

SEPTEMBER 2023

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN COMMUNITY

“Each link in the supply chain presents an opportunity to improve our work and impact the world we leave behind.”

– Anonymous



SSCA HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER

ICRC ENVIRONMENTAL AND DECARBONIZATION ROADMAP

The ICRC is finalizing its Environmental and Decarbonization Roadmap, which outlines how the organization intends to meet its target of reducing carbon emissions by 50 per cent by 2030, compared with the baseline year of 2018 (a draft version of the main solutions to achieving the target can be found [here](#)). The roadmap was developed between May 2022 and May 2023 in a collaborative process between five themed groups: food, EHI, premises, fleet and transport, travel and commuting). Colleagues from all departments, in the field and HQ, as well as external experts, took part in an all-staff webinar, global survey and three cross-cutting leadership workshops.

As a result of this collaboration, mitigation actions were identified, their feasibility and compatibility with the delivery of the ICRC’s humanitarian mission and mandate assessed, and their environmental impacts and co-benefits determined. The ICRC is currently examining the financial implications of the mitigation actions. The final version of the roadmap will be ready by the end of 2023. While the plan is an institutional one, many of the carbon-reduction solutions relate to supply-chain management, logistics and fleet management. For more information on how the ICRC does its carbon accounting, visit the [Carbon Climate Accelerator \(CAA\) website](#).

HUMANITARIAN CARBON CALCULATOR

The Humanitarian Carbon Calculator was developed in consultation with more than a hundred humanitarian organizations, experts and ECHO (the humanitarian aid division of the European Union) and was released at the beginning of 2023. The tool and user guide are available in [English](#) and [French](#). A new version of the calculator is currently being developed to better support organizations that have more than 30 reporting entities/offices, as well as to facilitate the data entry and output processes and enable the use of dashboards. It is due to be released in early 2024, following a pilot phase.

A webinar was held in June on the Humanitarian Carbon Calculator, in which its use was reviewed and challenges, lessons learned and suggestions on how to make better use of it were shared. The [recording](#) of the webinar and the [slides](#) are now available.

Another webinar, entitled Introduction to measuring Carbon Emissions, was also held in June. For those organisations interested in starting the process of measuring carbon emissions, the [recording](#) of and [slides](#) for this webinar are also available.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN ALLIANCE EVALUATION

Between January and August this year, an external review of the first phase of the project (SSCAI) was conducted, together with a feasibility study of the second phase (SSCAII). To learn more, see the [executive summary](#) of this mid-term review.

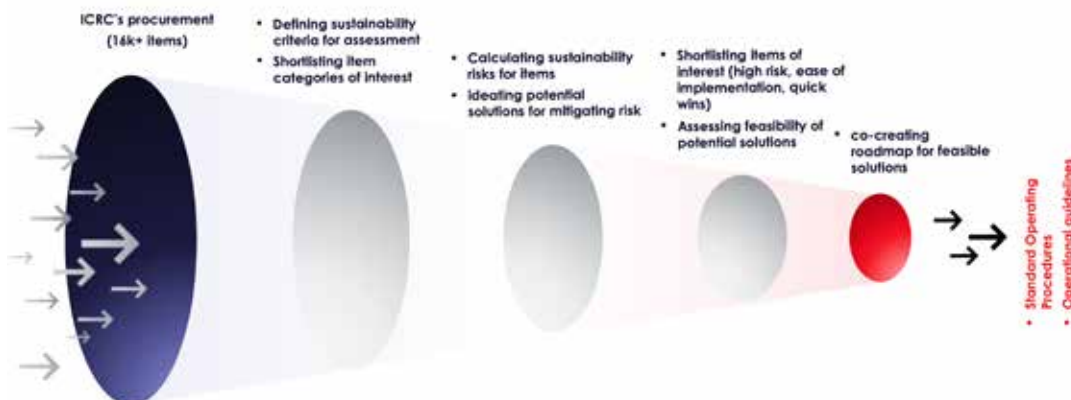
SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

1. Supplier Code of Conduct

The ICRC Supplier Code of Conduct has now been finalized and all suppliers, when registering, must undertake to adhere to it. Please find [here](#) the official version and in case your organisation is interested please find here the version that can be used [as template](#). It was developed in an inclusive process involving different departments and drew on the experiences of other organizations that had recently been through a similar exercise (Save the Children, the Interagency Procurement Group, the UN Procurement Division, etc.).

