



IMPLEMENTING THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS: THE ICRC'S PLAN OF ACTION 2021–2024+



INTRODUCTION

The climate and environmental crises are affecting people across the globe. The situation is only getting worse – and countries affected by conflict are among those hit the hardest. Some 60 per cent of the 25 countries considered most vulnerable to climate change and least ready to adapt according to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-Gain) Index are experiencing conflict.¹ This statistic does not point to a direct causal link between climate change and conflict, but to the lesser adaptive capacity of countries in conflict, which makes them particularly vulnerable to climate variability and extremes.

The convergence of climate risks and conflict and other situations of violence has grave humanitarian consequences. It worsens food, economic and water insecurity. It widens health disparities. It limits access to essential services. It weakens the capacity of institutions to provide support. And it can shape human mobility and access to resources on a continental scale.

At the ICRC, we are committed to doing our part to help communities enduring conflict and other violence adapt to a changing climate and environment. We are also determined to limit our own footprint. In May 2021, the organization adopted the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations.² The Charter contains seven commitments. The first focuses on stepping up our response to growing humanitarian needs and helping people adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crises. The second involves maximizing the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The next four commitments set out how we will achieve our ambitions, from building our knowledge and embracing local leadership, to nurturing collective action and using our influence to that effect. The last commitment calls for the adoption of specific targets and action plans that spell out how we will implement the Charter.

In line with this, we have established an initial set of three organizational targets that reflect our priorities:

- Factoring climate and environmental risks in all programmes by 2025
- Reducing the ICRC's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2030, compared to 2018 levels, including all direct and indirect emissions
- Strengthening awareness, understanding and implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL) protecting the environment among states and parties to conflict as a result of the ICRC's bilateral and multilateral engagement, publications, and legal tools by 2025

This document gives a high-level overview of our plan of action for translating the Charter and our specific commitments into practice. This plan of action is aligned with the ICRC Strategy 2019–2024.³

STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The first table in this document details the activities that the ICRC will carry out between 2021 and 2024 and beyond. These activities are arranged into three interconnected focus areas: integrating climate and environmental risks in our programmes, reducing the ICRC's environmental footprint, and conducting policy and legal development and engagement on climate and the environment. The final section of this table sets out the enablers, including access to sufficient funding, that will support all dimensions of this work. At the end of the document, there is a matrix indicating how each initiative will help us meet the Charter's seven commitments.

1 University of Notre Dame, "Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative: Country Rankings", 2021: <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>, all web addresses accessed March 2022.

2 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), "The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations", 2021: <https://www.climate-charter.org/>.

3 ICRC, *ICRC Strategy 2019–2024*, ICRC, Geneva, 2022: <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/4354-icrc-strategy-2019-2022>



1. INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS INTO OUR PROGRAMMES

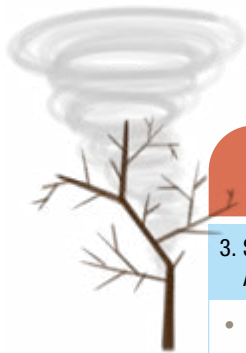
The ICRC seeks to strengthen conflict-affected communities' ability to absorb the combined consequences of conflict and climate shocks. It will support communities in adapting and transforming their capacities and resources to better manage future stresses caused by the combined effects of conflict and climate change, in collaboration with relevant partners, while strengthening the environmental sustainability of its programmes to systematically prevent degradation of the environment on which affected people rely for their livelihood and well-being.

CHARTER TARGET:

Factor climate and environmental risks in all programmes by 2025.

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|---|--|---|-------|
| 1. DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK TO INTEGRATE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned and development of guidance on integrating climate risks in water and habitat, and economic security programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a comprehensive programmatic framework for water and habitat, economic security, and health and protection activities, and development of appropriate tools and guidance to mitigate and address identified risks for specialist teams and/or delegations, informed by recommendations from the climate screenings of ICRC programmes | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification, strengthening and scaling-up of existing activities that contribute to climate change adaptation or mitigation, and development of new ones | | | |
| 2. STRENGTHENING OF CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR OPERATIONAL STAFF | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc training through the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Climate Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-learning modules on climate, the environment and humanitarian action Identification of training gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing capacity-building and peer learning for ICRC leadership, technical experts and key operational partners, including National Societies | |





| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|------|------|------|-------|
|------|------|------|-------|

3. STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF ICRC DELEGATIONS TO ASSESS AND MANAGE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piloting of an annual climate risk register by delegations, identifying risks faced by communities and mitigation measures Development of national and regional fact sheets (by the RCRC Climate Centre) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out of a community-level climate risk register across all delegations as part of the ICRC's annual planning and budgeting cycle, in consultation with relevant partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool sharing with interested National Societies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piloting of environmental risk assessment tool in Iraq Definition and mapping of environmental management steps in assistance project cycles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued piloting in selected delegations Development of environmental risk management in the programmatic framework Definition of environmental indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out and training, including with operational partners |

