

German Doctors Climate Charter Action Plan

At German Doctors e.V. (GD), our vision is that everyone realizes their right to healthcare as the basis for a self-determined and healthy life. As a medical humanitarian organization based in Bonn and founded in 1983, we are committed to delivering sustainable, needs-based healthcare to marginalized communities around the world.

The climate crisis poses a significant and growing threat to global health – especially for the most vulnerable. Recognizing our responsibility to act, **German Doctors signed the Climate Charter in 2024**, joining a global movement of humanitarian organizations committed to addressing the climate and environmental crises. The Charter outlines **seven commitments** to guide our collective response:



1. Step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crises.
2. Maximize the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities.
4. Increase our capacity to understand climate and environmental risks and develop evidence-based solutions.
5. Work collaboratively across the humanitarian sector and beyond to strengthen climate and environmental action.
6. Use our influence to mobilize urgent and more ambitious climate action and environmental protection.
7. Develop targets and measure our progress as we implement our commitments.

In alignment with these principles, German Doctors aims to **mainstream climate action across all areas of the organization**. This includes our operations at headquarters in Bonn, our medical and humanitarian projects, and our collaboration with partner organizations around the world.

This Climate Crisis Action Plan outlines the concrete steps we are taking to reduce our environmental footprint, build climate resilience, and strengthen our collective capacity to respond to the health impacts of climate change. Our approach acknowledges the many interlinkages between domains such as travel, procurement, energy, programming, waste, and learning – emphasizing cross-cutting solutions and practical synergies.

The GD Climate Charter Working Group will guide and support the implementation of this plan and monitor progress across the organization. As a living document, the action plan will be reviewed regularly and formally updated every three years. This iterative process will allow us to learn from experience, adapt to emerging challenges, and respond to new evidence and opportunities.

Through this plan, German Doctors reaffirms its commitment to protecting both people and planet – and to ensuring that climate and environmental considerations are integrated into every aspect of our work.

Action	Links to commitment	When	Who	Indicator
Travel				
Headquarters in Bonn				
1. Develop and implement a green travel policy for HQ staff (incl. CO2 reduction, continue CO2 compensation). Use the Climate Action Accelerator Travel Toolkit as guidance.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Starting in October 2026	Team Lead Admin & Secretariat	Green travel policy is developed and implemented by the end of March 2027.
2. Promote sustainable commuting (continue incentives for JobRAD and Jobticket, promote hybrid work for HQ).	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing ¹	Team Lead Admin	Annual staff commuting survey conducted (response rate $\geq 70\%$) to track commuting modes and trends. At least 70% of staff report using sustainable commuting methods (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, car-sharing, or remote work) for the majority (>50%) of their working days. Hybrid work policy maintained, with three remote workdays per week for HQ staff.
Procurement, Goods & Services				
Headquarters in Bonn				
3. Conduct a sustainability status quo analysis of existing procurement practices and update existing procurement guidelines to fully reflect sustainability criteria. Use	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	2026-2027	Team Lead Admin & Secretariat	Procurement sustainability status quo analysis completed by Q4 2026, including gap analysis against Climate

¹ Ongoing refers to actions already implemented.

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Climate Action Accelerator Procurement Toolkit as guidance.				<p>Action Accelerator Procurement Toolkit criteria.</p> <p>Revised procurement policy developed, approved, and published by Q4 2027, incorporating defined sustainability standards and minimum requirements.</p>
4. Conduct biennially staff training on sustainable procurement.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Starting in 2028	Team Lead Admin & Secretariat	100% staff attend mandatory training biennially.
5. Continue the transition to climate-neutral mailings (e.g., using FSC-certified paper, climate-neutral printing services, and offsetting emissions) for all direct mail campaigns.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing	Team Leads Fundraising & Public Relations	100% of mailings from HQ use climate-neutral printing and FSC-certified or recycled paper.
6. Ensure to include sustainable selection criteria when selecting event venues.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Starting in 2026	Team Lead Admin	<p>By end of 1st quarter 2027, responsibilities and a central coordination mechanism for sustainable event venue selection are defined.</p> <p>Documentation or checklist for venue selection developed and used for HQ-organized events from 2027.</p> <p>From 2027 onwards, sustainability criteria are systematically applied in the selection of venues for HQ-organized events, with the objective that 100% of events consider defined sustainability</p>

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				criteria (e.g. accessibility by public transport, use of renewable energy, eco-certification).
7. All events organized by HQ offer vegetarian meals only.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing	Team Lead Admin	By 2026, the vegetarian-only catering requirement is formally documented and made accessible to all staff, with a responsible person designated to ensure staff awareness. 100% of HQ-organized events annually offer vegetarian catering only.
Projects				
8. Update project procurement guidelines to fully reflect sustainability criteria (incl. housing). Use the Climate Action Accelerator Procurement Toolkit as guidance.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Starting in 2026	Team Leads Projects, Compliance Advisor	New guidelines distributed to 100% of projects starting in 2027.
9. Assess and improve medical procurement to reduce medical waste.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	2027	Medical Advisor, Working Group Medicines	Medical procurement SOPs developed by 2027.

