

Sustainable Supply in a Nutshell

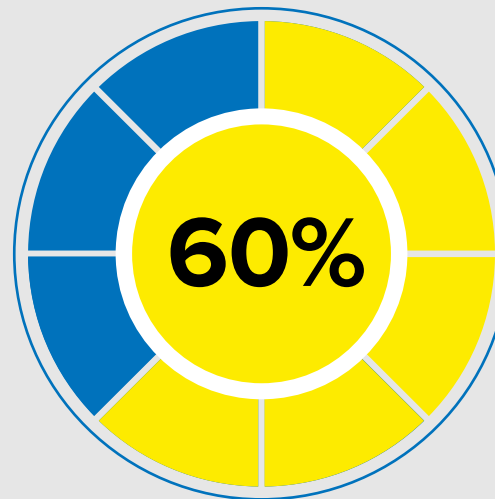
UNHCR purchases a wide range of goods through international and local markets in order to provide international protection to people forced to flee.

Core relief items, such as tents, blankets and sleeping mats, are key components of our humanitarian assistance. While they are vital and life-sustaining products, an expert evaluation found that their production and distribution contribute to almost 60 per cent of UNHCR's total carbon emissions.*

In line with our [Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025](#), we are stepping up our efforts to improve the sustainability of our end-to-end supply chain, including the planning, sourcing, contents, manufacturing processes, procurement, delivery and lifecycle management of essential relief items and other goods.

*On average, an estimated 450 kilotonnes of CO₂ are emitted annually as part of UNHCR's supply chain activities. To capture 1 tonne of CO₂ emissions, 50 trees must grow for one year.

Emissions:



- UNHCR total emission
- UNHCR supply emission

By 2025, we aim to:



Reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent



Increase recycled plastic content of core relief items by 20 per cent

Guiding principle:



We embrace **circular economy standards** to reduce our environmental impact, minimize waste, generate additional income, and decrease resource dependency.

	Contents	Packaging & Labelling	Sustainable Procurement	Warehousing	Logistics	Lifecycle management
ACTION TAKEN	<p>"Green" specifications for the highest-emitting relief items to reduce virgin plastic materials and increase the proportion of recycled material by up to 100 per cent.</p>	<p>More sustainable packaging solutions: recycled and natural-coloured cardboards, water-based ink, reduced single-use plastics.</p>	<p>Applying economic, environmental and social considerations when procuring goods and services.</p>	<p>Green boxes are being installed in the seven global stockpiles and over 30 warehouses.</p>	<p>Optimized palletization and loading ability of transport units.</p>	<p>A concept note to support a proactive waste management strategy for operations and supply activities.</p>
IMPACT	<p>Up to 70 per cent of energy can be saved by replacing virgin with recycled plastics in CRI production.</p> <p>Using recycled plastics reduces waste and decreases the need for additional extraction of raw petroleum.</p>	<p>Green labelling for CRIs with indications on material composition and recycling.</p> <p>QR code on CRIs to access product and protection information (help.unhcr.org).</p> <p>Recycled polyester uses 90% less water compared to raw polyester and substituting natural cardboard for white-coated cardboard can save 70% of water.</p> <p>Removing unnecessary single-use plastics can save over 1000 tonnes of CO2 annually.</p>	<p>Sourcing goods closer to where they are needed most (proximity sourcing).</p> <p>Amended frame agreements of essential items.</p> <p>By prioritizing local procurement and considering diversity, gender balance and ethical practices, UNHCR is also supporting local economies and social inclusion.</p> <p>Reduces transportation distances and emissions, diversifies suppliers, boosts local economies, allows swifter access to critical supplies.</p> <p>A supplier base ready to produce and ship "greener" items.</p>	<p>Preposition of CRIs emergency capacity increased to reach 1 million refugees, with replenishment ongoing.</p> <p>The UNHCR Global Stockpiles network is regularly reviewed and aligned with emergency forecasts and early warning mechanisms.</p> <p>Allows monitoring the worldwide energy usage in UNHCR's warehouses and guides their future solarization</p> <p>Enables rapid, efficient, and more sustainable deployment of material assistance.</p>	<p>Achieving 60% bale compression of blankets can save 50 containers per year.</p> <p>Increasing the pallet count from 48 to 60 per 40' container will boost container loading efficiency by 22%.</p> <p>This also means reduced transportation costs.</p>	<p>Provides a framework to reduce and manage waste resulting from the disposal of both the packaging and the items themselves once they reach the end of their life cycle.</p>
FIND OUT MORE	<p>Improving the Sustainability of UNHCR Core Relief Items (report summary)</p>	<p>Case Study on Packaging</p>	<p>Sustainable Procurement in the UN</p>	<p>UNHCR Green Boxes</p>		<p>UNHCR Waste Management Concept Note</p>

As a result, we are well on our way to achieving our initial target.

In addition to reducing the environmental footprint, these changes also aim to lower costs, which will in turn enable UNHCR to assist more people forced to flee.

Strategic approaches



We directly involve displaced and host populations in designing sustainable supply solutions, including the pilot testing of greener items and end-user feedback mechanisms.

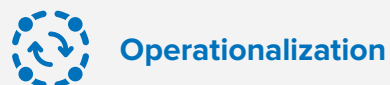


We build on and strengthen our cooperation with governments, sister agencies, donors and logistics partners to enhance our ability to provide effective emergency response solutions, while minimizing the environmental impact of our material assistance.



We engage suppliers about our procurement principles and sustainability provisions through B2B meetings and at humanitarian aid events for increased market-shaping and capacity-building.

We strive to develop an organizational culture based on innovation and a sustainable supply mindset. Consequently, we organize training and certification programs.



We make conscious efforts to collaborate across UNHCR functions and regions to maximize synergies with all stakeholders.

Going forward, we will:

- Develop four additional environmentally friendly product specifications.
- Gradually replenish our stocks with greener items.
- Go full cycle and introduce sustainability considerations into all supply activities.
- Develop a methodology to calculate Scope 3 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to support organizations in reducing their carbon footprint. This guidance will enhance UNHCR's understanding of the GHG emission hotspots in its value chain, enabling the organization to apply the different emissions reduction mechanisms.
- Advocate for comprehensive reductions of GHG across the humanitarian supply chain actors.

Contact Us

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[Sustainable Supply Website](#)