4. GRADUAL INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE RISKS INTO OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate screenings of ICRC programmes in selected countries, in partnership with the RCRC Climate Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate screenings of all ICRC programmes and stress testing of selected projects, in partnership with the RCRC Climate Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the programmatic framework in field-led initiatives, informed by recommendations from climate screenings Monitoring of operational integration on a yearly basis |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local, regional and global partnerships, including with the Movement, to strengthen the resilience of conflict-affected communities | | |

5. ENERGY 4 PEOPLE, AN INITIATIVE TO BOOST MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO MEET THE ENERGY NEEDS OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CONFLICT OR VIOLENCE

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting-up of two energy training hubs (in Nairobi and Dubai) | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies on the energy needs of people affected by conflict or violence and the ICRC's response | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaling-up of activities to meet the energy needs of people affected by conflict or violence | |





2. REDUCING THE ICRC'S ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

The ICRC will enhance its own environmental policies and practices by improving its energy efficiency, reducing its dependence on fossil fuels, reducing and ensuring proper treatment of hazardous waste in the field, and demanding higher-quality and sounder environmental practices from its suppliers.

CHARTER TARGET:

Reduce the ICRC's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2030, compared to 2018 levels.

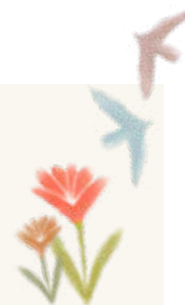
| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|--|--|---|-------|
| 1. REDUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF ICRC PREMISES | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of the Sustainable Delegation Process, which monitors delegations' environmental impacts and supports action plans to reduce them (data integrity) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of the Sustainable Delegation Process (action planning) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Sustainable Delegation Process | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of cross-cutting environmental standards | | |
| 2. ENERGY TRANSITION | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff energy survey Business case for the highest fuel-consuming sites in seven countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piloting of staff-centred activities tailored to the energy survey Development of the energy efficiency business case and standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out of staff-centred activities tailored to the energy survey Implementation of the energy efficiency business case and standards | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of solar power systems at the highest fuel-consuming sites in seven countries Installation of solar power systems at other premises on an ad hoc basis | | |
| 3. DECARBONIZATION OF ICRC OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a carbon accounting tool Partnership with the Climate Action Accelerator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the ICRC's environmental and decarbonization roadmap | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the environmental and decarbonization roadmap | | |



| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|---|--|---|-------|
| 4. SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN ALLIANCE, WORKING TO FURTHER EMBED SUSTAINABILITY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS, INCLUDING FLEET AND PROCUREMENT, FOR THE ICRC AND THE MOVEMENT | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the Sustainable Supply Chain Challenge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of the Sustainable Supply Chain Challenge initiatives and knowledge sharing | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of tarpaulin and woven polypropylene bags | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of specifications for a carbon accounting tool for the humanitarian sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and piloting of the carbon accounting tool for the humanitarian sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of the carbon accounting tool for the humanitarian sector | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of sustainable procurement requirements for ten key items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of the “quality, social and environmental” approach in procurement • Strengthening of the ICRC purchasing team to increase sustainable procurement • Review of the most-purchased items per category from a sustainability risks perspective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of a standard operating procedure to reduce sustainability risks | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to a sustainable fleet (optimization and garage waste management) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to sustainable freight and air operations (AirOps) | | |



3. POLICY AND LEGAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT ON CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



The ICRC will advocate, within and beyond the humanitarian sector, for stronger climate action, environmental protection and climate finance for communities enduring conflict. It will also work to shape the role of humanitarian organizations in addressing the climate crisis, leveraging its experience and expertise in addressing the needs of people who require humanitarian assistance, and will promote respect for IHL rules protecting the environment.

CHARTER TARGET:

Strengthen awareness, understanding and implementation of IHL protecting the environment among states and parties to conflict as a result of the ICRC's bilateral and multilateral engagement, publications, and legal tools by 2025.

