

DCAF's CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITMENTS

Towards a 50% carbon footprint
reduction by 2030



Photo: DCAF

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FOREWORD

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges, if not the biggest challenge, of this century. It affects everyone and has consequences everywhere, but its impact is not felt equally by all. Climate change is understood to be a driver of instability and an increasingly important factor in conflicts. Its destabilizing effects are particularly harmful for countries working on achieving higher levels of development, security, and justice. DCAF sees and witnesses the damaging impact of the climate crisis on the security of men, women, boys and girls and their societies, including in many of our partner states.



In many countries, security institutions are on the front lines of responding to climate and environmental risks, from natural disasters occurring with increasing frequency and severity to environmental crime leading to accelerating depletion of natural resources. Security sector governance and reform have a key role to play in helping DCAF's partners prepare for a future which will be increasingly shaped by environmental risks and in ensuring security responses are transparent, accountable and meet the needs of local communities. Over the past several years, DCAF has invested in developing expertise and insights in the field of climate security – publishing a policy paper on climate change and SSG/R; conducting research on the intersection of gender, climate and security in Colombia; working with women's rights organizations in Yemen, Mali and Colombia to explore opportunities for gendered climate advocacy in peace processes; and leading a stocktaking study on the role of the security sector in responding to climate change.

We must be aware of and address our own organization's contribution to climate change. To implement our mandate and achieve our mission, we travel, consume energy, buy products and services and produce waste. With the help of the Climate Action Accelerator we have been able to calculate our carbon footprint and make a clear commitment to reduce this footprint. This decarbonization commitment is the result of a consultative and collaborative process spanning many months and building on input from across the entire organization.

DCAF is committed to being part of the answer to this global challenge, through our own organizational changes as well as through our work with partners in the field. In the following pages, you will find concrete actions DCAF will implement to reduce our carbon footprint. The implementation will help decrease our contribution to climate change, and ensure we remain a responsible, credible dialogue partner when it comes to the impact of climate change on human security and sustainability.

Our thanks go to everyone who has been involved in developing these commitments and we look forward to start working on their implementation.

Mark Downes,
Acting Director

Why we must act now

“The rise in weather and climate extremes has led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt.” (IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers¹)

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has moved from warnings about the potential impact of climate change to describing how climate change is already today causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature, affecting the lives of billions of people. Those least able to shoulder the consequences are hardest hit, many of whom live in areas where DCAF is active. While the climate crisis worsens, it is important that we look critically at what we can do ourselves as an organization.



An open-pit mine near Manila, the Philippines. The Philippines is one of the four case studies in DCAF's *Stocktaking of Security Sector Roles in Climate and Environmental Security*. Photo: DCAF

The consequences of the climate crisis on human security

Climate change is not only a threat to the natural environment but also to social and political systems. It constitutes a risk multiplier and aggravates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. This threat to human security is broadly acknowledged by both the international community (e.g. EU, NATO, UN), the policy priorities of key partners, and it is also increasingly reflected in our own publications.

The policy context

The Paris Agreement sets a trajectory for net zero by 2050, including a 50% GHG reduction target for 2030 as a first milestone. It was adopted by more than 190 countries (including all DCAF member states). Since then, the Swiss Federal Council has approved a revised CO2 Act in late 2020. In January 2021 it also adopted a Long-Term Climate Strategy, which will serve as guidance for current and future Swiss climate policy. Most DCAF partners follow the same trend.

Benefits and opportunities

Taking action to reduce GHG emissions has many additional benefits. Not only does it strengthen our credibility as a responsible international stakeholder, it also has the potential to enhance the health of DCAF staff, contribute to cost effectiveness, staff motivation, and to make a local impact on pollution levels and suppliers' own environmental records. Moreover, DCAF can help inspire our partners to reflect on their own contributions – in the process helping maintain DCAF's image as a forward-looking organization at the forefront of the international policy agenda.