2. The Sustainable Risk per Item project

This project reviewed the sustainability of all products distributed by the ICRC to people affected by armed conflict or other violence and, where the organization's procurement of such products posed a sustainability risk, looked for practical operational solutions, with simplicity and pragmatism as the key prerequisites. This diagram illustrates the different steps of the project:



The main recommendations developed as a result were shared with country offices for implementation in the following areas of ICRC activity:

- [EcoSec](#) (food, essential household items, agriculture, etc.)
- [WatHab](#) (water, sanitation, habitat/shelter and engineering)
- [Health](#) (medical renewables, medical equipment and forensics)
- [Premises](#) (furniture, consumables, cleaning products and kitchenettes).
- The items identified by the project as posing a risk to sustainability were taken into consideration in the ICRC's product quality risk matrix, which is used to decide when an onsite Quality, Health, Safety and Environmental (QHSE) assessment of the suppliers needs to be carried out.
- Another output of the project was a [list of sustainability specifications for more than 40 item categories](#), which includes recommendations on how to enhance their sustainability.
- As well as developing practical solutions to mitigate sustainability risk, the project created awareness of the issue and led to increased cooperation among requesters, procurement teams and suppliers. Requesters set specifications but procurement teams are closer to suppliers and so can help find solutions that will be acceptable to the requester.

A webinar to share the methodology, lessons learned and outputs of the project was held on 12 October. The [recording](#) of and [slides](#) for the webinar are now available, as is a “living copy” of the project experience in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, illustrating the [project methodology](#) explained in the webinar.

3. Talking to suppliers about sourcing more sustainable products

Nobody has better knowledge of the types of products you buy and how they are manufactured than your suppliers. So why not speak to them when looking for more sustainable alternatives and let them be part of the solution? We have compiled a [series of sustainability questionnaires](#) you can use to quiz your suppliers about products, services and their own practices. The ICRC is increasingly taking this approach, and conversations with suppliers have already led to some new products being sourced – for example, a syringe with 16 per cent less plastic and biodegradable body bags. We now know more about the products we’re purchasing and are sending clear signals to our suppliers that the ICRC is serious about sustainability.

4. Quality, Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental (QHSE)

Assessment Awareness course

The ICRC has developed a new online training course covering the basics of how to conduct a QHSE assessment of suppliers and partner companies. Within the ICRC, the course can be accessed [here](#); for externals please use [IFRC platform](#) that is accessible to everyone .

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Eco-design tarpaulin (UNHCR/IFRC/ICRC)

The new eco-design tarpaulin (see the [September 2022](#) and [March 2023](#) issues of the newsletter) is currently being tested in the field. This new version uses 14 per cent less plastic (polyethylene) than the previous one, lasts twice as long and can be reused, thanks to greater UV resistance and better mechanical properties, among other things. In early June, the Luxembourg Red Cross Shelter Research Unit, together with the Red Cross Society of Niger, started testing 60 new tarpaulins in real-life conditions, with help from beneficiaries and involving the UNHCR, the Shelter Cluster and the IOM, among others. More information on the field tests can be found in this [short document](#). More detailed information is available in the lifecycle assessments of the [current tarpaulin](#), the [new tarpaulin](#) and [alternative raw materials](#).



New eco-design tarpaulin ensures reduced environmental impact

Alternative Polypropylene Bag project (ICRC/UNHCR/WFP)

This project aimed to find alternatives to woven polypropylene bags and comprised three main phases. In the first phase, the project team defined the specifications for the alternatives being sought using eco-design methodologies and with help from external experts. As a result, two priorities were identified: 1) incremental rather than disruptive innovation and 2) selection of certain materials based on an analysis of multiple criteria (economic, environmental and social).

Following a call for applications, three organizations were selected to develop prototypes of feasible alternatives to current packaging. The three organizations and their proposed solutions are:

- [AIMPLAS](#), Spain: polypropylene bags with an extended shelf life to encourage reuse
- [Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology \(AUST\)](#), Bangladesh: jute bags with a biodegradable coating
- [GIOTTO-SUPSI](#), Switzerland: modified jute fabric.

