

Our Commitments to the Climate and Environment Charter

GERMAN RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS



OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

1. Our framing of the Charter Commitments

According to our understanding and reporting logic, we distinguish between two main questions when it comes to our contribution to the Climate and Environment Charter Commitments. What do we do within our national and international programs to contribute to the Climate and Environment Charter goals? And how do we execute our work to contribute to them?

The 'what' in our programs

The GRC's contribution to civil protection and welfare in Germany, as well as to international cooperation, is the core of our mission – at the GRC, we see this as the 'what' of our work. The content of our programs is presented in particular in the GRC yearbook, our public reporting for stakeholders, issued each year on Red Cross Red Crescent Day on May 8 and on our website. Our work in Germany and abroad focuses largely on the concerns of the six Climate and Environment Charter Commitments: climate adaptation, climate resilience, prevention and anticipatory action is at the core of our mission. A wide range of our programs contribute to the goals 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Climate and Environment Charter.

Sustainability at the GRC

Regarding the 'how' do we work, this is where our ESG (Ecology, Social, Governance) strategy is being applied and continuously developed. For the GRC headquarters, sustainability is an integral part of responsible management and therefore a joint task for all departments. For us, it means balancing social responsibility and ecological limits with economic viability. Transparency and honesty are particularly important to us in this regard. In our work, we are constantly faced with conflicting goals, especially with regard to environmental sustainability. When speed, availability and security of supply are paramount in an emergency, the best environmental solutions are not always feasible. We openly acknowledge these areas of tension. For us, exploring viable middle ground is not a one-off step, but an ongoing process, on which we will report in our first ESG report, that is currently being developed. In there, we specifically report on the Climate and Environment Charter goals 2, 4, 5 and 6.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

2. Our understanding of sustainability

The German Red Cross sees sustainability as an integral part of its humanitarian mission. It assists people at home and abroad, alleviates suffering and works indiscriminately to promote health, well-being, protection, peaceful coexistence, dignity and the preservation of natural resources. For the GRC, sustainability means that aid, community and natural systems can continue to exist in the future – in a people-centered, inclusive and fair manner, while respecting ecological limits and guided by financial prudence.

This understanding is based on the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the GRC's mission statement and sound scientific findings. The GRC follows the Priority Model of Sustainability, according to which nature forms the basis for society and the economy. In view of the consequences of climate change and environmental destruction, the GRC sees it as its responsibility to

reduce its negative environmental impact and at the same time strengthen positive social contributions – through reliable aid, participation, good working conditions, social justice and ecological sustainability. At the same time, we strengthen our positive contributions by providing reliable aid, enabling participation, creating good jobs, and promoting social justice and ecological resilience for the future.

Sustainability is understood at the GRC Headquarters as a joint cross-departmental task for all areas and teams. It shapes the working methods, management, and decision-making processes of the Headquarters as well as the cooperation within the GRC as a whole.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

3. ESG Strategy

German Red Cross

Structure of the GRC ESG strategy



Climate change and biodiversity

Strategic guidelines

- We take responsibility for our climate impact and strive to continuously reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in line with international and national climate targets.
- We make our energy use sustainable and promote the use of renewable energies.
- We strengthen climate-conscious action within the GRC, particularly in mobility, logistics, infrastructure, catering, procurement and in the workplace.
- We systematically integrate climate risks and opportunities into our decision-making processes and control systems and strengthen our adaptability to the consequences of climate change. In doing so, we take scientific scenarios and regional climate data into account.
- We recognize biodiversity as a systemically important basis for life and the resilience of our society. We take responsibility for its protection and promotion in our own activities and as part of our humanitarian mission.

Use of natural resources

- We critically evaluate the procurement of materials and energy sources and act sparingly, prudently and with foresight.
- We cultivate a responsible approach to the use of valuable resources.
- We take responsibility for the sensitive return of resources to material cycles.

Employees

- We promote an appreciative and fair working culture that strengthens satisfaction, security and diversity.
- We support health and well-being by preventing physical and mental stress and creating structures that relieve stress.
- We enable professional development, promote skills and create space for lifelong learning.

Governance

- We systematically embed sustainability in our decision-making processes, control systems and management structures.
- We are politically committed to sustainability at EU and federal level.
- We promote responsible behavior by ensuring transparency, integrity and data protection in all areas.
- We strengthen sustainability competence by specifically developing knowledge, attitudes and responsibility among managers and employees.
- We use financial resources responsibly to ensure that our investments are consistent with our ethical values and sustainability goals and to promote transparency and accountability in our financial practices.

