



**OPERATIONAL
STRATEGY FOR
CLIMATE RESILIENCE
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
2022-2025**

Contents

Purpose and scope	4
1. Prepare and respond	7
2. Respond and deliver	9
3. Supply and deliver	15
Strategic approaches	21

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

A solar-powered water pump and treatment plant brings clean water in the Kutupalong Refugee Camp, Bangladesh.

© UNHCR/Will Swanson

Purpose and scope

This first Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability operational response strategy contributes to the implementation of UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action (SFCA).¹ Mitigating the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on forcibly displaced people and their hosts, supporting their resilience by preserving and rehabilitating the natural environment in displacement settings, and minimizing the environmental footprint of humanitarian assistance, are imperative for UNHCR to fulfil its mandate.

As outlined in the Strategic Framework for Climate Action, the overarching objectives that we aim to contribute to are:²

1. Enhance the resilience of refugees, internally displaced people and stateless persons and their hosts to climate related and other environmental risks (SFCA objective 2.2).
2. Preserve and rehabilitate the natural environment and mitigate environmental degradation in displacement settings (SFCA objective 2.1).
3. Strengthen preparedness, anticipatory action and response to support protection and solutions for people displaced and their hosts in disaster situations (SFCA objective 2.3).
4. Improve UNHCR's environmental sustainability by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and minimizing negative impacts on the environment (SFCA objective 3).

This strategy is the first of several multi-year strategies to strengthen environmental considerations in UNHCR's operational responses from preparedness to protection and solutions. It lays the foundation by emphasizing data-driven baselines, improved planning and action in environmentally critical operational areas, innovative learning and developing ongoing measurement and accountability systems.

Our actions are structured around two key approaches which are to, firstly, recognize forcibly displaced people, and their hosts, as agents of change, and secondly, strengthen their resilience and protect forcibly displaced people, and their hosts, from the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

1 - UNHCR - Strategic Framework for Climate Action

2 - The third operational objective: strengthen preparedness, anticipatory action and response to support protection and solutions for people displaced and their hosts in disaster situations, will be part of a UNHCR emergency policy document.

The strategy recognizes the urgent action required in three major areas:

- 1 **Prepare and respond**, to improve our predictability of engagement in emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards and integrate environmental considerations in planning and preparedness for emergency response.
- 2 **Respond and deliver**, to incorporate climate and environmental considerations into sectoral operational responses, work with refugees, IDPs and communities in the most climate vulnerable countries, and develop innovative sustainable energy and reforestation programmes for refugee-hosting areas.
- 3 **Supply and deliver**, to improve the sustainability of the end-to-end supply chain, including planning, sourcing, contents, manufacturing processes, procurement, delivery and lifecycle management of core relief items (CRIs) and other goods.

The progress of the operational actions outlined in this strategy goes hand in hand with the efforts UNHCR is undertaking in protection, policy and law, and the environmental sustainability of the organization.



Amir Khan (65), works at sewing clothes, under the light provided by solar panels, at night, in Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh. | © UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau

1 Prepare and respond

Expected outcomes

- An updated UNHCR Emergency Policy and simplified consolidated preparedness guidance includes the events of displacement and increase of humanitarian needs in existing displacement situations that are brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards.
- UNHCR's risk analysis, early warning and preparedness incorporates climate-related and other hazards that may lead to an increase in humanitarian needs and displacement.
- Stronger collaboration and sharing of knowledge on preparedness, early warning and early action through participation in coordination mechanisms and specialised networks and initiatives, including at local, regional and global level.
- Emergency training includes protection and assistance interventions informed by climate risks and impacts.
- Stand-by partner arrangements include specialized technical capacities.

The new reality where protection needs and the humanitarian impact of climate change are growing and intertwine with other drivers of vulnerability and displacement, including extreme weather, unpredictable rainfall, armed conflict and other situations of violence, demands decisive action and contribution from a wide range of actors, including UNHCR. While many emergencies can be anticipated UNHCR must ensure that the strategy and required support measures for an eventual emergency response in each case are in place. UNHCR will continue maintaining and building the capacity to mobilize rapidly, reliably, and effectively in response to emergencies, and to strengthen emergency preparedness.