(Click on the name of each organization to find out more about the different technical solutions).

Prototype bags have been designed and delivered by all three and their performance is currently being evaluated. The AUST and AIMPLAS solutions are being tested in real-life conditions. AIMPLAS has already produced around 4,000 alternative bags for use as packaging for flour, red beans and blankets by the WFP, ICRC and UNHCR, respectively. These are currently being sent to suppliers and are being analysed before the field tests start. AUST plans to start industrial production of its bags within the next few weeks.

Once all the tests and associated analyses are complete, the project will be able to give recommendations on the performance of these bags versus woven polypropylene bags, and on the feasibility of scaling up these alternative packaging solutions.

The project has already provided a great deal of insight into the issues and challenges encountered in finding operational alternatives. The problems posed by the current bags in terms of end of life, mechanical performance, carbon impact and, above all, their economic viability, make them a limited option for replication on a large scale. Compromises will, undoubtedly, need to be made in the humanitarian context, where there is little room for extra costs. The important thing now is that the project shares these reflections beyond the three organizations involved in the study, to further consolidate knowledge and encourage the marketing of more sustainable solutions.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY-CHAIN MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPORT

When it comes to achieving a sustainable supply chain, planning/forecasting is often overlooked, but it can have a significant impact.

| IMPORTANCE OF FORECASTING/PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY | |
|---|--|
| PROPER PLANNING | SUSTAINABLE RESULT |
| Reduced number of orders | - Less and more efficient work - Optimised transport - Number of paper, signatures, emails etc. which is also a reduction in waste, GHG emissions etc. |
| More time to find proper supplier and item | - Market assessment (more sustainable suppliers, DDA questionnaire) - Avoiding traders and questionable private entities |
| Time for proper quality control | - Having the right quality item (quality we ask for) - Enough time to claim non-conformity |
| Reducing dead stock | - Reducing waste |
| Choosing the right mode of transport | - Prioritize sea-road shipments (less CO2) |

EMISSIONS BY MODE OF TRANSPORT (G CO2/TON KM 123)

A large vessel emits 1% of CO2 per tonkm of a plane (5/435) and 14% of a cargo train (5/35)



Equally important is selecting the right mode of transport, according to the category of goods being transported and your organization's main destinations. The ICRC has used immersive supply-chain simulations to boost the skills of our supply-chain teams in terms of planning, reducing the amount of stock that ends up as waste, improving the different parameters per item to be able to make the right decision at the right time, etc.

Warehouse management

Forecasting also enhances the organization and efficiency of our warehouse teams. Check out this [interview](#) with a storekeeper team leader at LSC Satigny to learn how the ICRC is making the HQ warehouse more sustainable.

Are you considering installing solar panels or rainwater harvesting systems in your warehouse? To guide your decision, take a look at the [IPCC WGI Interactive Atlas](#) maps, featuring information on precipitation, temperature, etc. See also our section on [best practices](#), with various examples of implementing rainwater harvesting systems in warehouses/workshops, etc., as well as best practices from other logistics clusters (procurement, transport, premises, etc.)

Dangerous goods within humanitarian supply chains

Handling dangerous goods can have environmental, social and economic consequences, yet it is a subject that, in humanitarian organizations, doesn't always receive the attention it deserves. This [concept note](#) outlines the ICRC-led project to create awareness of dangerous goods within the Movement. If your organization is working on something similar, or is interested in doing so, please don't hesitate to share your knowledge with us (contact cgarciaduro@icrc.org).

ICRC: TURNING SUSTAINABILITY IDEAS INTO REALITY



- The new ICRC delegation office in Nairobi is now certified to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)! If you want to know more about what that means and what practical steps the delegation has taken to reduce its environmental impact, watch this [video](#).



- **ISO 14001 (environmental management):** The ICRC has finally received [ISO 14001 certification](#) for our logistics centre in Douala, Cameroon. This [short presentation](#) outlines the main activities, achievements and obstacles on the journey to certification.
- **Repository of best practices:** New entries have been added to the list of more than [40 best practices](#) on how to make our supply chain, fleet, etc. more sustainable. The new additions include: [Reused tires to make a safer workshop](#) and [Rail use to transport goods in Ethiopia](#). This [short video](#) on one of our rainwater harvesting systems is also informative. Please don't hesitate to share your feedback on how any of the practices can be improved, or to use the [template](#) to share your successful practices with others.



