departments, the Green Initiatives Working Group, and contexts with limited or no engagement with Green Initiatives. The intention was not to achieve statistical representativeness, but to ensure sufficient diversity of perspectives to support explanation, comparison, and pattern identification.

A total of 43 interviews were conducted. Thirty-two interviews were undertaken across the four case study contexts (DRC, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Yemen), while a further eleven interviews were conducted with organisational actors beyond the case studies, see table 1 below. These included stakeholders with organisation-wide visibility of Green Initiatives, representatives of underrepresented operational domains, and actors from contexts characterised by limited engagement or disengagement from the funding mechanism (see table 2). Participants for case studies were drawn from multiple organisational levels, including project, country, Cell, and regional roles, providing perspectives from both operational implementation and organisational oversight (see table 3). Of the 43 interviewees, 10 were women and 33 were men.

Table 1: Interview coverage for case studies and organisational-wide (by gender)

Context	Female	Male	Total
DRC	2	9	11
Sierra Leone	1	6	7
South Africa	2	5	7
Yemen	1	6	7
Organisational-wide	4	7	11
Total	10	33	43

Table 2: Distribution of "organisational-wide" interviews

Organisational-wide interviewees	Number of interviewees
"HQ or regional support staff" stakeholders	5
Silent or disengaged Cells	3
Underrepresented Green Initiatives domains	3
Grand Total	11

Table 3: Distribution of all case study interviews per position

Position of case study interviewees	Number of interviewees
Project	6
Country	9
Cell	9
Regional	4
HQ	4
Grand Total	32

The intention of this sampling strategy was not to produce representative findings, but to assemble a sufficiently diverse body of evidence to support comparison, triangulation, and the identification of recurring patterns, tensions, anomalies, and organisational conditions.

2. Generating insights step

2.1 Interview reflection and self-interpretation

Semi-structured interviews combined narrative enquiry with a small number of structured reflection prompts. Participants were invited to reflect on the experiences they described and, where appropriate, indicate how they understood the significance of particular events, changes, or challenges. These reflections were used as one source of evidence to support interpretation of the qualitative material and to help identify areas of convergence, divergence, and tension across interviews.

2.2 Within-case patterning

Within each case study, interview data, documentary evidence, and portfolio information were reviewed to develop a context-specific understanding of how Green Initiatives had evolved and been experienced within each setting. The analysis sought to identify recurring observations, areas of tension, explanations offered by participants, and contextual factors that appeared to shape engagement with Green Initiatives. Rather than coding data into predefined themes, the analysis focused on developing an interpretive account of each case. Evidence was brought together to identify patterns within the case, explore how participants made sense of these patterns, and examine what they suggested in relation to the evaluation questions. The analysis of each case study was brought together into a short case study note – see Annex C.

2.3 Workshop 1: Exploring emerging patterns

Following patterning of the individual case studies, a facilitated sense-making workshop was held with members of the Evaluation Advisory Group. Participants were invited to interrogate, deepen, and challenge emerging interpretations from the four case studies and explore possible explanations for observed similarities and differences. The workshop was not intended to validate findings or reach consensus. Rather, it served as an opportunity to deepen interpretation, challenge assumptions, and surface additional perspectives on the organisational conditions, relationships, and dynamics shaping engagement with Green Initiatives. Insights from the workshop informed the subsequent cross-case landscape analysis.

2.4 Landscape analysis: Patterns

Following Workshop 1, findings from the case studies, organisation-wide interviews, portfolio analysis, and documentary review were brought together in a cross-case analysis of the Green Initiatives landscape. The purpose of this stage was to move beyond individual cases and identify recurring patterns, important variations, and anomalies visible across the wider body of evidence.

Rather than seeking consensus or reducing findings to a set of common themes, the analysis focused on understanding the overall shape of the landscape. Attention was given to recurring dynamics that appeared across multiple contexts, as well as cases that departed from broader trends and therefore offered insight into alternative pathways, tensions, or exceptions. This process resulted in a provisional landscape of patterns and anomalies that described how Green Initiatives appeared to

function across different operational contexts. The landscape analysis formed the basis for both the findings chapter and the second sense-making workshop.

2.5 Workshop 2: Exploring organisational conditions and future implications

A second facilitated workshop brought together the Evaluation Advisory Group to reflect on the broader pattern landscape emerging from the evaluation. Building on the case study findings and organisation-wide interviews, participants explored the organisational conditions that appeared to enable, constrain, or shape engagement with Green Initiatives and reflected on what these patterns might imply for its future role and design. The workshop was not intended to develop strategy or generate recommendations directly. Rather, it provided an opportunity to collectively examine the organisational environment within which Green Initiatives operates and to explore how different conditions may influence future possibilities.

2.6 Synthesis

Insights from the case studies, organisation-wide enquiry, workshops, portfolio analysis, and document review were brought together. Findings were articulated as recurring patterns and organisational conditions rather than as definitive causal explanations. These findings formed the basis for the evaluative conclusions and the discussion of future directions presented in the report.

3. Generating Insights

3.1 Report development and review

Findings from the evaluation were synthesised into a draft report that was shared with the Stockholm Evaluation Unit (SEU) and members of the Evaluation Advisory Group for factual review and comment. The evaluation team retained responsibility for the analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and final report. Feedback was used to strengthen clarity, accuracy, and usefulness of the report.

3.2 Discussion of findings and dissemination

Following completion of the draft report, a discussion will be held with SEU and members of the Evaluation Advisory Group to reflect on the findings and consider approaches for dissemination and organisational learning. The purpose of this discussion is not to revisit the findings themselves, but to consider how insights from the evaluation may be shared and used within OCB.

3.3 Presentation to a wider OCB audience

To support wider organisational learning, the evaluation team will offer a presentation and discussion of the evaluation findings to interested OCB staff. The session will provide an opportunity to share the main findings, discuss their implications, and encourage reflection on the future role of Green Initiatives within OCB.

3.4 Taking learning forward

Responsibility for considering how learning from the evaluation is taken forward rests with OCB. The evaluation has sought to provide evidence, reflection, and strategic insight regarding the role and future development of Green Initiatives. Decisions regarding the use of findings, dissemination activities, and any subsequent organisational actions will be determined by SEU, the Green Initiatives Working Group, and relevant OCB stakeholders.