UNHCR will be a predictable partner working with a wide range of stakeholders to anticipate, prepare for and respond to emergencies and displacement brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards. UNHCR will reinforce its proactive participation in country level coordination mechanisms (UNCTs, HCTs, DRR platforms

where such exist) to analyse the risks that may create or exacerbate humanitarian crises and displacement leading to emergencies and contribute to the analysis with its protection expertise and data. As required, UNHCR will participate in the local, regional and global mechanisms and initiatives on early warning and early action.

In collaboration with government counterparts and other partners UNHCR will lead inter-agency risk analysis and multi-sectoral preparedness and response to emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards affecting refugees. In non-refugee contexts, including disaster situations, both as a cluster(s) lead and as an operational agency, UNHCR – as a member of the UNCT / HCT – will make sure that specific protection and displacement-related concerns are addressed as early as possible during the preparedness phase and in the humanitarian response.³ UNHCR will work to ensure that protection and displacement considerations are integrated within the



Refugees walk safely at night, thanks to the lights provided by solar panels, in Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh. | © UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau



In Sudan, UNHCR and partners are working to mitigate the effects of climate change and create sustainable living conditions for refugees. © UNHCR/Ahmed Kwarté

national disaster risk reduction and risk management policies, strategies and adaptation plans for early warning, preparedness, response and recovery.

Considerations for preparedness and response to emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards will be reflected in the revised UNHCR Emergency Policy, while preparedness guidance will be further streamlined and elaborate on practicalities of such engagement. Emergency training will include relevant guidance on protection and assistance

interventions informed by climate and other environmental risks and impacts. Furthermore, working together with its stand-by partners, UNHCR will deploy specialized technical capacities such as settlement planning, shelter, energy, environment, hydrogeology and disaster risk management, to country operations to support environmentally friendly and sustainable preparedness, response and solutions, and to contribute to national and regional DRR plans.



Noor, 8, and Sameera, 10, play on swings by their home in a part of Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh | © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

2 Respond and deliver

Expected outcomes

- Overall reduction of 172.000 tons of CO2 emissions through improved sectoral operational responses by the end of 2025.
- 30 displacement sites in the most climate vulnerable countries will conduct integrated spatial planning and climate resilient studies.
- 10 displacement sites at greatest risk of flooding will benefit from strengthened infrastructure management plans.
- 10 refugee camps will benefit from improved solid waste management systems.
- 50% of solar lanterns will be repaired or recycled in 12 operations.
- 60% of people of concern living in camps or settlements will live in an environmentally sustainable shelter.
- 80% of communal facilities will be environmentally sustainable.
- 30 sites at highest risk of drought will strengthen their groundwater monitoring.
- 30% of refugees will have access to clean cooking.
- Three countries will establish projects to generate 1 million tons of carbon offsets via reforestation and clean cooking programs.
- 50% of water boreholes running on diesel generators will be solarized.
- 50% of UNHCR-supported health centers and schools running on diesel generators will be solarized.

Millions of the world's displaced and stateless people live in climate vulnerable "hotspots" but lack the resources to adapt to an increasingly inhospitable environment. Indeed, 90 per cent of refugees under UNHCR's mandate and 70 per cent of conflict IDPs originate from countries most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change. Climate change is amplifying vulnerabilities and threats such as conflict, poverty, food insecurity which increasingly drives people from their homes.

Climate action provides an exceptional opportunity for UNHCR to work closely with forcibly displaced communities, to learn from them and strengthen their resilience. In addition to prioritizing climate interventions in the most climate and environmentally vulnerable situations, UNHCR will incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental mainstreaming into sector-specific responses.

i) Climate resilient people, communities, and settlements

UNHCR will work closely with forcibly displaced people and host communities to prepare for climate and environmental risks such as floods, landslides, storms, and droughts. To improve our understanding of the conditions, UNHCR will advance and improve the use of geospatial and hydrological multisectoral analysis, enhance ground water monitoring and environmental impact assessments, in both emergencies and longer displacement situations, to be able to better adapt settlements. UNHCR will advocate to include these settlements and camps into national disaster preparedness plans and support mitigation and adaptation measures. UNHCR and partners will continue to learn from and adapt to local traditional and indigenous knowledge, including nature-based solutions.

