



IFRC SECRETARIAT ENVIRONMENT POLICY

July 2019

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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1 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the present policy:

Build back better refers to the use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems¹, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies and the environment.

Environment refers here to the physical, chemical, and biological surroundings in which communities live and develop their livelihoods. It provides the natural resources that sustain individuals and determines the quality of the surroundings in which they live.

Environmental aspects refer to elements of IFRC Secretariat's activities, products or services that interact or can interact with the environment.

Environmental impacts refer to changes to the environment whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from IFRC Secretariat's environmental aspects.

Environmental impact assessment refers to a process of systematic analysis of the potential environmental impacts of projects or programmes and identification of appropriate preventive actions and/or mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or remediate significant adverse environmental impacts identified.

Environmental mitigation hierarchy refers here to the range of actions that IFRC Secretariat shall undertake to avoid adverse impacts, and where avoidance is not possible, take measures seeking to minimise, mitigate or remediate adverse impacts to achieve the best possible environmental outcomes.

Environmental performance refers to the level of success in the management of environmental aspects to reduce adverse and increase beneficial environmental impacts.

Do no harm refers here to avoiding any unintended negative consequences of its interventions that may further endanger affected persons or undermine communities' capacities for peace-building and reconstruction, as an aspect of the IFRC's prior commitment to the broader principle of "do no harm".²

Green response refers to the goal of saving lives and reduce suffering without risking damage to the environment or the livelihoods, assets, health and survival of affected people.

IFRC personnel refers to any person in the service of the IFRC, including: Employees, National Staff and Seconded Staff (as these terms of defined in the Staff Regulations) as well as, surge capacity personnel³, volunteers, interns and consultants.

Life cycle refers to consecutive and interlinked stages of a product or service, from raw material acquisition or generation from natural resources, design, production, transportation/ delivery, use, end-of-life treatment and final disposal.

Precautionary principle refers to an approach whereby measures to prevent a potentially negative impact of an activity on human health or the environment will be taken even if the causal link between the activity and the impact is not conclusively established.

Prevention of pollution refers to the use of processes, practices, techniques, materials, products, services or energy to avoid, reduce or control (separately or in combination) the creation, emission or discharge of any type of pollutant or waste, in order to reduce adverse environmental impacts

Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

1 The term "societal" shall not be interpreted as a political system of any country.

2 The term "do no harm" is often associated with protection activities, and in the IFRC, is closely linked with the "Better Programming Initiative (BPI)." The original meaning of "Do no harm" - as used in BPI - relates specifically to not exacerbating tensions between communities in conflict situations. The term has taken on a broader meaning of ensuring that humanitarian operations do not have any unintended negative consequences such as endangering affected persons, or undermining community capacity for peacebuilding.

3 Includes Heads of Emergency Operations (HeOps), Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) members and Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) / Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members and other positions in IFRC deployments formed in the future, including those resulting from the surge optimization process.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) considers that it is necessary to conduct its activities in a way that respects and protects the environment. As part of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, the IFRC has a global and local presence, which means it must consider its global and local beneficial and adverse environmental impacts.
- 2.2 The increasing global awareness of environmental issues and their impact on societies and communities has led to a number of international agreements dedicated to, or with a strong focus on, the protection of the environment. IFRC has made statements of support to the objectives of such agreements, including the 2015 Paris Agreement (for implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), which calls for various measures aimed to contain rising temperatures (mitigation) and to deal with the impacts of climate change (adaptation); the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which recognises the definitive capacity of the environment to either increase vulnerability or resilience within communities; and the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development - a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change and its impacts.
- 2.3 IFRC recognizes that negative impacts on the environment from humanitarian efforts can harm the people they are intended to help and undermine resilience outcomes. Local environmental degradation can increase the vulnerability of communities to disasters and the impacts of climate change and have other negative effects on affected communities (including on health and livelihoods, immediately or further in the future). Globally, the human influence on the climate system and the continued emission of greenhouse gases induced by human activity will cause further warming and long-lasting changes across the climate system. This includes increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems such as severity and unpredictability of weather or climate related hazards. Climate change has the characteristics of a global collective action problem, therefore addressing the problem must be a collective effort. A commitment to this collective effort is a strong component of this Secretariat Environmental Policy.
- 2.4 Environmental sustainability is intrinsically linked to climate change action, both mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and community resilience. IFRC recognizes that women and men – in their diversity – are differently affected by the effects of climate change and environment degradation, and that environmental degradation disproportionately impacts socially vulnerable groups.
- 2.5 IFRC Secretariat is committed to a continual and systematic improvement of its environmental performance, demonstrated through a phased implementation of this policy, with an aim to be comprehensively implemented within two years.