RCRC movement, volunteers and network

- We promote sustainability throughout the association and among our Red Cross Red Crescent sister societies by providing knowledge, tools and exchange formats that support independent action.
- We actively participate in the RCRC movement on the topic of sustainability in order to work together towards transformation.
- We actively shape cooperation within our national and international network in order to exploit synergies and further develop sustainability together with our partners.
- We strengthen volunteering within the German Red Cross by creating good conditions, recognition and opportunities for development.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

4. ESG Projects and Targets

The main two superordinated aims are to develop a solid data baseline as well as implementing immediate measurements to reduce our negative impact and increase our handprint in various areas of action.

Priority joint sustainability projects 2026 and 2027

- Further develop our greenhouse gas accounting after the first pilot in 2025 (Scope 1&2) extending it to more areas and locations of the GRC Headquarters
- Analysis of selected Scope 3 emissions and measurements for their reduction
- Comprehensive climate risk analysis of physical and transitional risks; integration into the risk management system of the GRC Headquarters
- Analysis of our impact on biodiversity in building stock & surroundings
- Development of action areas 3 (Employees) and 5 (RCRC movement, volunteers and network) of our ESG strategy: Priority topics & goals
- Sustainability report: first internal ESG report in 2026, a public one in 2027. It will be aligned with the EU's standard VSME, extended by own topics identified within the Double Materiality Assessment
- Climate transition plan for Scope 1&2 with measurable reduction targets
- Development of a ESG databook for a solid data baseline

In addition to those centrally managed projects, each department of the GRC Headquarters has its own projects, measures and actions to address its most important issues in a targeted manner. The priority of topics has been identified by the execution of a Double Materiality Assessment (according to the CSRD) and a SWOT analysis in 2025. Once a solid data baseline is given, quantitative targets will be set.

Goals

Our Commitments to the Climate and Environment Charter

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND EXAMPLES

Goal 1

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

We systematically integrate climate and environmental risks into our humanitarian action, preparedness, response and recovery work.

What we do today (examples):

- Climate Funding Program for our branches in Germany: Through the GRC Climate Program, the Headquarters funded 29 innovative and cross-sectoral projects across the organisation in the fields of climate mitigation, climate adaptation and sustainability. The projects addressed a wide range of areas including participation and support, civic engagement, child, youth and family services, civil protection, administration and services for older people (period: 2022–2025).
- Climate Adaptation in Care Services in Germany: The project “Climate Adaptation in GRC Welfare Services” 2024 – 2026 is implemented as part of the funding program “Climate Adaptation in Social Institutions” of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Protection. The aim of the project is to support facilities and services of the GRC welfare sector in systematically preparing for extreme weather events—including heatwaves, heavy rainfall, flooding, strong winds and drought—and in better managing their impacts. Within the project, several tools and resources are being developed, including information materials, a training concept, a practical guidance manual, and emergency exercises. These will be transferred into practice through workshops and multiplier trainings.
- Committed climate protection and effective climate adaptation begin in the GRC- Kindergartens: We offer continuous training for educational staff, for example in e-learning format, provide educational materials for children and communication tips for parents and families. In this way, we ensure that children are effectively protected from the effects of climate change, such as heat or increased UV radiation. At the same time our facilities get to know effective measures and ways to implement climate protection on site.
- Since 2014, the GRC has internationally taken up a pioneering role with partners such as the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to develop anticipatory action. Anticipatory action is one way of addressing the increasing frequency and strength of extreme weather events as a consequence of climate change. The approach uses forecasts to allocate funding for actions to prevent or at least mitigate humanitarian impacts of predicted extreme events before crises occur or before they fully unfold. GRC was one of the main actors in setting up a financing mechanism at IFRC in Geneva (Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF) to enable National Societies to access such funding based on forecasts and has worked directly with more than 20 National Societies to develop plans outlining forecast threshold and pre-agreed actions (Early Action

Protocols). GRC is also the host of the Anticipation Hub. Founded in 2020, the Anticipation Hub is a joint initiative of GRC, IFRC and RCCC that today connects more than 170 partners – from UN agencies and governments to universities and NGOs. The Hub enables knowledge and exchange around anticipatory action and strives for a joint advocacy for a paradigm shift across humanitarian, development, and climate sectors towards anticipation. Take action to prevent or at least mitigate impacts of predicted extreme events before crises occur or fully unfold.