To preserve the natural environment and provide safer, healthier, dignified living conditions, UNHCR will strengthen partnerships with wastewater and solid waste management systems, including recycling, re-use, re-purposing of items and composting and biogas production. Safe recycling and disposal systems will be initiated and rolled out for e-Waste, such as the solar lanterns used in emergency responses.

To support local and national economies to become greener, UNHCR will collaborate with local private social enterprises and promote livelihoods⁴ and the development of green jobs.⁵

With climate change contributing to poorer health outcomes and health inequities, UNHCR will strengthen the prevention, detection, and control of communicable diseases, including through improved disease surveillance, vector control and immunization in its supported public health programmes.⁶

4 - UNHCR - Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion - 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note | 5 - What is a green job? (ilo.org) | 6 - UNHCR Public Health Strategy 2021-2025

ii) Environmentally friendly & sustainable shelter and housing

Over the next four years, UNHCR will further adapt its shelter programme and focus on localized environmentally sustainable shelter interventions, including the use and promotion of sustainably sourced indigenous materials and local building practices that are adapted to local climate conditions and can potentially entail a far shorter supply chain.

Throughout the design phase of shelter and housing programmes, the principle of build back better will be applied in those areas most prone to natural hazards. Furthermore, climate-smart considerations in structure design, placement and materials will include the use of passive energy for heating, ventilation, cooling, and lighting, to optimize natural insulation against weather conditions, and minimize the reliance on appliances that require the use of polluting fossil fuels. UNHCR will

contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions by systematically pursuing local, environmentally friendly solutions in its shelter and housing programming.

Emergency shelter responses often rely heavily on high-carbon and plastics which have negative environmental impacts, specifically during the distribution of internationally or regionally procured shelter materials and household items. Environmentally friendly solutions will be sought through a life cycle analysis of standard family tents, the self-standing family tents, and tarpaulins. In collaboration with IFRC and ICRC, UNHCR is working on a research and development project to improve or find alternative solutions for the use of plastic sheeting. Post-emergency, UNHCR will also seek opportunities for the use of recycled material and for recycling or repurposing of emergency shelter materials.



Permanent houses constructed through UNHCR's CBI for Shelter Programme in Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana West, Kenya. | © UNHCR/Samuel Otieno



Brick makers work in Ouallam, Niger to produce the interlocking, environmentally friendly bricks used to build new sturdy homes for vulnerable refugees and members of the host community. | © UNHCR/Sylvain Cherkoui

iii) Climate smart water and sanitation services

UNHCR will contribute to climate resilient WASH programmes focusing on environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management. Among the biggest impacts of climate change is water scarcity and/or the contamination of water due to floods, droughts, and other severe weather conditions. UNHCR will focus on the improved understanding and impact of water resources in camps and settlement areas, through systematic aquifer monitoring, remote sensing, water quality testing and integrated water resource management to use water more efficiently, prevent risks of network breakdowns and water shortages.

In its responses, UNHCR will contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions by systematically pursuing more resource-efficient alternatives to water trucking while reducing related risks by using adequate tools and technologies such as rapid groundwater mapping and real time monitoring. Furthermore, greater efforts will be made to power water systems through renewable energy rather than fossil fuels.

To preserve the natural environment UNHCR will improve its sanitation programmes. Toilets will be designed and constructed taking into consideration environmental standards.

iv) Clean cooking and reforestation

The need for cooking fuel often results in protection risks, especially for women and girls, as well as environmental degradation such as soil erosion, landslides, and desertification, which threaten safe living conditions and livelihoods for forcibly displaced and their hosts alike. To mitigate these negative impacts and improve protection outcomes, UNHCR will continue and strengthen existing clean cooking and environmental programming. UNHCR will create an innovative new initiative, the **Refugee Environmental**

Protection (REP) Fund. The REP Fund will be set up as a sustainable financing mechanism that invests in impactful and larger-scale refugee and host community reforestation and clean cooking programs, while registering these as verified carbon credits. The sale of these 'Refugee Carbon Credits' would replenish the fund, making it financially sustainable over time and empowering more refugees and host communities to contribute to the global climate solution. Given the 5+ year cycle of clean cooking programs and 10+ year cycle of reforestation programs, the REP Fund will be a long-term initiative.