LIMITATIONS

Identifying patterns rather than prevalence: The evaluation was designed to generate explanatory insight into how Green Initiatives functions across different organisational contexts. Because the methodology relied primarily on case studies and purposive sampling, the findings identify recurring patterns, tensions, anomalies, and organisational conditions rather than measure how widespread particular views, experiences, or changes are across OCB. The evaluation therefore provides insight into how Green Initiatives appears to operate in practice, rather than population-level conclusions about the prevalence of particular perspectives or behaviours.

Contribution rather than attribution: The evaluation focused on understanding how Green Initiatives may have contributed to observed organisational changes. Given the complexity of OCB's operational environment and the influence of multiple interacting factors, it is not possible to attribute changes in operational practice, decision-making, capability, or environmental awareness solely to Green Initiatives.

Limited visibility of longer-term change: The evaluation explored changes in organisational practices, decision-making, legitimacy, and capability associated with Green Initiatives. However, many of these changes are likely to emerge gradually over time. Given the relatively recent introduction of Green Initiatives and the timing of the evaluation, some forms of embeddedness, capability development, or organisational learning may still be evolving and therefore not yet fully visible.

Dependence on interview accounts and documentation: The evaluation relied primarily on interviews, documentary evidence, portfolio data, and collective sense-making activities. As with all qualitative evaluations, these sources are influenced by factors such as recall, interpretation, positionality, and the availability and quality of documentation. The use of multiple evidence sources provided opportunities for triangulation, but the findings remain dependent on how participants understood and described their experiences.

Staff turnover and organisational memory: In several contexts, individuals directly involved in the design or early implementation of Green Initiatives proposals were no longer in post at the time of the evaluation. As a result, some aspects of proposal development, decision-making, and early implementation were reconstructed through documentation and retrospective accounts rather than direct testimony from those originally involved.

Adaptation of the evaluation design: The methodology evolved during implementation in response to practical considerations and emerging learning needs. Some activities envisaged during the inception phase, including case-specific reflective group discussions and inter-contextual focus group dialogues, were not undertaken. Instead, analytical effort was concentrated on in-depth case study enquiry, organisation-wide interviews, comparative interviews with other OCs, and two structured sense-making workshops. This adaptation reduced demands on operational staff while still providing opportunities for collective interpretation and organisational reflection. Nevertheless, the additional group-based methods may have surfaced further perspectives and interactions that were not captured through the methods ultimately employed.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with principles of voluntary participation, confidentiality, proportionality, and responsible use of data.

Informed and voluntary participation: Participation in interviews and workshops was voluntary. Participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation, how information would be used, and the extent to which confidentiality could be maintained. Individuals were free to decline participation or choose not to answer particular questions.

Confidentiality and non-attribution: Interview notes and workshop contributions were anonymised during analysis and reporting. Findings are presented at an aggregated level and care has been taken to avoid attributing comments to identifiable individuals or, where appropriate, specific operational contexts. The intention was to enable participants to speak openly while minimising professional, operational, or relational risks.

Protection against reputational harm: The evaluation focused on organisational dynamics, conditions, and systems rather than assessing the performance of individual staff members, teams, or country programmes. Findings are therefore presented in a manner intended to support organisational learning and reflection rather than judgement of particular actors.

Proportionality and participant burden: The evaluation was designed with awareness of operational pressures across OCB. Data collection activities were therefore kept proportionate to the evaluation objectives, and methodological choices sought to balance analytical value with demands on participants' time and availability.

Data handling and security: Interview notes, documents, portfolio data, and other materials used in the evaluation were stored securely and used solely for the purposes of the evaluation. Access to evaluation data was restricted to the evaluation team.

Use of Artificial Intelligence: The evaluation team made limited use of Chat GPT 5.5, an AI-supported large language model (LLM), as an analytical and drafting aid. All materials shared with the tool were anonymised and stripped of identifying or confidential information. The tool did not generate primary data, undertake analysis independently, or make evaluative judgements. Responsibility for interpretation, conclusions, and reporting remained entirely with the evaluation team.

Environmental considerations: Consistent with the subject of the evaluation, the methodology sought to minimise unnecessary travel and relied solely on remote engagement. This approach reduced the environmental footprint of the evaluation while remaining proportionate to the evaluation's learning objectives and resource constraints.

Evaluation matrix

Given our systems and mechanism focus, recognition of contribution logic, and our narrative and case-based methods, we developed an evaluation matrix that helped check the evaluation questions are answerable and that methods sensibly map over to questions. We purposely did not aim to develop a framework that locks evaluation questions to fixed indicators and targets or suggests linear causality.

Main evaluation question	What we are trying to understand	Methods of enquiry and purpose	Analytical focus	Cross-cutting considerations
EQ1. Strategic contribution (Mindset Shift & embeddedness) How have the Green Initiatives shifted mindsets, norms, and decision-making conditions such that environmental consideration (and climate resilience) become normal, valued, and self-sustaining within OCB operations?	Whether and how environmental footprint considerations and climate-related risks are becoming part of routine operational thinking, planning, and decision-making, rather than remaining exceptional or project-dependent.	Country programme-level case studies Semi-structured interviews to surface concrete decision moments and practical reflexes where alternatives were (or were not) considered Case-level reflective group discussions to explore shared norms and default practices Document analysis (Green Initiatives proposal and capitalisation reports and proposals, planning and budgeting documents) to trace whether and how considerations are formalised	Self-interpretation using signifiers to capture how decisions are framed Cross-case sense-making to test interpretations of embeddedness Evaluator-led collation into conditions that enable or constrain embedding	- Differences across country programme and Cell and contexts and roles - Time horizon of change - Reliance on individuals (in country programmes or Cells) vs organisational capability
EQ2. Co-benefits & legitimacy What are the co-benefits of the Green Initiatives beyond environmental footprint reduction, and how do these shape the perceived legitimacy	How non-environmental benefits (e.g. operational resilience, quality of care, autonomy, risk reduction) shape perceptions of value, credibility, and	Country programme-level case studies Semi-structured interviews to surface how Green Initiatives are valued, useful, or burdensome are perceived	Self-interpretation using signifiers to capture how legitimacy is produced in practice (for example, whether an initiative is seen as credible or	- Variations between HQ, Cells, and field contexts - Short- vs longer-term benefits