WHAT'S NEW IN THE FIELD: FROM ACROSS THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT



[The Green Logistics Guide](#) aims to support National Societies in adopting green practices and contains a wealth of hints, tips and good practices adapted to the needs of National Societies that are at the start of their sustainability journey.



[Guide to Climate-Smart Programmes and Humanitarian Operations](#): The IFRC has developed these guidelines together with the Climate Centre to help National Societies make their programmes and operations climate-smart. This means using climate information across timescales when designing and/or adjusting all our programmes and operations to ensure that, at a minimum, they do not place people at increased risk in the future, given the likelihood of new climate extremes and growing vulnerabilities.

[Practising Environmental Sustainability training](#): This 30-minute e-learning course was developed as a brief introduction to environmental sustainability and the Green Response initiative from the perspective of surge personnel in an emergency response (to access it you need to have/set up a free account on the IFRC Learning Platform).

Green Response quarterly meeting: You can view the [Green Response Working Group's presentations](#) to find out more about the topics it is currently focusing on (ISO 14001 certification for the Norwegian Red Cross; Green Response as practised in the field by the Myanmar Red Cross Society and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society; the environmental impacts of conferences and events).



["Greener, safer, easier: Solar-powered water pumps bring life to Ghana"](#): This article describes a project that is ensuring a community has access to a safe, clean and sustainable drinking-water supply.



Have you had a look through the inspirational [Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2022 from the American Red Cross](#)?



[Developing Sustainable Fleet Management: Experiences from the Costa Rican Red Cross \(EN, SP, FR, AR\)](#): Award-winning fleet manager Walter Fallas Bonilla explains how the Costa Rican Red Cross reduced carbon emissions across its entire fleet, made it more energy-efficient and also managed to save on fuel costs.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- Find tips, reports and other interesting information on sustainable procurement and waste management on the [WREC project page of the Logistics Cluster website](#).
- [Sphere unpacked guide to implementing nature-based solutions](#): Guidance for using the Sphere minimum standards when implementing nature-based solutions in humanitarian contexts. Nature-based solutions are those that work with nature to address societal challenges, including disaster risk reduction and climate-change adaptation.
- The [Joint Initiative for Sustainable Humanitarian Assistance Packaging Waste Management](#) has shared useful publications that are also worth checking out:
 - [Guidelines for Packaging Waste Management in Humanitarian Operations](#)
 - [Options for Humanitarian Packaging Reuse, Repurposing and Recycling](#)
 - [Outcome of the webinar entitled Repurposing of Humanitarian Assistance Packaging and Plastic “Waste”: What’s the Story?](#)
- Have you read the [Better Alternatives Now \(B.A.N\) List 2.0 report](#) – an analysis of and call to action to phase out the most polluting plastic products used in the United States? In it, you will find information on the top 20 plastic-containing products used worldwide and on the best alternatives, as well as an informative section on bioplastics.
- Do you know about the use of plastic waste in construction materials? “[Assessing benefits and risks of incorporating plastic waste in construction materials](#)” is an interesting research paper on the subject.
- Help Logistics has published its [data-driven study](#) of the environmental performance of electric vehicles versus internal combustion-engine vehicles in East Africa and the Middle East.
- [We Need to Talk About Gloves](#) is the title of a video highlighting the environmental and social consequences of single-use gloves. It was produced by Health Care without Harm, together with the Sustainable Health in Procurement project.
- Have you heard about the [Sustainable Supply Chain Management course from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)? It’s one of the courses that other humanitarian organizations have mentioned to us. It’s free to follow, with payment only required if you want the certificate of completion. If you know of any other good courses, do please [let us know](#).

HAVE YOU MISSED PREVIOUS SSCA NEWSLETTERS?

[SSCA Newsletter July 2021](#)

[SSCA Newsletter February 2022](#)

[SSCA Newsletter September 2022](#)

[SSCA Newsletter March 2023](#)

If you want to know more about the SSCA project, check out the [Sustainable Supply Chain Alliance project roadmap](#).

Any questions, suggestions or feedback can be sent directly to the SSCA project manager, Carmen Garcia Duro (cgarciauro@icrc.org).