3 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that IFRC Secretariat: expands its commitment to a “do no harm” approach to the protection of the environment; strives to fulfil its environmental obligations; establishes and meets its environmental goals and objectives; and commits to continual improvement of its environmental performance. It may also be useful as a reference for National Societies in their environmental policy development.
- 3.2 The scope of this policy extends to all activities of the IFRC Secretariat and IFRC Global/Regional Surge Tools⁴ and mechanisms. It does not otherwise directly apply to the members of the IFRC as a network.
- 3.3 This policy does not specifically address issues related to preparedness or response to environmental emergencies, defined here as sudden onset disasters or accidents resulting from natural, technological or human-induced factors, or a combination of these that cause or threaten to cause severe environmental damage as well as loss of human lives and property.

4 Includes Heads of Emergency Operations (HeOps), Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) members and Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) / Regional Intervention Team (RIT)

- 3.4 This policy shall be read consistently with the following policies and guidance materials: the IFRC Framework for Climate Action Towards 2020, Community Engagement and Accountability Commitments and Minimum Actions (2018), Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies (2018) and the IFRC Framework and Roadmap to Community Resilience.
- 3.5 Although this policy defines IFRC's Secretariat approach to the protection of the environment, it aims to complement regulations, policies and procedures that seek to ensure social and economic safeguards within the IFRC, with the view that environmental sustainability is one pillar of sustainable development, along with social and economic sustainability.

4 OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 IFRC Secretariat is committed to a systematic approach to improving its environmental performance to protect the environment and prevent pollution.
- 4.2 IFRC Secretariat shall take action to avoid adverse environmental impacts and, where this is not possible, take measures seeking to minimise, mitigate or remediate the adverse environmental impact to achieve the best possible environmental outcomes (as per the environmental mitigation hierarchy), applying the Precautionary Principle.
- 4.3 Communities that are resilient can manage their own natural resources and are better equipped to withstand the impacts of and recover from disasters. IFRC Secretariat is committed to enhancing the existing adaptive capacity and knowledge of communities while recognizing the different knowledge of women and men and ensuring that women's needs and priorities are voiced, understood and addressed. IFRC Secretariat shall continue to support National Societies to strengthen community resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate action, with special attention to the interaction between ecosystem management and community resilience and its influence on human health, livelihood, food production and disaster resilience.
- 4.4 IFRC Secretariat is accountable to National Societies and the people they support and shall develop, implement and continually improve processes that identify, prevent and mitigate potential and actual adverse impacts on the environment under the principle of 'do no harm'. IFRC Secretariat shall actively seek to support National Societies to meaningfully engage affected communities in these processes, ensuring that appropriate and accessible feedback mechanisms include environmental concerns and opportunities.
- 4.5 In the aftermath of disasters, the immediate imperative for the IFRC is to save lives, reduce suffering, damage and losses, and to protect and support affected people. Whilst life-saving interventions must always remain the priority aim of any emergency response operation, the IFRC Secretariat shall take into account environmental aspects when analysing response and recovery options.
- 4.6 IFRC Secretariat shall work proactively in preparedness to establish cost-efficient, effective, equitable and environmentally sustainable solutions to addressing humanitarian needs, and continuously seek to improve the environmental outcomes of life-saving operations in pursuit of a Green Response.
- 4.7 IFRC Secretariat's operations and activities shall at a minimum conform with relevant principles of international law and national environmental and natural resource law, and align with global international standards (including humanitarian standards such as the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response) and good practice for environmental sustainability.
- 4.8 IFRC Secretariat shall work towards sustainable resource use, improving environmental aspects of its in-house Management services and facilities.
- 4.9 IFRC Secretariat shall seek to optimize its transportation in order to reduce its emissions and pollution. This includes monitoring and reporting on its emissions, as well as actively seeking solutions to optimize travel, and fleet management.
- 4.10 IFRC Secretariat will embed environmental aspects and best practice in its long-term strategy and goals.