Climate change and our SSG/R mandate

We are already working on the challenges that come from the interaction between climate change and human security. Efforts are being made across the house to build up more expertise on this topic. Here is a sample of the work that was done in 2022:

We worked on the gender, security, and climate nexus, building on a growing body of research that recognizes the gendered impacts of climate change, and how these are impacted by armed conflict. We brought together women's rights organizations from Colombia, Mali, and Yemen to share ideas, strategize and contribute to a set of policy recommendations for environmental and peacebuilding initiatives.

We conducted research on the connections between climate change and SSG/R to help generate knowledge products like SSR Backgrounders and SSR Papers. We seek to mainstream climate risks into SSR policy and practice, addressing issues such as environmental crime and peacebuilding, greening the defence sector, and accountability mechanisms to oversee climate-related interventions.

In Latin America and the Caribbean climate change has devastating, differential, and gendered consequences on human security. We worked on developing local indicators measuring the impact of the climate crisis on the security of rural and indigenous women in Colombia; sharing local perspectives on environmental and human security from the Amazon basin; and a study on the security sector's roles in climate and environmental security in Brazil.

We released two thematic briefs about climate security in the Asia-Pacific region, examining the linkages between the security sector and governance in East and Southeast Asia. Both briefs followed multiday workshops on the topic and aim to increase understanding of how climate change is affecting human security in the region.

We began a large stocktaking study on the security sector's role in climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and environmental protection in Brazil, Palestine, the Philippines and Sierra Leone. The study will provide recommendations to our International Partners' Group on how to better align their SSG/R programming with environmental and climate security.

Although these examples are by no means exhaustive, they demonstrate how we are increasingly integrating climate change and its impacts in our work.



Workshop participants in Bogotá, Colombia. The workshop was part of the DCAF project *Women Speak: The Lived Nexus Between Climate, Gender and Security*. Photo: DCAF / En Algún Lugar









OUR VISION AND COMMITMENTS

Our vision

DCAF commits to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, with an environmental ambition aligned to the Paris agreement goals, and an approach similar to many of our closest partner organizations in Geneva and beyond. We will promote the implementation of environmentally friendly alternatives in the form of internal and travel policies, equipment choices, procurement, and clean energy. These actions aim to participate now to the collective carbon emission reduction efforts and contribute to a better future.

By doing so, we will be setting the example to inspire our partners and other global security governance organizations on the same path.

