

Our commitments

to the Climate and Environment
Charter for humanitarian organisations



Introduction

People worldwide, including in the UK, feel the growing impact of climate change, leading to increasing humanitarian needs. For people across the world, it's leaving their home and job behind when a hurricane, flood, or wildfire claims it. It's skipping meals and going hungry, with droughts leaving farmers' land thirstier than ever. The poorest, most exposed and those in fragile contexts are, and will continue to be, hardest hit unless they are prioritised. The British Red Cross (BRC) has a 150-year history of supporting those in crisis, including climate-related emergencies, which are becoming more frequent and intense.

Our goal is to empower communities to prepare for, respond to and adapt to climate impacts. We provide tools and support to cope with climate challenges.

- Helping people get ahead of a disaster, putting life-saving action plans in place before an emergency happens.
- Making sure communities are ready with vital training, tools, and skills to future-proof their livelihoods.
- Supporting people to get the healthcare they need before and after disaster strikes.
- Responding to emergencies, supporting people in the aftermath with the things they need most.
- Backed by an expert group of climate scientists, who use research and data to make sure the Movement is supporting communities in the best way possible.

BRC teams are on the ground, working side by side with communities, listening to what people need right now. While doing so, we are committing to reduce our environmental impact and carbon footprint.

The Charter has been a driver in bringing our varied work on climate together in a coherent way. In line with this, we've established 7 key commitments which reflect our climate priorities. This document gives a top-level overview of our ongoing efforts in translating the Charter and our specific commitments into action. It is aligned with our [Strategy & International Strategy](#). Because of strategy processes and timelines, we will look to develop more precise targets in 2024/25.

The below table structure demonstrates that our main priorities as key elements of our strategy, sit under the Charter's commitments on adaptation and mitigation. We see other commitments as cross-cutting to our adaptation and mitigation efforts, and we're increasingly trying to mainstream climate into all that we do.



Our commitments

1

Step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crises.

- Adapt programmes & build resilience to ensure climate change impacts are addressed locally, shaped by the voices of people and communities affected.
- The humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis are understood, and people are empowered to take early action to preserve lives and livelihoods and thrive in the face of it. Examples include:
 - UK Climate Adaptation Programme to enable our Crisis Emergency and Response services to be climate ready.
 - Support the Movement on scaling up Early Action & Climate Smart initiatives.

2

Maximise the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Working towards improvements on environmental sustainability of our UK and international work:

- Improve energy performance ratings across BRC premises.
- Decarbonisation of BRC operations and activities.
- Reduction in waste to landfill.

3

Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities.

Ensure the voices of people with lived experience and those supporting them are heard and shape our work. We ensure this by:

- Developing new approaches to support more localised humanitarian action which genuinely shift power, including an increased focus on National Society Development.
- Embracing a co-production approach to our work, putting affected people at the heart of everything we do.
- Being committed to support the Movement and wider sector to ensure Community, Engagement & Accountability (CEA) is promoted, resourced and adopted to strengthen community engagement in climate and environmental action via the CEA Hub and register.
- Joint work across UK and international to strengthen how we listen to and empower communities before, during and after crises
- Strengthening our youth engagement offering and opportunities for young people around climate and environment.

4

Increase our capacity to understand climate and environmental risks and develop evidence-based solutions.

- Strengthen BRC capacity to assess and address climate risks, in partnership with the RCRC Climate Centre.
- Contribute to the growing evidence base on the humanitarian impacts of climate change through research anchored in our programmatic work. Examples include:
 - Climate proofing of community action plans of the Resilience Programmes in Bangladesh and Nepal.
 - UK Climate Change Risk assessment to understand impacts on our Crisis and Emergency Response and adaptation action needed.

- Piloting of environmental risk assessment and management tools.
- Develop tools to understand climate impact of up to 70% of our supply chain.
- Encourage action through our sustainability network.
- Deliver ongoing internal comms programme on green behaviours.
- Deliver training for our people to improve performance.



1

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2

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5

Work collaboratively across the humanitarian sector and beyond to strengthen climate and environmental action.

- Develop fundraising partnerships to unlock stronger climate adaptation and climate finance for the most vulnerable.
- Frame and continue to establish British Red Cross's climate change voice and position in the disasters and emergencies space.
- Collaborate with communities, private sector and scientists to come up with innovations to address climate humanitarian challenges.
- Strengthen cooperation with, support for, and learning from wider Movement including Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies and Climate Centre on environmental and climate issues.
- Increase collaboration with UK-based agencies and global partnerships to share and implement knowledge, challenges and solutions in scaling up climate action (such as UK Met Office, REAP).

- Active participation in IFRC Green Response Working Group and other sector working groups

6

Use our influence to mobilize urgent and more ambitious climate action and environmental protection.

- Engage with the UK government and international actors to influence cross sector engagement to mobilise resources, support and technical expertise in scaling-up locally led climate adaptation and early action.
- Contribute to the Movement's Humanitarian Diplomacy efforts in climate action, especially by supporting National Societies dealing with the impacts of climate change in participating in global climate processes such as COP conferences.
- Contribute to the growing evidence base on the humanitarian impacts of climate change through research anchored in our programmatic work both nationally and internationally.
- Advocate for greater priority given to climate change adaptation in national climate and environment related policy processes, striving for effective and accessible support for the most vulnerable people in preparing for and adapting to extreme weather.

- BRC revised Environmental policy implemented and promoted across the Movement and humanitarian sector.
- Ensure key suppliers either uphold the standards we set or are working towards them.

7

Develop targets and measure our progress as we implement our commitments.

- Our Corporate and International Strategies already include targets and ways to measure our progress, albeit not in a comprehensive way with regards to the Charter commitments. Both are due to be updated in 2024 which will enable the development of clear ambitions, goals and targets under our C&E Charter commitments. Goals and choices are informed by understanding of the impacts of climate change.

- Pilot metrics and monitoring systems on environmental impact.
- Implementation of carbon accounting and its analysis to develop and monitor targets to decrease carbon footprint.