5 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES

In order to guide the practical application⁵ of the commitments made in the overarching principles, the following section provides further guidance on measures to be undertaken across the different functions of the IFRC Secretariat.

The commitments made within the policy shall be achieved through a process of progressive implementation that corresponds to the Secretariat's capacity, development, resources and applied learning.

Accompanying this policy is an Implementation Plan which will establish a baseline, and consequently set-out activities, targets and goals as to how the IFRC Secretariat will work towards and improve environmental sustainability throughout the organisation, prioritizing areas of higher environmental risks and impact. Good practice guidance on environmental considerations in programming, in-house operations and personal choices will also be provided to IFRC Personnel.

5.1 Programming

In its longer-term programming, preparedness and emergency response and recovery operations, where IFRC Secretariat is providing financial support and/or can influence, the IFRC shall integrate environmental aspects, in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, as part of overall planning, quality assurance and risk management, in line with the concept of 'build back better'. This includes the IFRC Emergency Plans of Action and Operational Plans. In practice, this means:

- 5.1.1 **Environmental screening.** IFRC Secretariat shall implement and mainstream environmental screening tools in its programmes and emergency response and recovery operations.
 - a. Environmental screening and categorization tools will identify environmental risk levels and provide recommendations for subsequent action to be included in decision-making. Proportional environmental impact assessments and subsequent management plans will be undertaken as required and should be a collaborative process with external partners and environmental experts wherever possible.
 - b. IFRC will strive to understand how social factors such as gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, health status, social status, ethnicity etc. shape the contextual vulnerabilities to the impacts environmental degradation and take a gender and diversity-sensitive approach when identifying and addressing risks and opportunities.
 - c. IFRC Secretariat will strive to offer meaningful opportunities for members of the community – in their diversity – to participate and guide the screening and assessment of environmental risks and opportunities, as well as the implementation, monitoring and reporting, as appropriate.
- 5.1.2 **Technical support.** IFRC Secretariat shall actively seek, in collaboration with its partners, to ensure that environmental technical support is available to programmes and emergency response operations in the field, as relevant and requested.
- 5.1.3 **Improved waste management in programmes and operations.** IFRC Emergency Plans of Action shall, to the extent possible, anticipate and ensure adequate resources for environmentally responsible waste management within their operations.
- 5.1.4 **Sustainable energy solutions in programmes and operations.** Wherever feasible IFRC Secretariat shall aim to address energy needs through sustainable energy solutions in its programming and emergency response and recovery operations, replacing or supplementing fuels that may adversely impact health, protection or the environment.
- 5.1.5 **Supply chain and fleet management.** In close collaboration with relevant IFRC Secretariat departments and other internal and external partners, IFRC Logistics Procurement and Supply Chain Management Department shall continue to lead the improvement and monitor the progress of the environmental performance and carbon efficiency of the IFRC supply chain, including in the areas of procurement, warehousing, fleet management and transport, working closely with Movement partners to consolidate and leverage resources, knowledge and capacities.

⁵ The practical application of principles to manage environmental aspects, address risks and opportunities, fulfil compliance obligations and set targets and goals for improving environmental performance is sometimes referred to as an Environmental Management System.

- 5.1.6 **Standard products.** IFRC Secretariat shall work proactively across technical departments, with relevant Movement partners and in close collaboration with IFRC Logistics Procurement and Supply Chain Management Department to strengthen the consideration environmental aspects of the specifications (including packaging) within the Emergency Relief Items Catalogue.