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Programming				
Projects				
10. Conduct one environmental screening / climate risk analysis per year using either the Environmental Stewardship Tool or NEAT+ (e.g. in feasibility studies, needs assessments and baselines). Consider the guidance by the Climate Charter on Environmental Sustainability on Environmental Risks.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability & 4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects	One completed screenings and reports delivered annually.
11. Conduct one Health Facility Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment & develop an Adaptation Plan.	1. Step up our response & 4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects, M&E Advisors	One Health Facility Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment conducted, and Adaption Plan developed. Evaluate if Health Facility Climate Vulnerability Capacity Assessment is a helpful tool for regular assessments for GD.
12. Consider incorporating environmental, climate change and disaster resilience indicators into baseline studies for each new project. Use IndiKit as guidance.	4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2026	Team Leads Projects, M&E Advisors	At least 25% of new projects starting from 2026 document consideration of environmental, climate change, or disaster resilience indicators during baseline study planning. 50% in 2027. 75% in 2028.
13. Include learnings on climate and environment considerations from action #10, #11 & #12 in	1. Step up our response & 4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects, M&E Advisors	Project proposal template includes paragraph on climate aspects.

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the development and implementation of respective new projects.				One new project proposal reviewed annually that reference climate and environmental learnings in their project design.
14. Establish budget line for climate adaptation in selected projects post-environmental screening/climate vulnerability and capacity assessment (actions #10, #11, #12 & #13).	1. Step up our response & 4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2027	Management Board Projects, Team Leads Projects	Budget line established and used for 2028 budget planning cycle.
With Partner Organizations				
15. Facilitate regular knowledge-sharing sessions with partner organizations to exchange climate adaptation/mitigation practices. Sessions will be documented and distributed internally and externally (together with actions #21 & #35).	3. Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities	Starting in 2026	Team Leads Projects, Working Group Climate Charter	One online knowledge-sharing sessions conducted annually (together with #21 & #35).
Energy & Buildings				
Headquarters in Bonn				
16. Procure energy-efficient products and energy-saving technologies for office operations.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing	Team Lead Admin, IT	75% of newly procured office equipment meeting defined energy-efficiency standards.
17. Promote energy-saving behaviour (e.g. power down devices, activate energy-saving modes) using internal campaigns and staff reminders. Adjust office temperature standards to reduce consumption (e.g. night reductions, closed-door policy) and consider switching to smart thermostats. Use Climate Action	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Starting in 2026	Team Lead Admin, Working Group Environmental Protection at the Workplace	By 2026, an internal guideline or policy on energy-saving practices is developed and approved, using the Climate Action Accelerator Good Office Practices Toolkit as guidance.

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Accelerator Good Office Practices Toolkit as guidance.				<p>By Q4 2026, energy-saving practices are integrated into staff onboarding.</p> <p>From 2026 onwards, all staff receive at least one annual reminder on energy-saving practices each autumn.</p> <p>Feasibility of smart thermostats and potential external funding was assessed by Q4 2026.</p> <p>Yearly heating energy consumption reduced compared to the previous year.</p>
18. Continue procuring renewable electricity for HQ and consider switching to climate-neutral hosting providers. Use Climate Action Accelerator Good Office Practices Toolkit as guidance.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	By the end of 2027	Team Lead Admin, IT	<p>Office electricity is fully sourced from renewable or climate-neutral providers.</p> <p>Feasibility of green web hosting services was assessed by Q4 2027.</p>
Projects				
19. Assess feasibility of solar power installations at project sites. Consider the Climate Action Accelerator Solarisation Toolkit in the process.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing	Team Leads Projects	At least one project sites assessed annually per region (Africa, Asia) starting in 2026.

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20. Improve the energy performance of buildings (e.g. minor upgrades to doors, windows, and roofs, as well as behavioural changes, such as keeping doors and windows closed when heating or cooling).	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects	One building with improved basic energy efficiency measures per year.
With Partner Organizations				
21. Gradually implement locally adapted energy-saving measures: Work with local partner organizations to implement energy-saving measures adapted to the local context and knowledge (e.g. favour the most energy-efficient cooling and heating options, such as ceiling fans and solar water heaters; energy-efficient air conditioning units and practices such as setting a minimum temperature and only using them during the hottest hours of the day) (together with actions #15 & #35).	2. Maximize environmental sustainability & 3. Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities	Starting in 2027 (together with action #35)	Working Group Climate Charter	One online exchange meeting to discuss energy saving measures held per region (Africa, Asia) (together with #15 & #35).
Waste & Ecosystems				
Headquarters in Bonn				
22. Adopt a 'digital first' approach wherever possible (e.g. digital reports, cloud storage) by developing a digital-first policy.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	By 2027	Team Leads Admin	Digital-first policy developed and implemented in 2027.
23. Promote waste reduction in HQ (e.g. reusable containers for lunch, paperless office, avoid purchasing or distributing single use plastic items and reduce packaging, eco-friendly cleaning supplies).	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing	Team Lead Admin	Annual internal confirmation that waste reduction measures (e.g. reusable items, paperless processes) are promoted and visibly in place.