and value of Green Initiatives ideas within OCB?	willingness to engage with Green Initiatives ideas and funding.	• Document review to examine how co-benefits are institutionally signalled (e.g. proposals, capitalisation reports, selection comments). • Case-level reflective group discussions to explore shared judgements of legitimacy and credibility • Light-touch organisation-wide enquiry to capture perspectives from disengaged or unconvinced actors and identify legitimacy gaps • Inter-contextual reflective dialogues to explore how legitimacy is constructed differently across roles	marginal, enabling or burdensome, aligned with operational priorities or in tension with them) • Cross-case sense-making to interrogate whose valuation matters • Evaluator-led collation into conditions shaping legitimacy	• Durability as signals of legitimacy
EQ3. Design, governance and organisational capability How does the design and governance of the Green Initiatives funding envelope shape participation, prioritisation, learning, and capability across the organisation?	How proposal processes, selection criteria, roles, and gatekeeping influence whose ideas progress, how learning circulates, and where capability is built or remains uneven	• Document review to trace selection criteria, feedback loops • Semi-structured interviews with Advisory Group members, Cells, coordinators, and support departments to surface experience of gatekeeping, feasibility, and learning • Light-touch organisation-wide enquiry to reach silent or	• Self-interpretation using signifiers to capture perceptions of governance, inclusion, feasibility, points where ideas stall or gain traction and formal vs informal influence • Initial patterning to identify bottlenecks,	• Power dynamics • Transparency • Inclusion • Dependence on champions • Alignment with organisational rhythms and incentives

		marginalised actors and test inclusion and equity • Inter-contextual reflective dialogues to examine governance dynamics and learning and capability across organisational levels	capability differences, and informal power • Cross-case sense-making to explore contested interpretations • Evaluator-led collation into patterns of enabling and constraining funding envelope design features	
EQ4. Sustainability and the future of the funding envelope How sustainable are the organisational, relational, and capability changes influenced by Green Initiatives, and what role should a dedicated funding envelope play in OCB's future environmental and adaptation strategy?	What the evidence suggests about Green Initiatives' added value as a strategic mechanism; trade-offs between mainstreaming and protection; risks of dilution or over-specialisation.	• Cross-case sense-making workshops as the primary engine for integrating findings from EQ1 to EQ3 and exploring strategic implications • Inter-contextual reflective dialogues to surface cross-system futures, tensions, and trade-offs • Selected interviews with senior decision-makers where clarification is needed	• Cross-case sense-making workshops oriented to futures and trade-offs	• Timing and maturity • Organisational capacity • Unintended consequences of mainstreaming or permanence

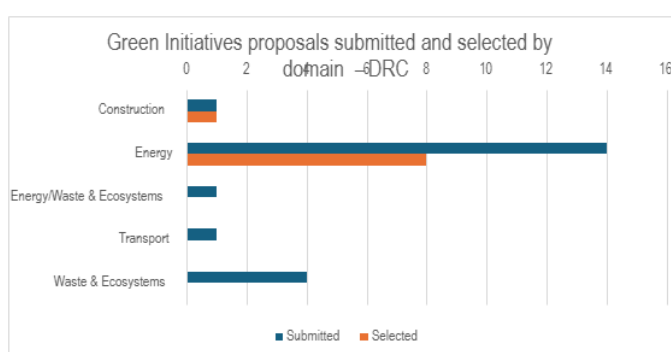
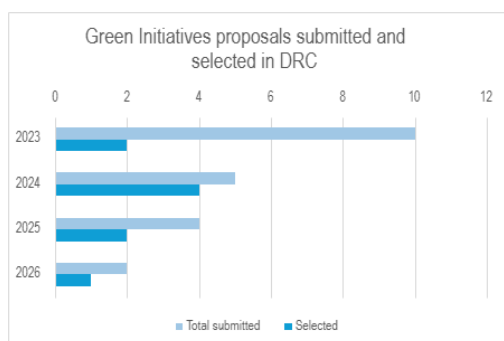
ANNEX C: CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

DRC

Background

- **OCB presence since:** 1985
- **Conflict status:** Armed conflict, internal instability
- **Reason(s) for intervention:** conflict and violence; outbreaks & epidemics systemic medical crises
- **Total number of projects today:** 4 – PUC, Masisi, VIH/SIDA, Goma (nutrition and VSK). Country team + 2 support bases.
- **Projects closed since 2023:** 4 – Kanyaruchinya IDP (end 2024), Ebola Kasai (end 2025, EPool), Kasai Central (2023), Mpox (2025)
- **Average Budget 2023-2026:** 38.1m

Green Initiative proposals



Overall picture

The DRC case was selected because it appeared, at portfolio level, to represent one of the strongest examples of sustained engagement with Green Initiatives over time. From the portfolio analysis we saw repeated engagement across multiple years and diversification beyond a single domain, as well as signs that some practices may be moving beyond Green Initiative projects into routine operational planning. Cell 1 is also identified as high capability. We, therefore, chose the case study to explore what organisational sustainability and embeddedness may look like in practice, including continuation, replication, or integration of environmental considerations beyond Green Initiatives funding.

The evaluation suggests that the DRC case study is less like a story of environmental awareness becoming embedded across the mission and more like a story of how one technology that reduces the environmental footprint of operations became increasingly operationally obvious, credible and normalised within a context shaped by insecurity, generator dependence, fuel transport risks, difficult road access, unstable electricity supply and high operational costs.

The case shows that this trajectory was focused on solar energy and not evenly distributed across environmental reduction domains. Between 2023–2026, DRC submitted 21 proposals. Fourteen were

energy related. Nine proposals were ultimately funded, eight of them energy initiatives and one construction initiative. None of the four waste and ecosystem proposals were selected, nor the mixed energy/waste and ecosystem proposal, nor the transport proposal. This pattern suggests that environmental action became easiest to legitimise (by the Working Group, and to some extent the DRC teams themselves) where it was technically mature, operationally visible, measurable, and already aligned with logistics expertise and operational priorities.

From the interviews, solar appeared to gain legitimacy because it solved practical operational problems: minimising disruptions to care, reducing fuel transport through insecure areas, stabilising electricity supply, lowering generator dependence, and protecting medical infrastructure. Over time, repeated implementation appears to have built familiarity, technical confidence and routine inclusion of solar within infrastructure planning discussions. Solar systems aligned with existing logistics and engineering expertise, produced visible operational results, had measurable return on investment, and could be implemented using technologies already perceived as mature and reliable.

At the same time, the case does not show a complete “green success story.” Much of the strength of engagement seems highly concentrated within logistics, energy referents, technically capable actors and a small number of champions. Non-energy initiatives proved harder to legitimise for the DRC team.