5.2 Management services

- 5.2.1 **Building and Office Services.** IFRC Secretariat shall establish a baseline for the key environmental aspects of building and office service provision including energy, water, waste management, including electronic waste, and in-house printing. Further, a system for measuring, monitoring and progressively improving in these key environmental aspects, shall be established throughout the organization.
- 5.2.2 **Meetings and Conference Services.** In hosting meetings and conferences, environmental impacts shall be considered by the meeting organizer (see further Secretariat Meetings and Workshop policy). Further, the IFRC Secretariat shall undertake measures to ensure best practices with regard to minimizing the environmental impacts of meetings and conferences.

5.3 Other

- 5.3.1 **Publications.** Electronic (soft) copies should be the default for IFRC Secretariat publications. Hard copy publications shall be considered in light of contextual technological constraints and the suitability for the audience and shall be produced with due consideration for the environmental aspects of the publication's lifecycle, from raw material to production, distribution, use and end-of-use. The volume of printed publications shall be weighed against the demand and expiration date of the publication.
- 5.3.2 **Work-related air travel.** IFRC Secretariat shall strive to increase efficiency in work-related travel, in accordance with the Guiding Principles of the IFRC Travel Policy. IFRC Secretariat shall collect, monitor and report on its air-travel emissions. By the time of the review of this policy (in two years) the IFRC Secretariat shall develop a solution to reduce its air-travel emissions and strive to implement mitigating solutions that aim to improve IFRC Secretariat's environmental performance.
- 5.3.3 **Telecommuting.** IFRC Secretariat strongly encourages improving environmental performance related to travel to and from workplace. This includes seeking effective telecommuting solutions.

6 COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Although a Secretariat Policy, IFRC Secretariat recognizes that the implementation of the Policy and the continual improvement of environmental practices and standards will require and benefit from close collaborations with partners. Motivated by the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) initiative, IFRC shall explore further opportunities with ICRC and National Societies to consolidate and leverage resources, knowledge and capacities to improve its environmental performance. Specifically, IFRC Secretariat will:

- 6.1 Continue to collaborate with the Green Response Working Group on initiatives seeking to improve environmental outcomes of emergency response and early recovery operations. The Green Response Working Group has as its objective to progress initiatives that improve environmental outcomes of humanitarian action, connected to the IFRC Secretariat and National Societies' knowledge, experience and mission, adhering to the Fundamental Principles, the principle of 'do no harm' and the concept of 'build back better';
- 6.2 Collaborate with National Societies sponsoring Emergency Response Units (ERUs) to improve their environmental standards and practices;
- 6.3 Draw upon the expertise of relevant Red Cross Red Crescent reference centres. This includes collaboration with the Climate Centre to improve the operational use of scientific climate insights;
- 6.4 Support and encourage National Societies to develop their own environmental policies, according to their needs, and in cooperation with the Environmental Sustainability Advisor; and
- 6.5 Seek collaborations with external partners, especially those with relevant expertise in environmental sustainability.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Responsibilities of senior managers

7.1.2 Under-Secretaries General, Directors of Regional Offices, Heads of Country and Country Cluster Offices, Heads of Response Operations and other IFRC deployments⁶ have the overall responsibility for implementation of the policy with regard to IFRC Personnel under their supervision.

7.1.3 The common responsibilities of all senior managers include:

- a. Ensuring that all IFRC Personnel are informed and regularly reminded of the content of the present policy.
- b. Leading by example and creating a motivating culture of compliance and environmental responsibility prioritizing resource allocation and staff time to improving IFRC Secretariat's environmental performance as part of overall quality assurance, pursuant to IFRC's core mandate and mission.
- c. Ensuring that all IFRC personnel under their supervision comply with the requirements of this policy, including the integration of environmental aspects into the project management cycle, Emergency Plans of Action, Operational Plans etc. and the undertaking of environmental screening, categorization and impact assessment as required.
- d. Ensuring and supporting the collection of data relevant to monitor, report on and improve IFRC Secretariat's environmental performance, as per the commitments made under this policy. These tasks can be delegated, however overall responsibility lies with the senior managers.
- e. Encouraging and supporting all IFRC Personnel to undertake relevant training to increase their capacities on how to improve environmental aspects in all areas of their work.