OUR COMMITMENTS

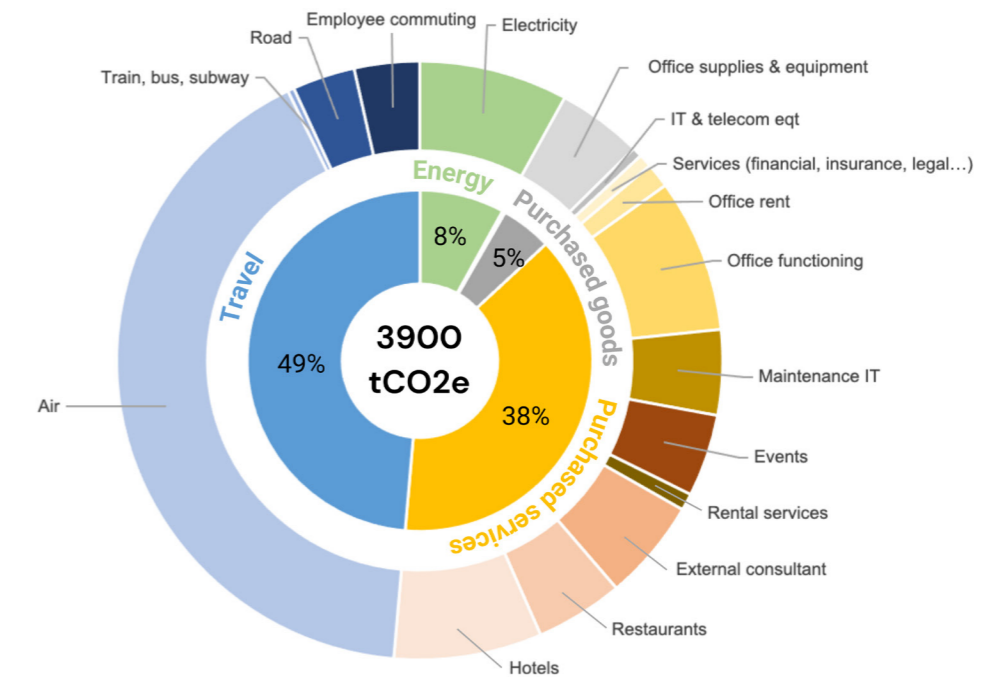
- 1 We will reduce our carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, without purchasing carbon offset credits. 
- 2 We will reduce air travel mileage by 30% by 2030 and promote the use of trains instead of European short hauls. In 2030, 100% of our flights will be made with sustainable travel choices. 
- 3 By the end of 2023, we will implement an Environmental Charter for responsible purchasing, setting out the criteria that guide us in each of our purchasing decisions. 
- 4 Our headquarters are powered by fossil free energy. By 2030, 80% of the energy used by our field offices will be of renewable origin. 
- 5 We implement good office practices in our headquarters and field offices, optimising our office space, complying with adequate temperature standards and managing our waste responsibly to reduce our footprint. 
- 6 Each DCAF staff member has the opportunity to contribute to change and to the implementation of environmentally friendly practices. We invest in training our staff, giving them the tools and the means to act. 
- 7 We will develop our expertise and operational work on the linkages between climate change and SSG/R, as well as environmental change and security more generally. 
- 8 We will inspire our international, national and local partners to follow the path of a credible environmental commitment and will actively share experience and achievements in doing so. 

Understanding our baseline emissions

To reduce our footprint successfully, we need to know what our current footprint is. A greenhouse gas (GHG) footprint makes it possible to assess an organization's contribution to climate change, as well as the sources that need to be tackled.

The methodology chosen for the assessment of the climate impact of DCAF's activities complies with ISO 14064 as international standard, follows the GHG Protocol, and includes both direct and indirect emissions.

DCAF's 2019 carbon footprint



Our footprint is estimated at 3 900 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) in 2019, before our activities were impacted by Covid-19. It quantifies the sources of GHG for which DCAF is accountable. The scope includes our headquarters in Geneva, our 12 country offices, encompasses 203 employees and a budget of 32.1M CHF.

The three largest components are responsible for more than half of the total footprint (2 450 tCO₂e or 62.8% of the total emissions):

- Passenger transport by air (1 650 tCO₂e);
- Travel accommodation and restaurants (500 tCO₂e);
- Office functioning (300 tCO₂e).

For more information, you can click here to see our full carbon footprint report.

Our reduction strategy

We selected eight tailored solutions to reduce our carbon footprint, with the support of CAA. These solutions are the building blocks of a decarbonization trajectory to halve our emissions by 2030 compared to 2019.

Within these solutions, four are especially important as they account for more than 90% of the emissions reduction efforts.

REDUCTION PATHWAY

The four key solutions

REDUCE AIR TRAVEL

We will reduce air travel (2019: 4 026 flights). Building on the experience built up during the pandemic, we will seek to further optimize trips, assess travel needs more carefully, facilitate climate-friendly travel solutions and online alternatives when relevant.

MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL CHOICES

We will put in place policies to decrease emissions from our travel choices. This includes favouring fuel-efficient airlines, prioritizing direct flights, and reconfirming an economy class policy for all (currently 98%).