Solar lamps illuminate the darkness for Rohingya refugees collecting water at night in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh | © UNHCR/Patrick Brown



Staff from UNHCR partner Muslim Aid cook meals for Ethiopian refugees at a kitchen at Hamdayet border reception centre in Sudan. © UNHCR/Will Swanson

v) Drive transition to renewable energy

In line with the sustainable energy strategy for 2019-2025,⁷ UNHCR will promote and advance access to sustainable household energy, including the expanded use of renewable energy, to minimize the negative environmental impact in a way that is inclusive of host communities while improving the protection and wellbeing of refugees.

UNHCR will contribute to reducing carbon emissions through improved investments in renewable energy in its supported water boreholes, health centers and

educational facilities and community learning centers. UNHCR will transition diesel supported water infrastructure, health centres and schools to renewable energy, particularly solar hybrid systems. For larger systems, whose transition costs exceed single year budgets, UNHCR has created **Project Flow**, an innovative financing revolving fund mechanism, that supports the high up-front capital expenditures for solar systems, which are then replenished by the savings over several years of switching from diesel fuel to renewable energy.

7 - Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy 2019 - 2025



The solar farm in Azraq refugee camp in Jordan was the first solar plant built in a refugee setting in the world. | © UNHCR/Jordi Matas

3 Supply and deliver

Expected outcomes

- Environmentally sustainable (recycled, recyclable or sustainably sourced) contents of UNHCR's CRIs are increased by 20%.
- Specifications for 8 CRIs and generators updated and improved for environmental sustainability. Continue expanding to other products.
- Proportion of plastic in CRI packaging reduced by 20%.
- Energy efficiency from generators used by UNHCR increased by 20% in 70 target country operations with intensive supply operations.
- Aggregate GHG emissions from the production and delivery of key CRIs and other standard product item assistance to refugees and displaced populations reduced by 20%.
- 70 country operations targeted with supply waste management services (full loads, recycling, repurpose, safe disposal).
- Geographic distribution of Global Frame Agreements for 8 CRIs expanded, with 25% reduction in source markets concentration.
- CO2 emissions from international freight reduced by 10%.
- Average duration of stock on hand (inventory aging) in country operation warehouses reduced by 25%.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance response, through the purchase, production, transportation, distribution, use and disposal of goods, can cause a significant detrimental impact on the environment. An initial environmental impact evaluation of UNHCR's CRIs indicates that (a) they collectively represent approximately 60% of UNHCR's total GHG emissions; and (b) a small number of emergency relief items generate a large proportion of GHG.⁸ This implies that there are substantial opportunities for targeted efforts to reduce the environmental impact of UNHCR action through greening the end-to-end supply.

UNHCR buys and distributes a wide range of goods to

forcibly displaced people through international and local markets. In local markets, UNHCR either buys directly and supplies goods or provides cash assistance with which refugees and other displaced populations procure goods available locally. Irrespective of the modality chosen, the goods procured and supplied generate significant environmental impact through their ingredients, manufacturing processes, transportation, and storage, or through their use and disposal. UNHCR will design and implement an environmentally sustainable end-to-end supply chain that is adapted to climate change risks and impacts, focusing on five supply-specific activities outlined as follows:

8 - Seven items are estimated to collectively account for more than 95% of calculated GHG emissions from UNHCR-procured products.

i) Supply planning and network design: to optimize the way we plan and deliver assistance

Notwithstanding the often-unpredictable nature of displacement situations, there are significant aspects of our response that can and should be well planned. Demand and supply planning, as well as supply network design have significant potential for improvement, which will result in substantial reduction in our environmental impact. Creating higher flexibility and agility in our supply network will yield double benefits, both in terms of environmental sustainability and efficiency. There are opportunities to improve the timeliness of delivery, velocity, and aging of inventory, through periodic review and matching of demand and supply; and right-fitting of storage network. UNHCR will redesign the network of inventory locations, and streamline the procurement and inventory planning standards through the following priority actions:

- Following more than ten years of successfully responding to emergencies through Global Stockpiles, a comprehensive review of the Global

Stockpile Management (GSM) network will offer a new direction for the GSM's inventory levels, locations, resupply strategies, and fluid interactions with country-level warehouses resulting in better responsiveness to emergency needs, with minimal inventory holding and related energy consumption.