Emerging dynamics that explain this picture

1) *Environmental technologies became operationally legitimate because they reduced operational exposure and fragility*

Across the interviews, solarisation rarely appears to have been driven through environmental conviction alone. Instead, operational vulnerability repeatedly appears as the entry point. Vulnerabilities include the transportation of fuel through insecure zones, generator breakdown, rising fuel costs, unstable grids, and the overall fragility of maintaining cold chain and medical services in remote locations. Masisi is symbolic of this; fuel is moved for hours through insecure terrain, projects are vulnerable to road blockages, and generators were underpinning entire hospital systems.

The introduction of solar, through the Green Initiatives, was described as increasingly difficult to ignore because it directly reduced operational fragility. As one interviewee reported: “Reducing fuel dependency directly improves operational safety and resilience.”

The DRC case study therefore appears less about environmental awareness becoming dominant and more about certain environmental technologies becoming operationally credible and increasingly normal within emergency medical operations.

2) *Rather than broad environmental mainstreaming, the DRC case study may be showing that the use of solar infrastructure is becoming routine practice*

Several interviewees describe the use of solar power options increasingly entering routine planning. It was reported that solar and energy autonomy is discussed automatically during the planning of projects and solar is being integrated into some regular budgets. One interviewee describes the use of solar power, and energy autonomy, as becoming increasingly “reflexive” in Masisi - it is becoming part of the starting assumptions of infrastructure conversations. The deeper shift, therefore, may not

simply be installing solar systems, but changing what operational actors increasingly assume is “normal” infrastructure planning.

The wider portfolio pattern, however, negates any claim of environmental mainstreaming. 14 of DRC’s 21 proposals were energy-related, eight of the nine successful proposals were energy proposals, no waste and ecosystem proposals or the one transport proposal were validated. One interviewee described the challenges of other types of Green Initiatives, reporting the need for behaviour change, increased coordination, and long-term follow-through. Other interviewees, more clearly describe the position of solar initiatives in relation the ambition of reducing the environmental footprint: “The things that we have done... we haven’t done because of climate sensitivity”, “Environmental impact is abstract.”

3) *DRC’s high engagement with Green Initiatives envelope appears strongly dependent on brokerage, technical accompaniment and Cell-level orchestration*

The interviews repeatedly highlight that there was strong involvement from key positions at Cell and regional level, as well as a few motivated individuals within DRC. This included multiple engaged positions at the Cell level, regional technical referents, and the country coordinators, particularly a highly motivated Logistics Coordinator within DRC. The LogCell appear especially important: centralising proposals, filtering and refining ideas, maintaining a tracking system, aligning proposals with Working Group expectations, and effectively creating a Cell-level “sub-committee.” Project teams were described as too operationally stretched to generate ideas themselves. Therefore, the expectation was that “coordination should do the thinking.” The interviews, therefore, suggest DRC’s high engagement with Green Initiatives was not only driven by need, but also by capability density and active brokerage.

4) *Green Initiatives seemed to accelerate pre-existing operational ambitions rather than generate entirely new directions*

Across the interviews a recurring pattern suggests that many of the solar power initiatives already conceptually existed before the Green Initiatives envelope was opened. Solar projects were “kept in the drawers” and plans were delayed due to capital costs. The funding envelope was repeatedly described as freeing initiatives from annual budget trade-offs, accelerating implementation and making solar infrastructure investments possible sooner, it was a “bouffée d’oxygène.”

This raises the question of whether Green Initiatives shaped operational thinking in DRC or whether it just offered a protected financial space for operational investments that already appeared rational to operational actors.

5) *Visible, measurable initiatives with clear operational benefits appear easier to legitimise*

The DRC case study indicates that the legitimacy of initiatives is closely tied to what operational teams can easily understand, calculate, implement and justify within existing MSF operational systems - measurable fuel reduction, visible infrastructure, calculable return on investment, technically feasible, and supporting operational continuity. Solar fits these conditions extremely well - fuel savings can be

shown, generator reduction can be measured, the technical specifications can be calculated, and the operational effects are immediate.

By contrast, waste, ecosystem and behavioural initiatives appear to face a much heavier legitimacy burden. The pattern from submitted proposals reflects this: all waste & ecosystem proposals were unsuccessful, and the transport proposal was unsuccessful. Several interviewees seem to indirectly recognise this dynamic. For example, one interviewee reported that waste initiatives are slower and less immediately visible. Similarly, another interviewee reported that some ideas were rejected because “the benefit would not be visible right away.”

The case therefore suggests that Green Initiatives may privilege forms of environmental action that resemble operational infrastructure problems already familiar to MSF systems.

6) *Operationally useful environmental solutions still generate new dependencies and “least bad” compromises*

There was some indication in the DRC case study of scepticism and hesitancy towards the green credentials of the solar initiatives. One interviewee, particularly, highlighted that solar panels are linked to coltan extraction, that battery disposal is unresolved, that solar is subject to theft, whilst also questioning whether MoH have the capacity to maintain systems. The interviewee framed environmental action as, “choosing the least bad solution.”

7) *Dedicated Green Initiatives funding appears to function partly as a workaround for short-term humanitarian budgeting systems*

Across the interviews, colleagues describe solar initiatives as operationally sensible, economically rational over the long-term, and already desired before the Green Initiatives funding became available. However, the high upfront investment costs were reported as difficult to absorb within OCB’s normal budgeting logic, where such investments appear to compete directly against immediate medical and operational priorities. Several interviewees explained that solar initiative would have to be scaled down or split across multiple years because regular budgets could not absorb them. One interviewee describes having to use “budgetary fiction” to absorb solar into normal budgets. The Green Initiatives envelope therefore appears to have functioned partly as an investment space that loosened short-term budget constraints.

8) *DRC’s apparent successful engagement with Green Initiatives may rely on organisational conditions not evenly distributed elsewhere*

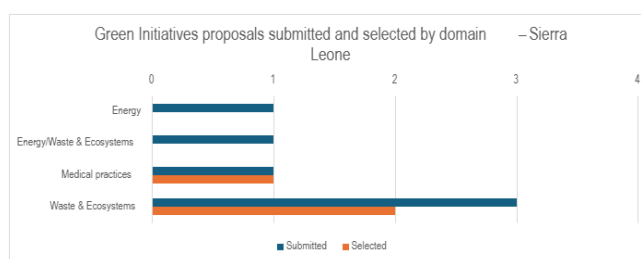
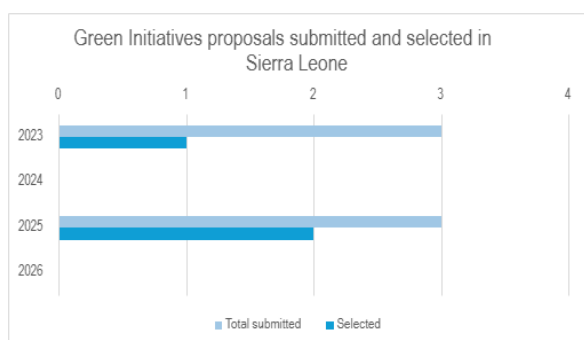
As reported above, the case shows high levels of accompaniment, proposal refinement, technical support, and Cell coordination. This raises the question of whether such supportive organisational conditions are distributed across OCB.