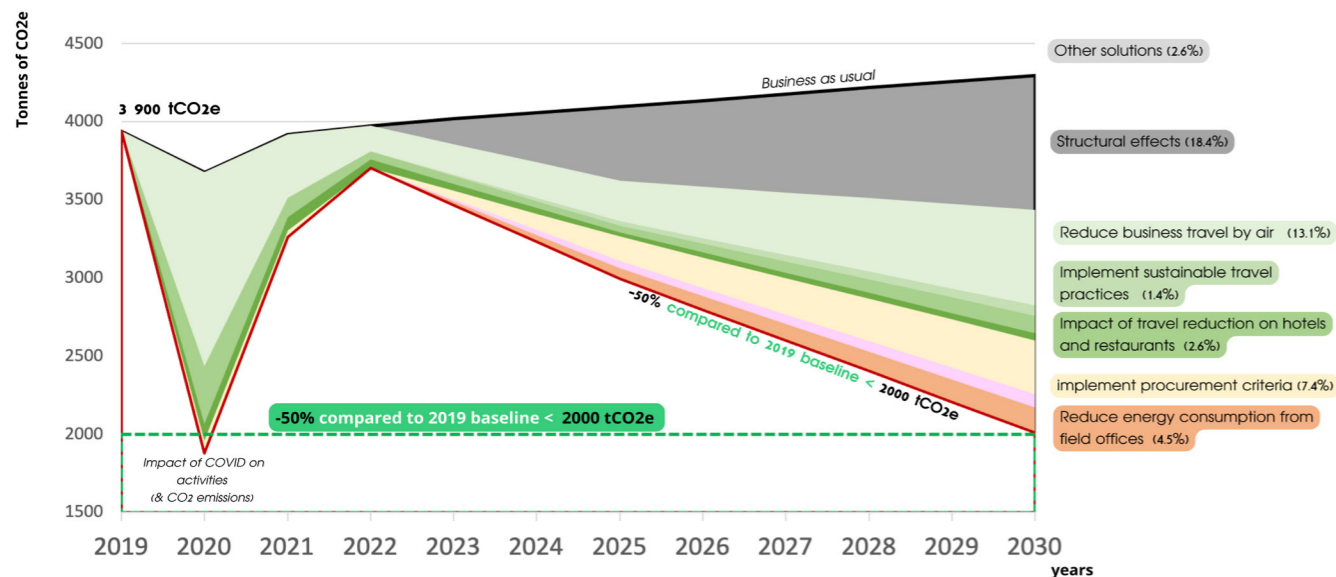
REDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT FROM PROCUREMENT

We will privilege suppliers of goods and services that have put in place a decarbonization plan and implement environmental procurement criteria.

GOOD OFFICE PRACTICES - OPTIMISE ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN FIELD OFFICES

We will reduce heating/air conditioning and switch to renewable energy at field office level.

DCAF's decarbonization trajectory: 2019 - 2030



Structural effects

Structural effects are applied to carbon reduction trajectories to cater for the fact that regardless of individual choices of an organization, societies as a whole are decarbonizing. When we calculate our expected decarbonization path, we factor in an annual reduction in emissions from selected categories. Airplanes and trains, for instance, are becoming more energy efficient and national electricity grids are progressively being decarbonized.

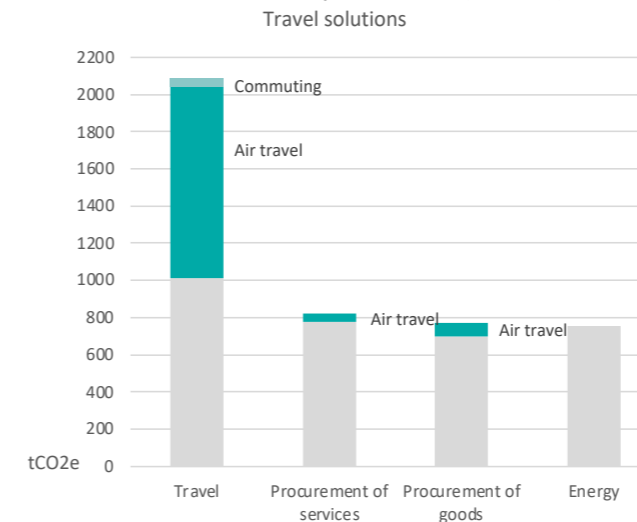
We apply the structural effects to each solution's reduction effect in this reduction pathway.