- A full review of country-level procurement planning and budgeting, actions and processes related to CRIs will create better guidance for aligning demand and supply; better timing of resupply and will minimize inventory.
- As part of UNHCR's product taxonomy, a structured definition of preferred sourcing, inventory holding levels and distribution options will be provided. This exercise will articulate what types and quantities of products are recommended for global, regional, or local sourcing and delivery, or for replacement with cash assistance. This definition will also offer alternatives depending on the phase of the response (emergency, transition, established response) and existing market conditions – both local and global.



UNHCR Supply Chain Associate, Reyhan Talibova, conducts an inventory count of core relief items being housed at UNHCR's warehouse in Baku, Azerbaijan. | © UNHCR/Elsevar Aghayev

ii) Market-shaping and sustainable sourcing: to enhance the sustainability of selected items through deeper market and product intelligence

UNHCR will identify products and markets where it has a strategic interest and market power to incentivize cost-effective environmentally sustainable improvements in product specifications, manufacturing processes and locations, using evidence from field testing and environmental science. The following strategies will be prioritized for CRIs that carry the highest volume/value and the highest levels of GHG emissions:

- Product development in partnership with suppliers who are willing and have proven to be reliable. This will require a deeper engagement with these suppliers, and potentially a combination of higher initial costs and guaranteed order volumes for a specific timeframe, to encourage investments in greener products. To achieve maximum impact,

UNHCR will mobilise other humanitarian actors who operate in the same markets.

- New source markets or sourcing options, either through encouraging environmentally motivated start-ups, established greener manufacturers with guaranteed orders, or seeking local solutions for products that require low-cost technology. This may also imply an initial cost premium and some volume commitment to selected manufacturers.
- Deeper market/supplier engagement: To enable and sustain the above strategies, UNHCR will need to change its supplier relationships from one of transactional nature to a deeper engagement with adequate market/supplier segmentation and definition of engagement strategies for each segment. Strategic suppliers and industry partners will be targeted for activities such as joint field visits, presentation, mini projects for aspects such as product evaluation, new products testing, etc., within well-defined parameters.



In the Rohingya settlements in Bangladesh, UNHCR's core relief items include kitchen sets, blankets, floor mats, solar lights, solar panels, and mosquito nets, as well as wires and ropes which are crucial for building shelters and protecting them during cyclones. | © UNHCR

iii) Sustainable procurement: to include environmental sustainability as a key feature in our procurement action

UNHCR will further revise its procurement policy and related guidance, to expand the procurement considerations to include stronger environmental specifications, particularly through:

- Enhanced supplier disclosure and product specifications. All standard products that UNHCR uses will be reviewed, starting with CRIs, to include more stringent disclosure for GHG contents and production process, as well as the impact on biodiversity by the manufacturers. In consultation with other UN and international actors, such as WFP, IFRC, ICRC, we will aim to drive manufacturers towards more environmental transparency.
- Expanded notion of value for money in the bid evaluation criteria. Standard tender documents will be revised to include provisions for broader evaluation criteria, including not only technical specifications, but also environmental specifications. The requirements here might be different from one product to another, but in general all products will

be held to a higher environmental standard through the prioritization of greener products even when they might cost more.

- Packaging materials are a source of significant waste and GHG emissions. UNHCR is actively engaged in a multi-stakeholder initiative to comprehensively evaluate and mitigate the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts stemming from humanitarian assistance packaging. The review will identify options for reduction in packaging and dunnage, use of biodegradable packaging material, reuse, recycling, recovery, return and/or disposal of packaging material, post-delivery. UNHCR already requires suppliers to offer minimal and lower carbon/plastic packaging options. UNHCR will adopt a 'full load' principle for its procurement and internal transfers – orders will be systematically adjusted to ensure maximum space usage within a container or a truck. In collaboration with ICRC and WFP, UNHCR is working on a research and development project to improve or find alternative solutions for the use of polypropylene bags for packaging for food and non-food items.

iv) Logistics and inventory management: to adopt a sustainable approach to the delivery of goods to refugees and other displaced people

In addition to the supply planning and network redesign described above, standard processes for logistics and inventory management will be further revised to ensure the environmental impact of transportation and inventory holding is minimized. This is expected to have positive effects on both financial and environmental levels.