SIERRA LEONE

Background

- **OCB presence since:** 1986
- **Conflict status:** Stable
- **Reasons for intervention:** systemic medical crisis, outbreaks and epidemics
- **Total number of projects today:** 1- Kenema. There was also an MPox emergency project, June-Aug 2025.
- **Average budget 2023-2026:** TBC

Green Initiative proposals



Overall picture

Sierra Leone was chosen as a case study because its engagement with Green Initiatives was characterised by both successful and unsuccessful proposals in non-energy domains, which is comparatively rare in the overall Green Initiatives portfolio. The case study repeatedly suggests that environmental action only became workable when translated into recognised operational language: safe disinfection, IPC compliance, disruptions to care, reduced supply vulnerability, rational use of materials, operational sustainability and MoH continuity after MSF exit.

At the same time, the case also shows how much organisational labour this required. For example, the Wear with Care initiative depended on audits, coaching, continuous assessment and reassurance around Lassa fever risk, and dedicated infection prevention control (IPC) capacity. The two Maxi-WATA initiatives appear relatively straightforward technically, but still depended on technical accompaniment, maintenance planning, local servicing solutions, and operational ownership after handover.

The case study seems, therefore, less like a story of “green innovation” and more like a story where environmental footprint reduction became possible through existing operational systems, and only when there was enough legitimacy, implementation support around it.

Emerging dynamics that explain this picture

1. Environmental action became legitimate when translated into recognised operational practice

Across the Sierra Leone case study, environmental initiatives rarely appear to gain legitimacy through environmental arguments alone. Instead, initiatives became workable when translated into IPC

improvement, operational continuity, reduced supply vulnerability, rational resource use, MoH continuity after handover, or operational sustainability and handover to MoH.

The two Maxi-WATA initiatives are a strong example of this. Their legitimacy appears to come primarily from reliable local chlorine production, reducing dependency on imported chlorine and supply chain vulnerabilities, reducing hazardous transport and storage, reducing operational cost, and supporting MoH after MSF exit. The reduction of transport, storage and disposal of chlorine also reduced environmental footprint, but this appears secondary to the operational and IPC rationale rather than the central legitimacy pathway. Similarly, Wear with Care became workable when framed as correct IPC practice and rationalisation of glove use. Environmental change became acceptable when translated into recognised medical governance language.

This raises a possible tension: although translating into operational language may enable environmental action, it may also narrow what kinds of environmental concerns become organisationally legitimate.

2. Behavioural and medical initiatives appear organisationally heavier than infrastructure or environmental health initiatives

The single Wear with Care initiative appears qualitatively different from the chlorine initiatives. It required significant behaviour change: modification of clinical routines, reassurance around staff safety, audits, bedside observation, training, and continuous reinforcement. Lassa fever complicated the initiative with some staff questioning whether reducing glove use was appropriate - fearing safety, and there were periods where the teams discussed continuing the initiative. One interviewee described the tension as, “encouraging medical staff to use PPE and then telling them to rationalise use and reduce glove use.”

By contrast, the two Maxi-WATA initiatives appear easier to operationalise because the operational benefits were immediately visible, the technology pathway was clearer, and implementation was more technically owned. At the same time, Maxi-WATA initiatives still required local maintenance training and solutions to spare parts.

Therefore, although behavioural initiatives seem to be possible inside emergency medical systems, they appear to require much heavier implementation support, with more negotiation around their legitimacy work than “simple” technical initiatives.

3. Green Initiatives created permission to focus on operational practices that were known problems

The interviews suggested that misuse of PPE was not unknown before Wear with Care. IPC teams knew gloves were overused, PPE was often misapplied, and misuse created both operational and environmental problems. Green Initiatives appears to have created the time and resources to pay attention to issues that otherwise remain peripheral.

4. Sierra Leone appeared to function as a favourable experimentation site, but its possibly not typical within the OCB portfolio

The case study evidence suggests Sierra Leone may have offered supportive conditions for experimenting with non-energy initiatives. Interviewees described Sierra Leone as having long MSF presence, operational stability, IPC maturity, large hospital infrastructure, and stable conditions. As one interviewee stated, “It would be hard to rationalise glove use in a conflict zone.”

Sierra Leone may demonstrate what becomes possible with operational stability, IPC capability and the protected support of a Green Initiative; but it may not necessarily illustrate what is easily replicable elsewhere.

5. GI appears to function partly as a workaround to operational scarcity

Several interviewees described Green Initiatives less as an environmental mechanism and more as an alternative budget pathway, or as a protected experimentation space. One interviewee described attempting to include Maxi-WATA in ordinary ARO budgeting but turning to Green Initiatives because “the envelope was tight.”

This feels important because it suggests Green Initiatives may function simultaneously as experimentation support and innovation subsidy, as well as a workaround to operational budget limitations.

6. Learning and replication appear highly relational rather than institutionalised

The Sierra Leone case study repeatedly suggests that replication and diffusion of initiatives happen through relationships, technical referents, and “water-cooler” conversations, rather than through formal organisational systems. This may be adaptive and realistic inside humanitarian operations, but it may also be fragile, uneven, and vulnerable to staff turnover.