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|--|--|------|-------|
| 1. DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development, adoption and promotion of the Charter, in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-development of guidance with the IFRC and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) Support to signatories and promotion of the Charter | | |
| 2. STRENGTHENING OF CLIMATE ACTION AND FINANCE IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY CONFLICT AND OTHER VIOLENCE | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued bilateral and multilateral engagement with development, humanitarian, climate and research bodies to explore avenues to strengthen climate action and finance in these settings, including by co-convening a group of multilateral development banks (MDBs), humanitarian agencies and researchers along with the World Bank, and public communication in order to raise awareness of the consequences of converging climate risks and conflict/violence | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-convening of an expert round table on climate finance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of a policy report on unlocking climate finance, in partnership with key organizations | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies on responses that strengthen people's resilience in conflict settings | | |

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. STRENGTHENING OF RESPECT FOR IHL PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DURING ARMED CONFLICT | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the ICRC Guidelines on the Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict (2020) Co-hosting of a blog series on war, law and the environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-convening of a state expert meeting on IHL and the protection of the natural environment Publication of a legal factsheet on the national implementation of key protections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symposium in the International Review of the Red Cross on international law and the environment in conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of protection of the environment in IHL programmes at leading academic institutions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued efforts to strengthen awareness, understanding and implementation of IHL protecting the environment among states and parties to conflict through bilateral and multilateral engagement, publications, and legal tools | | | |

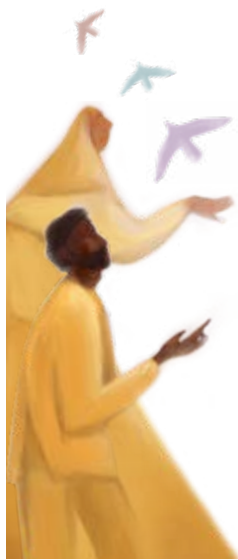




ENABLERS

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024+ |
|--|---|---|-------|
| 1. EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF EFFORTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing internal coordination and steering mechanisms on climate- and environment-related work to enhance coherence, boost institutional efforts and ensure timely decision-making | | | |
| 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OF A MONITORING METHOD TO MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CHARTER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas emission monitoring Energy efficiency monitoring Waste management monitoring | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a process for monitoring climate integration in programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate integration monitoring Monitoring of environmental risks in programmes | |
| 3. PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCESS CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTISE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of strategic partnerships with expert groups, humanitarian and development organizations, researchers and the private sector in order to increase access to climate and environmental expertise, strengthen the ICRC's capacities and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned across sectors, including with the RCRC Climate Centre, the Climate Action Accelerator, the Green Response Working Group and the Anticipation Hub | | | |
| 4. ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT FUNDING | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of the Climate and Environment Transition Fund to support the adaptation of ICRC programmes in order to better address climate and environmental risks and reduce our footprint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch and implementation of track 1: rolling out solar power at ICRC sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch and implementation of track 2: supporting our decarbonization plan, transitioning to clean energy and adapting our programmes to prevent or respond to environmental and climate risks | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of organizational climate finance readiness (i.e. ICRC accessing funding for programmatic changes to help communities adapt to a changing climate and environment). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision on the next steps | | |
| 5. INTERNAL AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of internal and public communication through relevant channels in order to ensure further alignment and to accelerate progress | | | |




COMMITMENT MATRIX



| | <p>1</p> <p>Step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crises</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Maximize the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions</p> |
|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmatic framework • Staff training • Integration of climate and environmental risks into operational programmes | <p>Energy 4 People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme environmental risk management • Reduction of the environmental impact of ICRC premises • Energy transition • Decarbonization of ICRC operations and activities |
| <p>3</p> <p>Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the ICRC's framework for accountability to people affected by armed conflict or other violence • Lessons learned from projects that have successfully embraced local knowledge and leadership on environmental and climatic issues • Strengthening of cooperation with, support for and learning from National Societies on environmental and climate issues | |
| <p>4</p> <p>Increase our capacity to understand climate and environmental risks and develop evidence-based solutions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of the ICRC's capacity to assess and address climate risks, in partnership with the RCRC Climate Centre • Documenting of the humanitarian consequences of converging risks and solutions that work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting of environmental risk assessment and management tools • Use of environmental analysis methods and tools to focus environmental sustainability work (e.g., environmental risk mapping, life cycle assessment) |
| <p>5</p> <p>Work collaboratively across the humanitarian sector and beyond to strengthen climate and environmental action</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-development of and support for the Charter, in partnership with the IFRC • Partnerships with MDBs, humanitarian organizations and researchers to strengthen climate action in conflict settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in the Green Response Working Group • Partnership with the Climate Action Accelerator • Development of sharable tools, including a carbon accounting tool and e-learning modules |
| <p>6</p> <p>Use our influence to mobilize urgent and more ambitious climate action and environmental protection</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships to unlock stronger climate adaptation and climate finance for the most vulnerable • Strengthening of respect for IHL rules on protection of the natural environment during armed conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Supply Chain Alliance |
| <p>7</p> <p>Develop targets and measure our progress as we implement our commitments</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of key performance indicators and a monitoring method • Reporting on progress • Access to sufficient funding • Launch of the Climate and Environment Transition Fund • Internal and public communication | |

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

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