- Inventory proximity or agility: Currently UNHCR has a high level of proximity, with significant inventory on hand in country operations. However, the inventory often does not move quickly due to lack of adequate demand visibility. The environmental impact of occupying large warehouse space, running electricity and the risk of deteriorating quality is significant. A centrally orchestrated inventory holding strategy may be explored, with a requirement for country operations to only hold inventory that they need for immediate demand coverage that is calculated based on past demand,

resupply timeframe and contingency for known risks. Positioning goods in a tiered network of centrally managed storage locations would allow for a balanced arbitration between closeness (for rapid response) and agility (to address the changing geography of needs).

- International logistics are a substantial source of GHG emissions, though to a significant extent, they are unavoidable. A recent analysis of CRIs transportation showed that airlifts generate roughly 100 times the GHG than sea transport for the same source and destination. There are several actions that can, however, reduce emissions. First, a diversification of sourcing options towards locations that are closer to where the goods are needed. Second, consideration for more cash assistance in selected markets and for selected products could offer a lower need for international transportation. Third, the above proximity vs agility aspect will significantly optimize ground and sea transportation and minimize the need for airlifts and/or inventory redeployment.



Rohingya refugee Rofiqqa Begum and her family use bottled LPG gas to cook. Previously they had to gather firewood, which damaged the environment and caused tension with the host community. | © UNHCR/Kamrul Hasan



UNHCR distributed core relief items, including solar lamps, to internally displaced families in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. | © UNHCR/Hanna Qassis

v) Product lifecycle quality management: to improve product quality, durability, and circularity

In line with the expanded notion of value for money, UNHCR will extend its product quality management beyond distribution, and will track the usage and lifecycle quality of CRIs through two approaches, which will jointly inform our sourcing and frame agreement establishment or renewal, including adjustments in products specifications:

- **Field-level quality management:** In addition to the current quality control processes from procurement through warehouse receipt and during storage, UNHCR will invest in targeted quality assessment of the products it distributes, identify typical defects, gradual degradation process, and average useful lifetime. Once products are damaged, UNHCR will also investigate the typical cause of damage and usual disposal mechanisms.
- **User validation:** To complement field-level quality management, UNHCR will systematically conduct user validation and preference exercises, to

determine the specific requirements of refugees and other displaced persons, vis-a-vis specific aspects of products on offer as well as alternatives that they would prefer. Beyond general user preference aspects, this process will focus on product durability, alternate uses, repairability and disposal aspects to ensure maximum effectiveness and minimal negative environmental impact. The review will also evaluate local or other alternative options for serving the same purpose as the product distributed by UNHCR, not only to validate whether the assistance is adequate, but also whether there exist greener/ simpler options for the people of concern.

- **Biodiversity, circularity and waste management:** In addition to controlling for waste that is created during production, transport and distribution, UNHCR will also aim to minimize waste generated through product usage and residual waste after useful life, through an effort to recycle, repurpose, return or safely dispose of the left-over goods. This effort will include both energy efficiency for powered items such as generators, water efficiency, as well as proactive field level waste management.

Strategic approaches

Engagement and leadership of forcibly displaced people

The active engagement and leadership of refugees, internally displaced people and their hosts will be key to identifying, designing, and supporting solutions that are culturally appropriate and rely on effective traditional and indigenous adaptation practices. UNHCR will provide the space for leadership of forcibly displaced people to implement these solutions and monitor progress and will promote the inclusion of forcibly displaced people in relevant adaptation programmes, early warning, and preparedness mechanisms.

Partnerships

The successful realization of this strategy requires the active engagement of the full spectrum of UNHCR's partners. We will build upon and strengthen our work with governments, line ministries, UN sister agencies, NGOs and development actors, while also developing new relationships with national and local actors, expert agencies, academia, the private sector, suppliers, and contractors. Technical partnerships, such as the newly established Geneva Technical Hub and the technical capacity teamwork of standby partners are key.