Key tension

1. Environmental responsibility vs staff safety

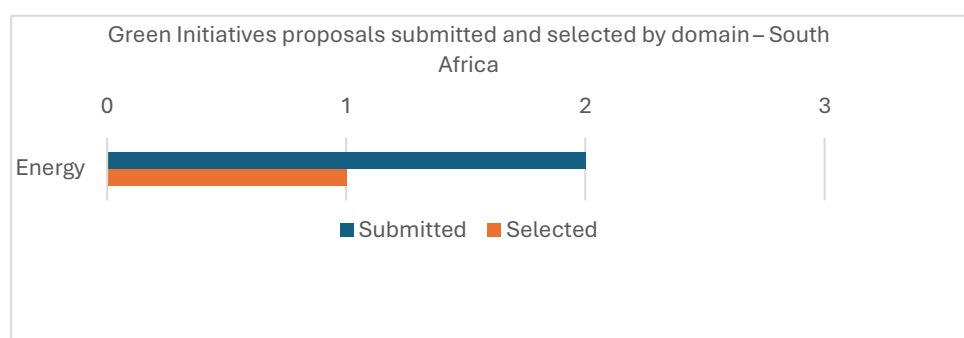
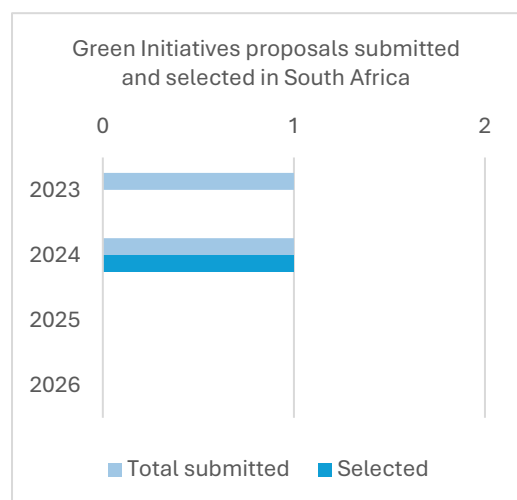
The Wear with Care initiative surfaced fears around Lassa fever infection exposure and reducing PPE in a high-risk medical setting. The environmental footprint reduction initiative only remained legitimate when continuously reassured through IPC evidence and field-level decision making.

SOUTH AFRICA

Background

- **OCB presence since:** 2000
- **Conflict status:** Stable
- **Reason(s) for intervention:** Systemic medical crisis
- **Total number of projects today:** 1 (only project since 2023, two other projects closed that year)
- **Average budget 2023-2026:** 2.8 m

Green Initiative proposals



Overall picture

South Africa was chosen as a case study because initial analysis of Green Initiative proposals showed a pattern of stalled engagement (no proposals after 2024) and low success (1 out of 2 proposals selected). It was chosen to contrast cases that showed high engagement with the Green Initiatives.

The patterns from the case study interviews and the document review, suggest that South Africa does appear to be a case where engagement with the Green Initiatives envelope remained partial, interrupted, and difficult to sustain within a context of scaling-down operational activities and uncertainty about the future of the mission. It is not a simple case however, of disengagement from environmental concerns.

South Africa was successful with just one Green Initiative proposal. This was the proposal for Solar Energy for Eastern Cape NCDs – the Butterworth project. This emerged during a period of severe national load-shedding, when unstable electricity supply was affecting diagnostics, medication storage, office functioning, and the ability to provide uninterrupted care. In this context, solarisation became operationally meaningful as a backup power solution.

Prior to this proposal, South Africa had also submitted a regional sensitisation proposal focused on awareness-raising, energy audits, planning, and organisational capability-building. The proposal was unsuccessful. Several interviewees described frustration, disappointment, and confusion around this

decision, particularly because they had understood that the Working Group was encouraging innovative ideas and broader environmental thinking.

The contrast between the rejected sensitisation proposal and the successful Butterworth solar proposal appears to have shaped how some colleagues interpreted what kinds of environmental initiatives Green Initiatives was most able to support. Several interviewees felt that technically clear infrastructure proposals with visible operational value were easier to legitimise than longer-term behavioural or awareness-focused initiatives.

At the same time, the case study also highlights evidence of smaller environmental activities occurring outside the Green Initiatives mechanism altogether, such as changes to lighting systems, air conditioners, and energy efficiency practices through ordinary country budgets. This complicates any straightforward reading of South Africa as environmentally disengaged.

Emerging dynamics that explain this picture

1. *Successful engagement with Green Initiatives was activated by infrastructure instability disrupting operations*

The only successful engagement with Green Initiatives for South Africa came during periods of severe load-shedding in the country and disruption of care, diagnostics, medication storage, office functioning and backup power needs. Prior to the energy crisis there was relatively little attention to solar powered systems in South Africa, “There was no culture of solar.” Environmental ambition did not appear to drive successful engagement; instead, operational disruption appears to have created the clearest organisational opening for the proposal to gain traction.

At the same time, there also appears to have been genuine environmental concern among several staff members. Some interviewees describe other environmental practices already happening through normal budgets (lighting changes, energy reduction through changes in air conditioning, hybrid vehicles elsewhere in the region), motivated by personal environmental ambitions and MSF’s wider environmental commitment.

2. *Engagement with Green Initiatives appeared highly dependent on motivated individuals and informal ownership*

Interviews point toward environmental activity being carried by specific individuals rather than clearly institutionalised structures. Some colleagues appeared highly personally invested in environmental initiatives and had prior experience. Some positions seemed central to moving the Green Initiatives proposals forward.

The case does not suggest environmental capability was absent. Rather, capability appears unevenly distributed, loosely anchored, and vulnerable to operational overload, project closure, and shifting attention. This appears especially important because South Africa only submitted two proposals across the entire Green Initiatives period.

3. *The rejection of the sensitisation proposal appears to have shaped perceptions of what Green Initiatives ‘really’ supports*

The unsuccessful regional sensitisation proposal seemed to hold importance. Several interviewees describe disappointment, confusion, limited feedback, and a feeling that more behavioural or long-

term initiatives were less valued than technical infrastructure projects. Several colleagues described feeling that, “The proposal was too early”; “We should have stuck with the classic ideas.”

The sensitisation proposal was framed around: awareness, audits, organisational capability, and long-term thinking. By contrast, the successful Butterworth proposal solved an immediate operational problem, had a clearer technical pathway, and resembled solar projects already visible elsewhere in the Green Initiatives portfolio.

Interviewees appeared to interpret this contrast as evidence that Green Initiatives more easily legitimised hard infrastructure, operational continuity and technically measurable interventions rather than longer-term behavioural and awareness work.

At the same time, the document review complicates this interpretation. Review of the Working Group selection documentation suggests the Working Group was not opposed to the sensitisation initiative itself. Instead, comments in the review process indicate concerns around unclear scope, difficulty articulating expected impact, and limited clarity around return on investment.

This creates an important distinction between why the proposal may have been rejected, and how the rejection was experienced and interpreted by the South Africa team. The perception of the rejection remains highly important. Even if the Working Group concerns related primarily to proposal design, scope or implementation approach, several interviewees experienced the rejection as signalling something broader about what kinds of initiatives felt realistic to propose, what Green Initiatives appeared to value, and whether longer-term organisational or behavioural change work was likely to receive support.