WHY IT MATTERS: Travel is the main source of our carbon footprint. It also has a knock-on effect on other sources: less travel reduces the need for hotels and restaurants. Solutions related to air travel represent 95.9% of travel related reductions and 51.9% of the total global reduction potential.

Solution	Expected results	Avoided emissions in 2030
Reduce air travel through the development of a comprehensive travel policy	By 2030, 100% of European trips with < 3h time difference (city centre to city centre) between plane and train are made by train.	1000 tCO ₂ e
	By 2030, 60% of corresponding flights through relevant European hubs (with <3h time difference city centre to airport) are made by train.	
	By 2030, reduce by 30% the mileage related to air travel compared to 2019, by re-assessing travel needs and developing alternative online practices where relevant.	
Reduce the carbon impact of commuting	By 2030, 100% of flights are made with sustainable travel choices ('greener' airlines and aircraft, direct flights).	100 tCO ₂ e
	By 2030, the number of employees commuting by car at HQ will have been reduced by 20% and 10% of those commuting by public transport have switched to soft mobility (e.g. bike, foot). By 2030 and compared to 2019, employees at HQ and in FOs work on average one additional day remotely (in line with the current remote working policy).	

Emissions avoided per domain (in 2030)



Co-benefits

- Trains tend to be better working spaces than planes because of better connectivity and more space.
- Stimulation of soft mobility commuting, remote working, and rethinking our travel needs can enhance our staff health and well-being.
- Reducing air travel and thinking better about our travel policy can save a significant amount of money.
- A new travel policy can help further improve equal treatment and flexibility in remote working, enhancing staff motivation.



WHY IT MATTERS: Putting in place environmental procurement criteria does not only contribute to directly reducing the carbon impact of purchased goods and services, but it also sends a clear signal to suppliers that decarbonising their operations and developing low-carbon products will be a strategic issue for the years to come, thereby creating an accelerator effect.

Solution	Expected results	Avoided emissions in 2030
Reduce the environmental impact of procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of procurement is made from suppliers that have reduced their emissions by 50% by 2030. 	700 tCO ₂ e
Reduce number of km travelled by goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace 15% of in-person events with virtual events. Switch to a flexitarian menu when using restauration services. Put in place basic sustainable procurement criteria for office supplies and equipment, hotels and events. 	
Reduction from travel solutions		100 tCO ₂ e



WHY IT MATTERS: Reducing the emissions linked to DCAF's digital equipment will positively impact the emissions linked to the procurement of goods (IT equipment) and services (IT maintenance) as well as energy (data storage). It is important to think about sustainable development of digital practices, as the use of digital tools will continue increasing (amplified by changing travel practices).

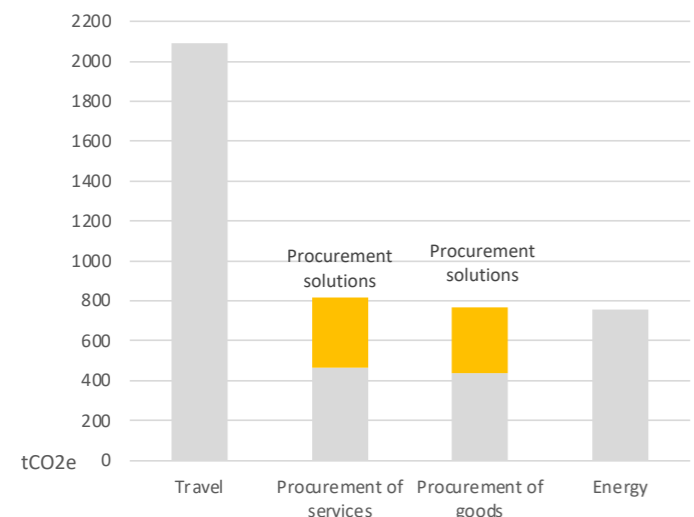
Solution	Expected results	Avoided emissions in 2030
Limit emissions linked to growth of network load.	Reduce online stored data per user	100 tCO ₂ e
Develop a sustainable approach to digital equipment procurement and management.	Increase the lifespan of IT equipment by one year and buy 50% of IT equipment reconditioned.	