7.2 Responsibilities of surge delegates

surge Delegates, as per the Core Competency Framework for Surge Delegates, are required to have the ability to identify and analyse environmental risks from programming and shall aim to minimize them. The Framework further outlines specific behaviours, skills and knowledge at technical, managerial and leadership level pertaining to the environment.

7.3 Responsibilities of the environmental sustainability focal point and environmental sustainability advisor

An Environmental Sustainability Focal Point will be designated in the Secretariat to oversee the implementation of this policy. The Focal Point will be also responsible for seeking resources to support an Environmental Sustainability Advisor, whose responsibilities would be:

- a. Support the implementation of the Policy and its Implementation Plan;
- b. Advise, coordinate and support the integration of environmental considerations in project design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting;
- c. Integrate the protection of the environment into organizational plans and strategies and reports;
- d. Develop and/or support the development of tools, guidance and trainings
- e. Raise awareness and support capacity development activities;
- f. Advise on National Society environmental policy development; and
- g. Act as a focal point for Green Response and environmental sustainability, both within and external to IFRC.
- h. Support in the provision of environmental technical support to programmes and emergency response operations in the field (see 5.1.2)

⁶ Currently including Heads of Emergency Operations (HeOps), FACT Leaders, ERU/RDRT/RIT Team Leaders and also to be applicable to other senior manager positions in IFRC deployments formed in the future, including those resulting from the surge optimization process.

7.4 Responsibilities of all personnel

In addition to responsibilities stated in the Code of Conduct, including the obligation to comply with Federation rules and regulations and applicable law, and to act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and the organizational values as defined by the Federation⁷, all IFRC Personnel have the following responsibilities:

- a. Read and understand this policy;
- b. Act in accordance with the overarching principles of this policy;
- c. Integrate environmental aspects into the project management cycles within their control, including specific requirements stated in 5.1.1;
- d. Perform their duties in an environmentally responsible manner; and
- e. Equip themselves, with support from management, with skills and knowledge relevant to undertake above-mentioned responsibilities.

8 PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 The Environmental Sustainability Advisor, once recruited, has the responsibility for promoting and monitoring the implementation of this policy and for coordinating and producing required reports on its progress.
- 8.2 An implementation plan shall be developed to accompany the policy. Key environmental performance indicators are to be agreed as part of the implementation plan. It is anticipated that the key performance indicators will be determined and will correspond to commitments iterated in section 5, ("Practical Implication of Principles").
- 8.3 Pursuant to the policy, the IFRC Secretariat shall report annually on its environmental impact and performance as part of its Annual Report. Also, environmental performance indicators, against which the IFRC Secretariat will evaluate its environmental performance, will be included in the regular IFRC Secretariat management reporting.
- 8.4 An evaluation of this policy's utility and outcomes will be undertaken two years after its adoption to inform a review of this policy, which shall reflect the IFRC Secretariat's highest level of ambition to improving its environmental performance.
- 8.5 The possibility of a Federation-wide environmental policy shall be explored.

⁷ These are: respect for diversity, cultures, structures and customs of the communities, solidarity with the community, integrity and accountability, as well as mutual understanding and non-discrimination are essential elements to preserve human dignity.

9 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Social and economic safeguards

- Community Engagement and Accountability Commitments and Minimum Actions (2018)
- Information Disclosure Policy
- Gender Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy
- Staff CoC
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief.
- Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion
- Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies (2018)
- Recruitment Procedures and Induction Program
- Staff Regulations and annexes
- Disciplinary Measures
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Control Policy;
- Financial Regulations
- Integrity Policy
- Cash Transfer Regulation
- Procurement Manual for the Procurement of Good and Services
- Standards for Investigations for the Risk Management and Audit Department.

Other

- Framework for Climate Action Towards 2020
- Framework and Roadmap to Community Resilience
- Sphere (including Core Humanitarian Standards)
- Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance
- Travel Policy
- Core Competency Framework for Surge Delegates
- Meeting and workshops policy



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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