The case therefore repeatedly highlights the tension between immediate operational problem-solving and slower organisational or behavioural change. Several interviewees linked this tension to wider MSF operational culture: “People are concerned about surviving in the present.”

4. *Contraction of operations in South Africa shaped what felt worth investing in*

The case also returns to the fact that South Africa operations were already winding down during the early Green Initiatives period. This appears to have shaped engagement with the envelope through uncertainty about long-term investment and competing operational priorities, “There was a moment of consolidation and question of why to apply for Green Initiatives.”

At the same time, Butterworth complicates this narrative because it was a newer project, in a remote area, during a period of severe infrastructure instability. The case therefore raises broader questions around:

- under what operational conditions environmental work feels worth the effort,
- when OCB could invest in longer-term infrastructure or behavioural change,
- and how shrinking operational horizons shape willingness to experiment.

5. *The wider Green Initiatives portfolio may have shaped proposal behaviour*

Multiple interviews suggest the Butterworth solar proposal was influenced by seeing how successful solar proposals had been elsewhere in the Green Initiatives portfolio. This may suggest a signalling effect within the portfolio teams observing what kinds of proposals appear likely to succeed, and adapting proposal behaviour accordingly. However, the evidence remains tentative.

6. Activity to reduce the environmental footprint existed outside the Green Initiatives envelope

Several interviewees describe practical environmental activities occurring through ordinary operational budgets rather than through Green Initiatives: lighting replacement, air-conditioning changes, energy reduction practices, hybrid vehicles elsewhere in the region. Green Initiatives alone does not reflect environmental engagement.

7. The timing and structure of Green Initiatives may have advantaged technically mature proposals

Several interviewees describe challenges with short Green Initiatives proposal windows, overlap with ARO budgeting, and therefore limited iterative engagement with the Working Group. This may have favoured proposals that were already technically clear, easy to specify, and operationally legible.

8. There is uncertainty around implementation visibility and follow-through

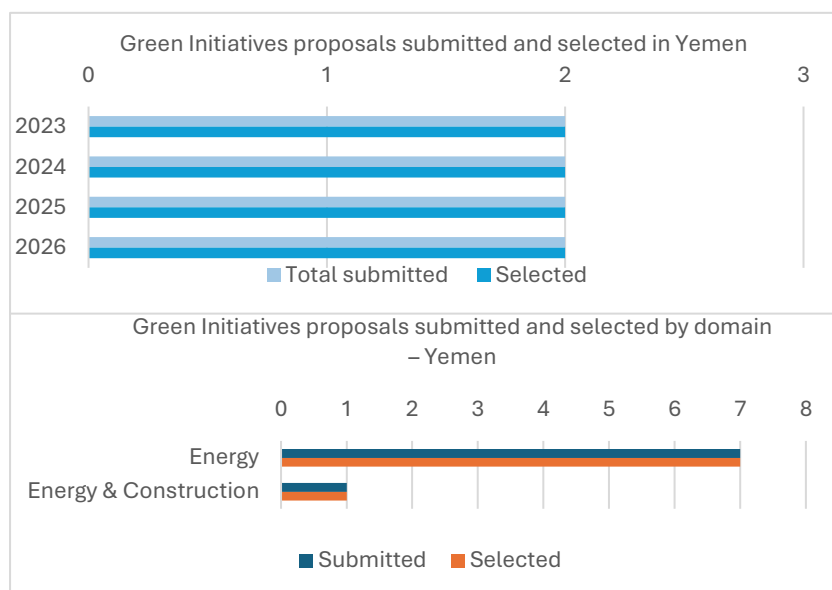
One important aspect of the South Africa case is the reported uncertainty around whether the Butterworth solar project was actually installed. Several interviewees expressed uncertainty about implementation status.

YEMEN

Background

- **OCB presence since:** 2020
- **Conflict status:** Armed conflict
- **Reason(s) for intervention:** Conflict & violence
- **Total number of projects today:** 2 (1 closed since 2023)
- **Average budget 2023-2026:** TBC

Green Initiative proposals



Overall picture

Yemen was chosen as a case study because it was a country with repeated proposal submission and 100% selection across multiple years, with a strong concentration in energy-related initiatives. Yemen is also a highly volatile, emergency-oriented context, challenging assumptions that Green Initiatives primarily function in stable settings.

Evidence from interviews and document review suggests that the Yemen case study does not show environmental transformation across the mission. Instead, it seems to be a case where OCB have increasingly recognised the operational usefulness of technologies that can reduce the environmental footprint of operations within a context shaped by conflict, fuel insecurity, damaged infrastructure, extreme heat, and unreliable electricity supply. Over time, colleagues have also become increasingly familiar with these technologies, particularly solar systems and energy optimisation approaches.

The strongest legitimacy for the Green Initiatives in Yemen came from their ability to address recurring energy problems that were directly affecting medical operations and continuity of services. Interviewees described a context of fuel shortages and rising fuel costs, difficulties transporting fuel, generators running continuously, generator breakdown, unstable electricity supply, and the operational risks created when hospitals and health facilities could not maintain electricity for medical activities, cold chains, lighting, or air conditioning. Within this context, solar systems increasingly

became seen as a practical way of reducing dependence on fragile fuel systems and improving operational stability.

Importantly, solar systems are not described in Yemen as unusual or experimental technologies. Several interviewees noted that solarisation is already widespread across the country, including in residential settings, because of the unreliability of national electricity supply.

This gives the Yemen case study a different texture from contexts where solarisation is framed primarily as innovation or environmental experimentation. In Yemen, solar systems increasingly appear to be treated as ordinary infrastructure for maintaining reliable electricity under unstable conditions.

Several interviewees described a shift over time from assuming generators were the default solution to increasingly treating solarisation as the first option, with generators becoming backup systems. Repeated implementation also appears to have built familiarity and confidence around sizing systems, planning energy demand, and integrating solar into infrastructure discussions.

The hospital insulation initiative (the Energy & Construction initiative on the graph above) is slightly different. Although it has not yet been implemented, interviewees described it as important because it strengthened attention around reducing energy demands and improving building performance, rather than focusing only on energy supply. However, because Yemen only submitted one non-solar proposal, it is difficult to argue that this broader approach has become established.

The evidence that these technologies and approaches are becoming integrated into operational planning and decision-making across the country offices remains partial. There appears to be a strong reliance on the Green Initiatives funding envelope to act as a budget for these approaches. Several interviewees also repeatedly raised concerns about maintenance, battery disposal, local servicing capacity, handover to MoH, and whether systems will remain functional once technical accompaniment falls away.

