



DANISH RED CROSS

**CLIMATE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
2026-2027**



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Introduction

The Danish Red Cross views the climate and environmental crises as among the greatest humanitarian threats facing the world today. Across the globe, weather patterns are becoming increasingly unpredictable, leading to floods, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires, while environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity weaken nature's ability to protect people from these risks. It is often the most vulnerable populations who face the greatest negative consequences of the climate crisis.

As a humanitarian organisation, we face a paradox: the Danish Red Cross's efforts are intended to save lives, yet our activities can also place a burden on the climate and the environment, which in turn, may have humanitarian consequences.

We therefore commit ourselves – in accordance with the principle of “do no harm” – to minimising the negative impacts on the climate and the environment in our work, while at the same time actively contributing to solutions that strengthen people's resilience and protect the environment for future generations.

Purpose

The Danish Red Cross is committed to taking responsibility for its impact on the climate, the environment, and society. This Climate and Environmental Policy sets out our approach to promoting sustainable development and ensuring that our humanitarian action strengthens people's resilience while safeguarding the natural systems on which they depend.

The policy sets the direction for the Danish Red Cross's efforts in three areas:

- Climate action in humanitarian work (adaptation) – we support people and communities in managing the consequences of climate crises through preparedness, response, and prevention.
- Our own climate and environmental responsibility (mitigation) – we reduce our own climate and environmental footprint by cutting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing resource consumption and waste.
- Engagement with the wider society (advocacy) – we mobilise volunteers, partners, businesses, and citizens to take action on climate and environmental issues, including through reuse, awareness-raising, and political advocacy.

CLIMATE ACTION IN HUMANITARIAN WORK

We support people and communities in managing the consequences of climate crises through preparedness, response, and prevention.

OUR OWN CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

We reduce our own climate and environmental footprint by cutting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing resource consumption and waste.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WIDER SOCIETY

We mobilise volunteers, partners, businesses, and citizens to take action on climate and the environment through reuse, awareness-raising, and political advocacy.

Adaptation

Mitigation

Advocacy

Danish Red Cross Climate and Environmental Policy guides employees and volunteers in their day-to-day work and addresses the requirements and expectations we face from partners, donors, and the wider society. The policy supports our international commitments under *The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations* and the *Core Humanitarian Standards*. Furthermore, the Danish Red Cross reports on the Climate and Environmental Policy in its annual report.

Climate action in humanitarian work

Internationally

The Danish Red Cross works to address the humanitarian consequences of climate crises. Together with the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other partners, we strengthen the resilience of local communities so that they are increasingly able to anticipate, prepare for, and manage climate-related disasters.

The aim is to protect people and reduce the number in need of humanitarian assistance. We do this through, for example, by setting up early warning systems that can alert communities before weather-related disasters strike. Funds are pre-allocated and automatically released when warnings are issued for early action to reduce impacts.

The Danish Red Cross is also rolling out the Climate-Smart *Programming* (CSP) concept across the projects we support. CSP is a combined guide and tool developed by and for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, enabling the integration of climate considerations across humanitarian programmes and operations – from design to implementation. CSP is based on robust climate risk assessments that combine scientific knowledge with local and traditional knowledge, with the aim of identifying sustainable solutions.

Our approach aligns with the principles of the *Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations* and the requirements of the *Core Humanitarian Standards*. We commit to delivering humanitarian assistance that does not harm people or the climate and that actively contributes to long-term positive outcomes for people, communities, the economy, and nature.

The Danish Red Cross's international climate adaptation efforts are anchored in its international strategy and implemented through cooperation and partnerships with other national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Danida, ECHO, and other donors.

Nationally

As climate change accelerates, Denmark is expected to experience more extreme weather events in the coming years, including storms, heatwaves, and floods. The risk of simultaneous events is increasing, putting substantial pressure on national and local emergency preparedness and potentially causing serious impacts on the environment and on people's lives and health.

The Danish Red Cross has a humanitarian mandate and a unique legal status as auxiliary to the Danish authorities in humanitarian matters. This entails an obligation to support the Danish authorities when humanitarian needs arise in connection with war or disasters, including during extreme weather events.

At the Danish Red Cross, we support people in vulnerable situations to be more resilient in the face of crises. We stand ready to act, both independently and in support of the authorities' emergency preparedness. Our national emergency response is rooted in volunteer engagement, with permanent and ad hoc volunteers organised and mobilised to provide assistance during crises, including psychosocial support and practical assistance to groups in vulnerable situations.

