

Sustainable Supply in a Nutshell

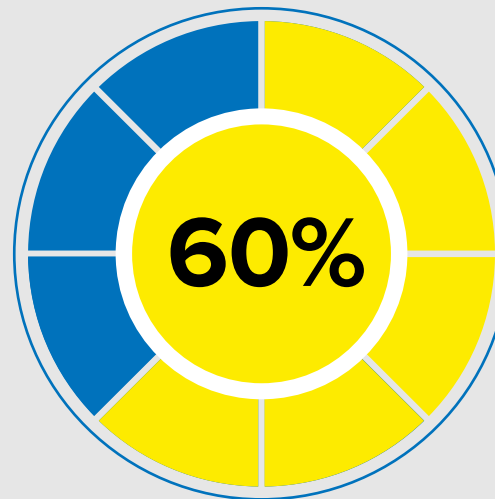
UNHCR purchases a wide range of goods through international and local markets in order to provide international protection to people forced to flee.

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 550 kilotonnes of CO₂ are emitted annually from the production of core relief and non-standard items. 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>Green labelling for CRIs with indications on material composition and recycling.</p>	<p>Applying economic, environmental and social considerations when procuring goods and services.</p> <p>Sourcing goods closer to where they are needed most (proximity sourcing).</p> <p>Amended frame agreements of essential items.</p>	<p>Global stockpiles (GSM) and local warehouses are being solarized with environmentally sustainable energy systems.</p> <p>Emergency response capacity increased by prepositioning CRIs sufficient for 1 million refugees, with replenishment ongoing.</p>	<p>Optimized palletization and loading ability of transport units.</p>	<p>A waste management programme has been designed, to proactively implement sustainable waste management services in country operations.</p>
	<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>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>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>The UNHCR Global Stockpiles network is regularly reviewed and aligned with emergency forecasts and early warning mechanisms.</p> <p>Reduce the GHG emissions related to the energy consumed to maintain UNHCR GSM and local warehouses.</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>Life-cycle analysis conducted for kitchen sets, mattresses and solar lanterns to evaluate environmental impact at each stage of the items' production and support suppliers to propose more sustainable products.</p> <p>Provides guidelines to reduce and manage solid waste resulting from the disposal of items delivered, and waste generated in warehouses once they reach the end of their life cycle.</p> <p>Enables informed decision-making to select more sustainable products and supports suppliers to enhance their capacity to develop greener items.</p>
IMPACT						
FIND OUT MORE	Improving the Sustainability of UNHCR Core Relief Items (report summary)	Case Study on Packaging	Sustainable Procurement in the UN	UNHCR Global Stockpile Termez fully solarized		UNHCR Waste Management Concept Note

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



Engagement of forcibly displaced people

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



Partnership

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.



Cost efficiency

We invest in innovative methods to optimize our supply chain and adopt a circular economy model to unlock efficiencies and cost savings.



Capacity-building, innovation, learning and culture change

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.



Operationalization

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

Going forward, we will:

- Develop additional environmentally friendly product specifications.
- Gradually replenish our stocks with greener items.
- Go full cycle and introduce sustainability considerations into all supply activities.
- Build tools to apply UNHCR's methodology to the calculation of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions related to the end-to-end supply chain (Scope 3).

These tools will enhance UNHCR's initiatives to cut GHG emissions and will enable the organization to reduce the overall environmental footprint.

- Advocate for comprehensive reductions of GHG across the humanitarian supply chain actors.

Contact Us

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[Sustainable Supply Website](#)