Emerging dynamics that explain this picture

1. Technologies that reduce environmental footprint became legitimate because they reduced operational vulnerability

Across the Yemen proposals and interviews, the strongest legitimacy pathway was not environmental responsibility but operational reliability. Solar powered systems were described as offering stable electricity, reduced fuel dependence, and protection from fragile fuel supply systems. One interviewee framed solarisation as “stable power” and “operational sustainability.”

Operational vulnerability (fuel shortages, damaged infrastructure, difficulty transporting fuel, overheating generators, inability to source genuine spare parts) is what made solar systems meaningful inside emergency medical operations, rather than environmental concerns entering as a primary framing lens.

At the same time, the interviews also suggest a gradual shift in operational assumptions. Several interviewees describe movement from assuming generators are the default, toward assuming solar systems should increasingly be considered first, with generators as backup. This feels important organisationally because it suggests certain infrastructure choices may be becoming operationally normalised, even where broader environmental ideology remains weakly evidenced.

At the same time, the case repeatedly suggests that operational and environmental rationalities are aligning, primarily around energy systems. The evidence is much weaker that environmental considerations themselves are independently shaping wider operational decision-making across the mission.

2. Green Initiatives created protected space for longer-horizon infrastructure thinking inside emergency operations

One of the strongest dynamics across the evaluation data is that Green Initiatives appear to have (temporarily) loosened the standard budgeting logic of emergency humanitarian operations. Several interviewees repeatedly describe solar systems as operationally useful, but difficult to justify within ordinary project budgets because of the high upfront investment. Green Initiatives was, therefore, described as “a backup budget” and “an additional budget that frees up space for other things.”

Green Initiatives seemed to be not only funding projects. It seemed to be enabling a different temporal logic. Instead of only asking “What is needed immediately for operations?”, the funding envelope seemed to allow teams to think about:

- What reduces long-term operational fragility?
- What will help maintain continuity, after handover?
- What reduces dependence on unstable fuel systems?
- What infrastructure might still function after MSF leaves?

For example, one interviewee said that the funding envelope allowed the Yemen team to “think about something lasting.” This appears important. MSF operate in a humanitarian system strongly oriented toward immediate medical priorities, relatively short operational horizons, and emergency expenditure - to what degree are OCB aiming for sustainable impact.

At the same time, the Yemen case study did raise questions about how durable this shift is. Several interviewees suggest that if Green Initiatives funding disappeared, large solar investments would struggle to compete against immediate medical priorities and ordinary project budgeting constraints.

This creates an unresolved organisational question: has Green Initiatives changed operational planning assumptions, or has it temporarily suspended ordinary budgeting constraints through a parallel funding mechanism?

3. Familiarity with solar powered energy systems is increasing.

Through repeated engagement with the Green Initiatives, and specifically with solar energy systems, the Yemen team appears to have created operational familiarity, technical confidence, and growing acceptance of solar systems as part of routine infrastructure planning. Several interviewees describe solarisation as becoming less exceptional, generators increasingly becoming backup systems, and teams becoming more confident sizing systems, estimating energy demand, and integrating solar into planning discussions.

However, we caution against reading this as environmental considerations shaping operational decision-making. As noted above, solar powered systems were described as offering operational reliability rather than supporting broader environmental ideology.

The insulation/passive cooling HVAC initiative appears important here because it shifts attention from energy substitution toward reducing energy demand itself, improving building performance, ventilation, thermal comfort, and passive cooling approaches. However, Yemen only submitted one

major non-solar proposal, so the evidence for broader organisational expansion beyond solarisation remains tentative.

4. *Solarisation is both operationally stabilising and operationally expanding demand*

The case study raised a tension around energy demand. Whilst solar powered systems reduce dependence on Yemen's fragile fuel systems and improves operational stability, some interviewees noted that the alternative energy supply often expanded operational consumption. One interviewee described situations where facilities who had shifted to solar energy also increased their use of air conditioning, and other energy-intensive infrastructure because energy felt more available and reliable. Thus, solar power may simultaneously stabilise operations and reduce generator dependence, it may also expand expectations and energy demand inside facilities.

This stresses the importance of the insulation initiative. Rather than focusing only on alternative energy supply, it introduced attention to reducing energy demand, reducing heat load, and improving building performance.

5. *Practicality is a stronger organising principle than innovation or environmental ambition*

The evaluation data repeatedly indicated that technologies that reduce environmental footprint only become workable when they fit the operational realities. Interviewees consistently stressed the importance of using local materials, systems being maintained, and MoH having capacity to operate systems after handover. In relation to the HVAC insulation initiative, one interviewee repeatedly grounded the initiative in adapting designs to Yemen, limiting scope to manageable sections of hospitals, and balancing ambition with what can realistically be implemented. More broadly, interviewees rarely discussed environmental initiatives in environmental terms alone. Instead, they consistently framed them through operational feasibility, continuity of services, energy reliability, and whether systems could realistically function in Yemeni conditions. The case therefore suggests that technologies reducing environmental footprint gained traction not because they were environmentally innovative in themselves, but because they could be integrated into the practical realities of emergency medical operations.

6. *Sustainability is understood primarily through infrastructure continuation and post-exit feasibility*

The Yemen proposals and interviews frame sustainability through continuity of electricity, infrastructure durability, reduced fuel dependence, and whether systems remain usable after MSF withdrawal. Interviewees repeatedly discussed handover, maintenance, local servicing, training local actors.

At the same time, the case study repeatedly surfaces unresolved sustainability issues with the Green Initiatives. This includes questions around battery disposal, lack of recycling systems, and technical and supplier dependence.

The Yemen case study therefore raises an interesting dynamic around increasing operational resilience (solar systems reduce dependence on fuel) whilst creating new forms of infrastructure dependency (dependence on batteries, maintenance systems, specialised expertise, and long-term servicing capacity).

7. *"Low-hanging fruit" may conceal deeper organisational limits*

Several interviewees described the implementation of solar powered systems as the "low-hanging fruit" of the Green Initiatives. Its operationally visible, OCB have the technical expertise, its

measurable in terms of carbon reduction and cost-savings and directly linked to immediate operational concerns. This may explain why solar powered systems gained such strong traction in Yemen compared with other forms of environmental action.

At the same time, does this raise a question about whether this operational fit may also indicate organisational or country limits around the Green Initiatives? Yemen submitted only one major non-solar proposal, and there is relatively little evidence of broader engagement with waste systems, procurement, or wider behavioural change initiatives.