Action	Links to commitment	When	Who	Indicator
24. Maintain waste segregation in HQ.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability	Ongoing	Team Lead Admin	Waste segregation system is visibly in place and used correctly in all designated office areas, confirmed through a brief annual internal check. Staff survey on waste needs in offices conducted by Q4 2026.
Projects				
25. Use medical waste guideline and continuously discuss gaps and needs in waste management with partner organizations.	2. Maximize environmental sustainability & 3. Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities	Ongoing	Team Leads Projects, Medical Advisor	Medical waste management plan developed for each medical project by 2026. The developed plans are gradually implemented from 2027 onwards.
26. Allocate targeted budget lines for medical waste improvements based on discussed gaps and needs with partner organizations.	1. Step up our response & 4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2027	Management Board Projects, Team Leads Projects, Medical Advisor	Budget line established and used in 2027.
With Partner Organizations				
27. Annually consult partner organizations in at least one project per region (Africa, Asia) on feasibility of water harvesting systems suited to local context (choose water harvesting systems adapted to the needs, infrastructure	3. Embrace the leadership of local actors and communities	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects	Minimum of two consultations annually conducted.

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context, available space, and maintenance capacities).				
28. Allocate targeted budget lines for water harvesting systems based on discussed gaps and needs with partner organizations.	1. Step up our response & 4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2028	Team Leads Projects	Budget line established and used for water harvesting systems who are sustainable in the long term.
Learning, Capacity Building & Advocacy				
Headquarters in Bonn				
29. Sensitize and train GD staff (both HQ and international representatives) on the Climate Charter and the effects of climate crisis on health.	4. Increase our capacity & 6. Use our influence	Starting in 2026	Working Group Climate Charter	At least one training conducted for staff every two years, ≥80% of staff attend.
30. Raise public awareness in Germany on climate crisis and health linkages (e.g. through newsletter, website, social media, annual report) with a focus GD projects and tangible issues.	6. Use our influence	Starting in 2026	Team Lead Public Relations	At least three public-facing communication per year on climate crisis and its impact on health (e.g. newsletter, article, social media post).
31. Actively engage in relevant working groups from VENRO (Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs) and other relevant platforms to advocate for stronger climate and environmental action across the humanitarian and development sectors in Germany.	5. Work collaboratively & 6. Use our influence	Ongoing	Team Leads Projects	Joint advocacy positions endorsed annually where relevant.

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Projects				
32. Sensitize volunteer doctors (e.g. during preparation seminars) about the health effects of the climate crisis and environmental sustainability in missions.	4. Increase our capacity & 6. Use our influence	Starting in 2026	Head of Mission Planning	Climate-health session integrated into 100% of new preparation seminars from 2026 onward.
33. Raise awareness among project target groups on the climate crisis and health by developing or selecting high-quality educational materials and integrating them into existing health education curricula, community health worker programs, and outreach activities. Materials should be contextually adapted to local needs, languages, and cultural practices, and reviewed periodically.	4. Increase our capacity & 6. Use our influence	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects, Medical Advisor, (possibly intern for research)	Educational materials on climate and health are incorporated into 50% of relevant community health education activities at project sites in 2028. Climate-health content is included in all relevant training curricula for CHWs and health education programs by GD in 2028.
34. Explore and support opportunities for national-level climate advocacy by or with local partners in project countries.	4. Increase our capacity & 6. Use our influence	Starting in 2027	Team Leads Projects	Advocacy opportunities assessed in at least one project per region (Africa, Asia) per year.
With Partner Organizations				
35. Sensitize and train partner organizations on the climate crisis and health, including practical climate-friendly practices (e.g. sustainable travel, energy use, procurement, and waste management; together with actions #15 & #21).	4. Increase our capacity	Starting in 2026 with a general introduction	Working Group Climate Action	At least one training or sensitization session held annually per region; ≥70% of targeted partner organizations participate (together with #15 & #21).

Action	Links to commitment	When	Who	Indicator
36. Introduce the Climate Charter to partner organizations and encourage partner organizations to endorse and adopt the Climate Charter.	6. Use our influence	2026 (together with action #35)	Working Group Climate Action	Climate Charter shared with 100% of partner organizations in 2026.