WHY IT MATTERS: Reduction of emissions linked with office practices positively impacts the carbon footprint of goods procurement and energy. DCAF is already a step ahead with a very sustainable HQ building. There is room to further this engagement in the field offices.

Solution	Expected results	Avoided emissions in 2030
Rationalize office space in HQ	By 2030, reduce office space by 15% in absolute terms (square metres).	250 tCO ₂ e
Develop sustainable office practices and responsible behaviours	Reduce air conditioning/heating in compliance with recommended temperature standards, switch field offices to fossil free energy. Implement responsible waste management and flexitarian menu for office events. 80% of the energy consumed by all field offices should come from renewable sources.	


Emissions avoided per domain (in 2030)
Procurement solution



Co-benefits

- Supports local economic initiatives and development.
- Create domino effect by asking suppliers to reduce emissions and showing our partners we live by our values.
- Local maintenance makes it easier to repair products.

PROJECTED EMISSIONS, TARGETS AND REDUCTION BY 2030



	Baseline emissions (2019 footprint)	Estimated business-as-usual emissions (in 2030)	Reduction target in emissions by 2030
	3900 tCO ₂ e	4300 tCO ₂ e	< 2000 tCO ₂ e
Travel & Commuting	1900 tCO ₂ e	2100 tCO ₂ e	1000 tCO ₂ e
Procurement	1450 tCO ₂ e	1600 tCO ₂ e	800 tCO ₂
Digital	200 tCO ₂ e	200 tCO ₂ e	100 tCO ₂ e
Cross-cutting	350 tCO ₂ e	400 tCO ₂ e	150 tCO ₂ e

Business-as-usual trajectory

On the trajectory, the business-as-usual line shows a slight increase in footprint. It means that if no efforts to reduce carbon footprint are undertaken, DCAF's emissions would rise because of the growth of activities. Emissions must be considerably decoupled from the evolution of material activities through a decrease in carbon intensity.



Photo: DCAF

THE KEY LEVERS OF DCAF'S TRANSFORMATION

We are committed to adapt our ways of working by 2030. To achieve our carbon reduction goals, we will need to meet a number of internal and external conditions which will require time, planning, and investment. We're committed to reducing our carbon footprint without compromising our ability to fulfil our mandate.

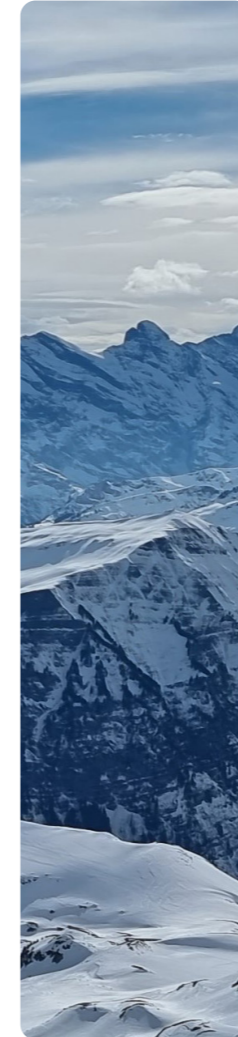


Photo: DCAF

Cost

Meeting these commitments will come at a cost, both financially and in terms of how we work. Over time, it may become cost neutral, but for now we must find ways to sustainably cover the costs through additional budget support or climate subsidies. Engagement and continuous dialogue with donors is key in ensuring our commitments align with theirs, and engagement with staff is essential to mitigate any impact on work-life balance. For instance, an overall reduction in staff travel will help offset the extra time it takes to travel by train instead of airplane.

Leadership

The will to meet our reduction targets has to be unambiguous and strongly anchored in our organisation. To that aim the roadmap will engage each staff member. DCAF's leadership will drive this process, regularly report on progress and mobilise the means necessary to achieve our target.