- The GRC has started to work on the nexus of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate related topics 25 years ago, climate change considerations were progressively integrated into DRR programming. This included the use of climate-sensitive risk assessments, Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments, early warning and early action measures, and community-based preparedness activities tailored to evolving climate risks. Programming focused on strengthening local adaptive capacity, improving disaster preparedness, and supporting risk-informed decision-making at the community and local government levels, particularly in coastal contexts.
- Climate Resilience in International Cooperation: The GRC cooperates with climate science institutions and implements needs-based climate adaptation projects together with Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in partner countries. This includes also collaboration with national government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, and humanitarian partners. These projects aim to increase the resilience of affected communities to extreme weather events and disasters. Key areas of action include: pre-positioning relief supplies, early warning systems, evacuation and emergency plans, measures to improve health and water services, and the introduction of alternative agricultural methods and diversified income sources. It supports capacity building, planning processes, research, and policy alignment related to climate adaptation and disaster risk management.
- Climate Adaptation and Anticipatory Action in national disaster preparedness: GRC has launched a programme to implement anticipatory action in Germany, building on its international experience and using hazard forecasts to trigger early action before disaster strikes. As the frequency and severity of disasters in Germany are increasing, GRC has started four projects in its regional branches in order to anticipate impacts and prepare for the impact of floods, heatwaves, cold waves and drinking water shortages associated with drought. In each context anticipatory actions address both GRC's internal structures and disaster management authorities, as well as the public as a whole and vulnerable groups.
- The GRC Federal Reserve addresses climate mitigation in disaster preparedness: Following the increasing challenges in civil protection due to climate change, as well as the 2021 floods, GRC has considerably strengthened its Federal Material Reserve. This reserve is primarily deployed in national emergency to reinforce and support GRC branches or disaster management authorities. Its modules include logistics, health and nursing, response coordination, energy supply, telecommunications, WASH, care and shelter. GRC is addressing the reduction of GHG emissions in the logistics sector by adding electronic vehicle options, facilitating modular designs, and promoting more efficient maintenance and routing guidelines.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND EXAMPLES

Goal 2

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

We avoid, reduce and manage the negative environmental impacts of our activities while maintaining our ability to provide timely and principled assistance. We measure and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in line with international and national climate goals.

What we do today (examples):

- Using a greenhouse gas inventory, we identify the sources of greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the internationally recognized Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol) standard. Since 2025, we have used our own accounting tool based on Power BI for this purpose. The calculations support the development, prioritization and monitoring of measures to reduce climate-damaging emissions. The scope and methodology of the inventory are reviewed annually and adjusted where necessary.
- In international humanitarian aid, the Humanitarian Carbon Calculator (HCC) is a commonly used instrument that often uses spending-based data. However, for our international spending, the required data is currently not available in the necessary structure. Therefore, on international level we initially focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions based on directly collected activity data. The accounting of Scope 3 emissions will be gradually expanded and further developed along key categories.
- By applying the NEAT+ (Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool) an environmental screening tool, GRC identifies issues of environmental concern in the projects. The environmental screening tool allows to identify environmental vulnerabilities and to highlight environmental risks associated with specific activities. With conducting the NEAT+ GRC integrates more sustainable environmental practices into humanitarian practice.
- Regular sustainability and climate awareness sessions for the entire HQ staff with an according landing page on our intranet in order to animate and motivate our staff to reduce emission within their area of influence. An annual survey about the emissions of staff mobility is being executed since 2024, results presented on the intranet. Through several measurements (free bike leasing, bike fixing station ...) the use of low emission transport means is being encouraged.
- In the GRC code of conduct (Verhaltenskodex) the sustainability governance and responsibilities of all staff members is explicitly formulated. In support of its execution a working group across all departments is in place since 2024. It supports all teams and departments besides other goals, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- A central aspect is the mission-related link between service delivery and emissions: as the scale of humanitarian assistance increases, emissions also rise. Addressing this inherent trade-off in a transparent and responsible manner is part of the ongoing conceptual development of the greenhouse gas accounting approach.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND EXAMPLES