In addition, we remain attentive to and respond to any climate-related impacts on groups at increased risk within our existing social activities.

GOALS FOR THE DANISH RED CROSS'S CLIMATE ACTION IN HUMANITARIAN WORK

- From 2026, the Danish Red Cross will integrate *Climate Smart Programming* as a standard approach in all new international programmes and activities.
- Nationally, by 2030 the Danish Red Cross will have a coordinating emergency preparedness unit in each of the emergency services' 28 geographical areas and will be able to respond to climate-related incidents.

The Danish Red Cross's own climate and environmental responsibility

As a humanitarian organisation, the Danish Red Cross witnesses how the climate crisis and environmental degradation have severe humanitarian consequences for people in situations of extreme vulnerability. At the same time, our activities generate emissions, consume resources, and produce waste, and we have a responsibility to minimise these impacts.

Over several years, we have worked to establish a transparent and accurate carbon accounting system, recognising that it can never be entirely precise and that DRC's climate footprint scales with scales with its level of humanitarian action. However, we now have a solid foundation to measure year-to-year changes in our climate footprint.

We therefore focus on the areas where our climate footprint is greatest – travel and procurement. Without compromising our ambition to deliver rapid and effective humanitarian assistance, we will take environmental responsibility in these two areas.

From 2026, we will monitor the climate impact of our business travel through the annual carbon accounting and assess it against the scale of our international and national humanitarian operations. Our aim is to progressively reduce the climate footprint of business travel, relative to the level of activity.

In 2026, we will also develop a new green procurement policy to reduce the climate footprint of our purchases.

In addition, we aim to foster a culture within the Danish Red Cross in which climate and environmental considerations are a natural part of everyday work, and where we all work to limit our greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our resource consumption, and minimise the waste we generate.

As part of this, we will explore possible tools that can be applied in our international programmes to ensure that the necessary environmental considerations are taken into account. This supports our commitment under the *Core Humanitarian Standard*: that all our interventions systematically identify and prevent negative environmental impacts, and that we as an organisation reduce our negative environmental impact.

GOALS FOR THE DANISH RED CROSS'S OWN CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

- When the national headquarters purchases new cars and trucks, electric vehicles will, generally, be selected.
- The Danish Red Cross's business travel will become less burdensome for the climate and the environment each year towards 2030, relative to the level of activity.
- We will develop a new green procurement policy for the Danish Red Cross.
- The national headquarters will take the lead in providing systematic guidance and inspiration to employees and volunteers on making green choices in everyday work and in making climate and environmental considerations a natural part of the culture of the Danish Red Cross.

Engagement with the wider society

The Danish Red Cross can further strengthen climate action by engaging national and international stakeholders on climate action. The ambition is to engage more people in order to help more people. This also applies in the area of climate action, where the Danish Red Cross's recycling activities, political advocacy, partnerships, and campaigns can help people affected by the climate crisis or contribute to limiting negative impacts.

Sale of reused goods

The Danish Red Cross's second-hand shops are an important means of mobilising the wider society for climate action. Here, we engage tens of thousands of people as volunteers, customers, or donors. This engagement generates financial resources for humanitarian work while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions when customers buy second-hand rather than new items.

Since 2020, the Danish Red Cross has measured the climate impact of recycling. The climate impact refers to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions achieved when purchasing second-hand goods instead of new ones. The Danish Red Cross has the potential to significantly increase the climate benefits

of recycling by selling more second-hand goods and by lowering emissions linked to reuse activities, such as the transport of clothing and the operation of shops and recycling centres.

Every year since 2020, calculations have shown that the Danish Red Cross's recycling activities have saved the world more CO₂ than the organisation itself has emitted.

We want more people in Denmark to be aware of the positive benefits that buying second-hand has for the climate and the environment. A survey shows that in 2024, 57 per cent of Danes associated *Danish Red Cross Recycling* with climate and sustainability. This policy aims to increase this number.

Political advocacy

Another way of engaging the wider society in climate action is through political advocacy. Through our key priority of strengthening the international focus on climate adaptation and financing, we seek to influence decision-makers to provide better protection for the people who are at greatest risk from the growing number of climate-related disasters.

Partnerships and campaigns

The Danish Red Cross also engages a wide range of companies and individuals in climate action through several other approaches. This includes partnerships with private companies, universities, and foundations. We also produce educational materials that help schoolchildren across the country better understand the global impact of major disasters, as well as more local disasters that may affect children in Denmark.

GOALS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WIDER SOCIETY

- By 2030, 70 per cent of Danes associate Red Cross Recycling with sustainability and climate responsibility.