Operationalization

The Strategy will be achieved through concerted institutional efforts at headquarters and at the regional and country-level.⁹ UNHCR is committed to working through collaborative approaches in ways that maximize synergies with - and consider the comparative advantages of - all stakeholders. UNHCR will ensure that, pursuant to the Global Compact on Refugees, the actions are duly designed to advance the inclusion and leadership of refugees in sustainable development, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policy, plans and programmes. Through its coordination responsibilities of the Protection, Shelter and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Clusters, and its operational IDP responses, UNHCR will promote and augment environmental and sustainable approaches in IDP contexts. In situations of high-risk for humanitarian crises including those due to the adverse effects of climate change, UNHCR will work within inter-agency preparedness planning mechanisms, fully in support of the leadership of the national authorities.

Capacity-building, innovation, learning and culture change

Creating an organizational culture of innovation and creativity as well as experimentation with end-users can lead to new solutions that may be more efficient, effective, and environmentally sound. A planned Innovation, Environment and Resilience Fund will provide space for operations, refugees, and host communities to develop and test ideas that may be novel, nature-based or inspired by indigenous design and knowledge.



Solar energy is being expanded throughout the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, with solar street lights, as well as solar mini grids powering facilities such as health centres and community centres. | © UNHCR/Kamrul Hasan

9 - The operationalization of the strategy will be linked and inspired by the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations system, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UNHCR's Strategic Directions, as well as clear linkages with the other pillars of the Strategic Framework for Climate Action (Law and Policy and UNHCR's Environmental Footprint).

Building organizational capacity will be crucial to successfully improve environmental considerations. Given the scale, scope, and dynamic nature of UNHCR's operations, this will be done enhancing the capacities of personnel, working with partners, and using remote learning and dedicated training for technical experts and partners.

Documenting and learning from UNHCR's own operational experiences will be important. UNHCR will build and consolidate the knowledge and evidence base by supporting and encouraging research, reviews, and studies in collaboration with partners and academic institutions, using the findings to develop and improve the supply and operational response.

Guidance and tools

UNHCR will adapt existing operational guidance and tools to support Greening the Operations and only develop new approaches where needed. Where required existing tools to support assessments and monitoring will be adapted to measure the impacts and results, as well as their cost effectiveness and cost efficiency. The upcoming revised Emergency Policy will further articulate UNHCR's emergency preparedness and emergency response role including in response to refugees, internal displacement caused by conflict as well as other humanitarian crises including those caused by climate change. Progressively UNHCR will ensure that administrative instructions, strategies, and policies that will be issued include climate action and environmental mainstreaming.

Resources

The current baseline prior to this strategy is that UNHCR already allocated 5% of its global, comprehensive, needs-based budget to greening operational responses. UNHCR seeks \$417 million for climate action in 2022 to respond to adverse effects of climate change, to do so through more environmentally-friendly responses which help displaced people and their hosts to resist climate shocks, and to ensure that there is improved anticipation and preparation for future, climate-induced population movements. This total also includes \$60 million to finance a multi-year effort to green UNHCR's own infrastructure, including offices, fleet, and travel, utilizing financially efficient innovative financing mechanisms such as the [Green Financing Facility](#). In future years, UNHCR will seek to steadily further strengthen its funding of climate-related activities, in line with its strong commitment to sustained efforts towards the Climate Action agenda, including the establishment of innovative financing mechanisms, advancing on non-transactional investments, exploring prospects for new and additional foundations and development partners.

Strategic planning and monitoring

The implementation of the strategy will be monitored on an annual basis with key indicators derived from the UNHCR Corporate Tools, the UNHCR Result Based Management Framework and relevant technical information management systems. Progress will be reported in the UNHCR Global Report. This will also include operational-level reporting made available on Global Focus.



OPERATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY 2022-2025

December 2021

*For more information, please contact DESS at ellis@unhcr.org
(Prepare and respond), safarib@unhcr.org (Supply and deliver),
and DRS at hqs100@unhcr.org (Respond and deliver)*



www.unhcr.org/environment-disasters-and-climate-change