Goal 3

Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities

- In line with the Grand Bargain, as a partner, facilitator and convener of cooperation at international level, we strive to fulfil commitments to localization, community participation, protection and inclusion, gender and diversity, accountability, and learning. Through these efforts, we aim to build resilient communities and ensure effective and inclusive humanitarian responses in an increasingly complex global landscape. Community participation has been central to these efforts, with trained volunteers and local groups engaged in implementation, monitoring, and maintenance to promote sustainability and local ownership. Risk-reduction and climate related activities are meant to be led by the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society. Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction is the core approach of our DRR work: Communities themselves identify risks, vulnerabilities, capacities, priorities, actions and solution.
- In Germany a working group sustainability has been installed by the Headquarters of the GRC in 2024. Members of the working group are the 19 state branches who distribute all learnings and insights to their local branches in their respective state. The aim of the working group is to build up expertise, extend a network and share best practices and tools.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND EXAMPLES

Goal 4

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

We strengthen our capacity to understand climate and environmental risks and to use science, data and practice-based evidence in decision-making.

- Developing the anticipatory action approach since 2014, see goal 1
- Anticipation Hub since 2020, see goal 1
- Climate Smart Programming Training for our Partner National Societies and Delegates
- Strategic crisis exercise (2026) lead by the ministry of Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance on heatwaves with participation of GRC Headquarters and the majority of GRC regional branches
- Risk- und resilience analysis GRC Headquarters (2023 and 2026)
- Climate risk analysis on drought and heatwaves for the GRC Headquarters and its civil protection hub (2026)

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND EXAMPLES

Goal 5

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

We work nationally and internationally with local branches, National Societies, public authorities, civil society, welfare associations, academia, suppliers and other partners to strengthen climate and environmental action.

- Nationally mainly through our sustainability working group and network, see goal 4
- Internationally mainly through the Anticipation Hub, see goal 1
- GRC has cooperated with the Heidelberg Institute for Geoinformation Technology (HeiGIT) as a strategic research partner, applying scientific expertise, open geodata, participatory methods, and GIS-based risk analyses — including climate and environmental risk — to support preparedness, anticipatory action, and disaster risk reduction. In partnership with the German Aerospace Center (DLR), GRC has collaborated since 2019 on applying AI, satellite-based Earth observation, and open web data analysis to humanitarian crisis response. Joint work has included social media monitoring for real-time situational awareness, conflict damage assessment using satellite imagery, and the co-development of tools for geospatial intelligence in crisis contexts. These data and technologies are also highly relevant for climate-related disasters, enabling real-time monitoring, impact assessment, early warning, and evidence-based decision-making to strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate risks.
- Jointly with the Malagasy Red Cross, the GRC implemented a project, funded by the International Climate Initiative (Internationale Klimaschutz-initiative, IKI) contributing to the National Action Programme on adaptation to climate change of Madagascar. The project in the Atsinanana region aimed at securing the livelihoods of local population and strengthening their resilience to the adverse effects of climate change through various adjustments in the agricultural sector.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND EXAMPLES

Goal 6

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

- We use our voice, expertise and experience to support more ambitious climate action, stronger environmental protection and a people-centred just transition. The GRC has a dedicated forum for members of the German parliament in order to support this cause. We regularly update the members with our concerns and needs in national and international contexts. GRC regularly publishes political demands, alone or as joint statements with other welfare or international cooperation organizations. As active member of the Red Cross EU (RCEU) office, the membership office of the RC in Brussels, the GRC is part of the RCEU climate focal points group, contributing to the advocacy for climate change in external action of the EU. The RCEU office is also actively contributing to global climate negotiations, for example with the development of guidelines for its members, strengthening the Humanitarian Diplomacy engagement, to contribute defining the EU's position on Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings.
- Via the Anticipation Hub at a global level, but also within the Movement, GRC advocates for anticipatory action as an important approach to address the humanitarian consequences of climate change. This advocacy has resulted in a global commitment by all members of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and all states to work together to strengthen anticipatory action in the resolution "Protecting people from the humanitarian impacts of extreme climate and weather events: Working together to strengthen anticipatory action", adopted at the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent at the end of a process which GRC, IFRC and ICRC had jointly initiated. Via the Anticipation Hub GRC has also facilitated the work on the Grand Bargain Caucus outcome document on anticipatory action, adopted end of 2024, in which donors commit to strive for at least 5% of their humanitarian funding being used for anticipatory action.

Legal notice

Publisher

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz e.V.
Carstennstr. 58, 12205 Berlin

Editorial team

German Red Cross Headquarters

Contact

E-Mail: nachhaltig@drk.de
www.drk.de/nachhaltigkeit

Berlin, August 2026