

Environmental Sustainability Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the British Red Cross' (BRC) commitment to reduce our environmental footprint and increase environmental sustainability across all operations and decision-making processes.

The commitments in this policy are in line with, and support, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's broader aims to address climate change in its humanitarian work and in internal operations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all BRC staff and volunteers ('our people') in the UK and Crown Dependencies, and for domestic and international operations.

3. Policy Statement

The BRC recognises that climate change is a significant humanitarian crisis, intensifying the frequency and severity of extreme weather events globally, with the most vulnerable communities being hardest hit. The BRC is committed to addressing climate change through emissions reduction measures and environmental sustainability; reducing our own environmental impact and carbon footprint.

To meet the commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and overall environmental impact, the BRC will:

- 3.1.** Adopt sustainability standards and integrate them into our daily operations seeking to ensure that our environmental commitment is deeply embedded in our people's day-to-day activities.
- 3.2.** Actively seek innovative solutions and continuously improve our practices to meet and exceed sustainability standards.
- 3.3.** Embed environmental sustainability considerations in all areas of domestic and international programming, including service lines and support services.
- 3.4.** Regularly review, measure and report on environmental performance to support transparency, informed decision-making and continuous improvement.
- 3.5.** Develop and implement a carbon reduction plan detailing targets and progress focused on reducing the organisation's carbon emissions. The plan will be published externally and updated regularly, and at least annually.
- 3.6.** Factor the cost of carbon and environmental impact into major procurement decisions and setting our environmental sustainability requirements for procurement processes and external suppliers.

3.7. In line with the Overarching Ethical Policy, not normally enter into any partnership or agreement with, or accept funds from, any organisation or individual where we are reasonably aware that 10 per cent or more of their core business involves the extraction of fossil fuels (oil, coal or gas) or other activities that are harmful to the environment, or where their public profile is associated with these activities. However, we retain the discretion to assess opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

3.8. Implement targeted measures to lower greenhouse gas emissions, alongside promoting waste reduction and sustainable practices across our value chain.

3.9. Train and educate our people on environmental best practices, encouraging behaviours that minimise impact on the environment.

3.10. Ensure accountability to environmental commitments made to external partners and within international agreements.

3.11. Allocate resources to fulfil our commitments to emissions reduction, and environmental sustainability.

3.12. Embed the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAs) process for UK and selected BRC-led international operations, projects and policies to ensure full awareness of potential impacts that will affect our climate ambition.

3.13. Impact Assessment

3.13.1. Equality Impact Assessment

The impact on equality has been considered as part of this policy development. The BRC is committed to creating an inclusive environment where equity, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing underpin all that we do. The impacts of climate change are not felt equally, and our intent and approach to environmental sustainability reflects our dedication to fairness, and accessibility for all. The commitment to reduce our carbon footprint will include ways that remove barriers, ensures inclusive participation, and provide the necessary training and support for our people.

4. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees (BoT) have ultimate responsibility for this policy.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

The Chief Operating Officer (Policy Owner) is responsible for ensuring that this policy is in line with the strategic intent and legal obligations of the organisation, and supports achievement of external and internal standards, its implementation and maintenance.

The Chief Operating Officer (Policy Owner) working with the ELT Portfolio Owner for Green is responsible for reporting progress against this policy's expectations.

The Environmental Sustainability Officer (Policy Lead), together with the Policy Owner, is responsible for the development, monitoring, and review of this policy. The Policy Lead is also responsible for providing advice and supporting the communication and implementation of this policy.

The Directorates' Leadership are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy across their teams.

All Managers are responsible for the operational implementation of, and compliance with, the policy within their remit, ensuring training is provided to our people and that environmental issues are given adequate consideration in both the planning and execution of our operations, services, and programmes.

All our people are responsible for adhering to, and complying with, this policy and supporting our efforts to minimise our impact on the environment.

5. Governance

Associated policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • Business Continuity and Resilience Management Policy • Flexible Working Policy • Procurement Policy • Quality in UK Services Policy • Risk Management Policy • Travel and Expenses Policy • Overarching Ethical Policy • Investment Policy
Policy superseded	Green Policy
Legislation/ regulatory requirements and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Duty of Care • UK Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations • IFRC Climate and Environment Charter • Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Corporate Standard
Equality impact assessment	Details of the impact assessment included under the Policy Statement
Data Protection impact assessment	No data protection impact identified
Environmental impact assessment	No negative environmental impact identified; positive impact intended
Endorsing Authority; Endorsement date	Chief Operating Officer, ELT; 06 2025
Approval Authority; Approval date	BoT; 06 2025
Policy Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Policy Lead	Environmental Sustainability Officer

Date effective	06 2025	
Interim update date	N/A	
Review date	06 2028	
Version	1.0	
Keywords	carbon, environment, sustainability, climate change, responsible, waste, efficiency, energy, future, green, carbon dioxide, CO2, footprint, procurement, emission, carbon reduction plan	
Revision history	Version	Summary of change (s)
	1.0	New policy document

Appendix: Definitions

Carbon footprint: the total amount of greenhouse gases, mainly carbon dioxide, released by an individual, organisation, or activity.

Carbon Reduction Plan: a document that strategically outlines an organisation's targets, actions, and timelines for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving lower-carbon operations and progress tracking towards any set goals.

Environmental footprint: an environmental footprint is the total impact an organisation's activities, products, or services have on the environment, including resource use, emissions, waste, and effects on ecosystems.

Environmental sustainability: responsible use of natural resources to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to thrive. The BRC's operational responsibility is to minimise the environmental impact of its actions through sustainable practices and resource management.

Gas emissions: gases released into the atmosphere by an organisation's activities, including carbon dioxide, methane, and other pollutants, contributing to climate change and air pollution.

Procurement: strategic process of sourcing a product or service that is predominantly focussed on value and return on investment. This includes identifying a specific product or service requirement and the steps to be followed to find new or existing suppliers, build supplier relationships, measure cost savings and other benefits delivered, and minimise risks.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: a collective endeavour to prevent and alleviate human suffering. Promoting mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace.

Staff: a person who operates for and is paid directly by the BRC.

Standard: an accepted, consistent and agreed way of completing a task to ensure best practice.

Value chain: all activities and processes involved in creating, delivering, and supporting an organisation's products or services, from raw materials to end-user consumption and disposal.

Volunteer: an individual who chooses to carry out a role on behalf of the BRC for no financial or material gain.