Changing collective behaviour

Many of the solutions are more cultural than technical. They depend on all our staff members and our collective willingness to make changes. Policies and guidelines are important, but critically we will empower our staff to contribute their ideas and initiatives to help us meet these commitments. This may require investment to support local initiatives and reinforce skills and knowledge where needed.

Project governance

From 2023 onwards, implementation of these commitments will be the responsibility of DCAF's Director. Additional structures may be developed as necessary.

We will integrate carbon emissions measurement into our existing monitoring mechanisms and report transparently on progress. We aim to report periodically on high-level indicators monitoring our progress, with more comprehensive progress statements being made at fixed points between now and 2030 (for example in 2026 and 2029).

HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Our commitments	Expected outcomes
GHG Emissions	Tonnes of CO ₂ e emissions are as close as possible to 2900 t in 2025 and below 2000 t in 2030 (-50% from 2019 baseline)
Air travel	Tonnes of air travel-related CO ₂ e emissions are close as possible to 1450 t in 2025 and below 1000 t in 2030 (< -45% from 2019 baseline)
Supply chain	Tonnes of procurement-related CO ₂ e emissions are close as possible to 1100 t in 2025 and below 800 t in 2030 (< -40% from 2019 baseline)
Energy	Tonnes of energy-related CO ₂ e emissions are close as possible to 200 t in 2025 and below 100 t in 2030 (< -65% from 2019 baseline). In 2030, 80% of the energy consumed in our field offices is of renewable origin.
Cross-cutting	A "good office practices" playbook has been published and is implemented in all offices.
People	100% of DCAF staff has been offered a chance to participate in an implementation workshop, essential training courses are provided for targeted staff, and the good office practices playbook is given to all new staff.
Programmes	Number of projects, publications and events linked to climate change and environmental security.



Acknowledgements

We thank all DCAF staff who participated in the co-construction of these commitments through interviews, questionnaires, workshops, and by proposing solutions on the participatory platform.

We are grateful to the Climate Action Accelerator for their expertise and assistance in leading us through this process, providing technical insight on the feasibility of solutions, and the development of these commitments.



DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to making states and people safer through more effective and accountable security and justice. Since 2000, DCAF has facilitated, driven and shaped security sector reform (SSR) policy and programming around the world.

Good security sector governance (SSG), based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, is a cornerstone of development and security. DCAF assists partner states in developing laws, institutions, policies and practices to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms based on international norms and good practices. In everything we do, DCAF adheres to the principles of impartiality, local ownership, inclusive participation and gender equality. DCAF also advises governments and international organizations in designing and implementing their own programmes for supporting states in developing their security sector governance.

DCAF creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, and provides legal and policy advice. DCAF supports capacity building of state, civil society and private sector stakeholders by providing access to independent expertise and information on Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R). DCAF's Foundation Council includes 57 members representing 54 countries and the Canton of Geneva. With programmes that touch on more than 70 countries, DCAF is internationally recognized as a leading centre of excellence for SSG and SSR. Headquartered at the Maison de la Paix in Geneva, DCAF has field offices in Addis Ababa, Bamako, Banjul, Beirut, Belgrade, Brussels, Chişinău, Kyiv, Ljubljana, Niamey, Ramallah, Skopje, Tegucigalpa, Tripoli and Tunis. DCAF employs more than 220 staff from over 40 countries with a broad range of expertise.



Climate Action Accelerator

The Climate Action Accelerator, a non-for-profit initiative, aims to mobilize a critical mass of community organization in order to scale up climate solutions, contain global warming below 2°C and avoid the risk of dangerous runaway climate change. The aim is to help shift the aid, health and higher education sectors towards a radical transformation of their practices, pursuing emissions reduction targets (-50% by 2030) and a 'net zero' trajectory, in line with the Paris Agreement.

A participant takes part in an exercise of the DCAF project *Women Speak: The Lived Nexus Between Climate, Gender and Security*. Photo: DCAF / En Algún Luga

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