

Climate action roadmap to 2035

Our pathway to net zero

Executive summary

1.

Climate and health: acting on a shared responsibility

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to global health in the 21st century.

The health sector itself contributes nearly 5% of global emissions, creating a **paradox**: the very systems designed to protect health are contributing to the crisis that threatens it. Rising temperatures, shifting disease patterns, and fragile supply chains are already undermining health gains.

Unitaid has a **dual responsibility**: to reduce the emissions linked to its activities while continuing to expand access to lifesaving health products for the people who need them

most, even in a changing climate. Unitaid is committed to minimizing its environmental footprint, supporting partners to decarbonize, strengthening resilience, and ensuring that life-saving innovations are delivered sustainably.

This **climate action roadmap sets out Unitaid's ambitious pathway to net-zero by 2050**, outlining concrete steps to reduce emissions across operations and investments, and to drive collective progress toward a low-carbon, sustainable future for global health.

2. Approach and targets

Unitaid's climate action centers on two commitments: reducing its own emissions and empowering partners and the health sector to advance climate efforts, leveraging Unitaid's role as an influencer, pathfinder, and investor.

Unitaid's **Climate Action Roadmap** translates these commitments into goals across **three levels of action** (see **Figure 1**):

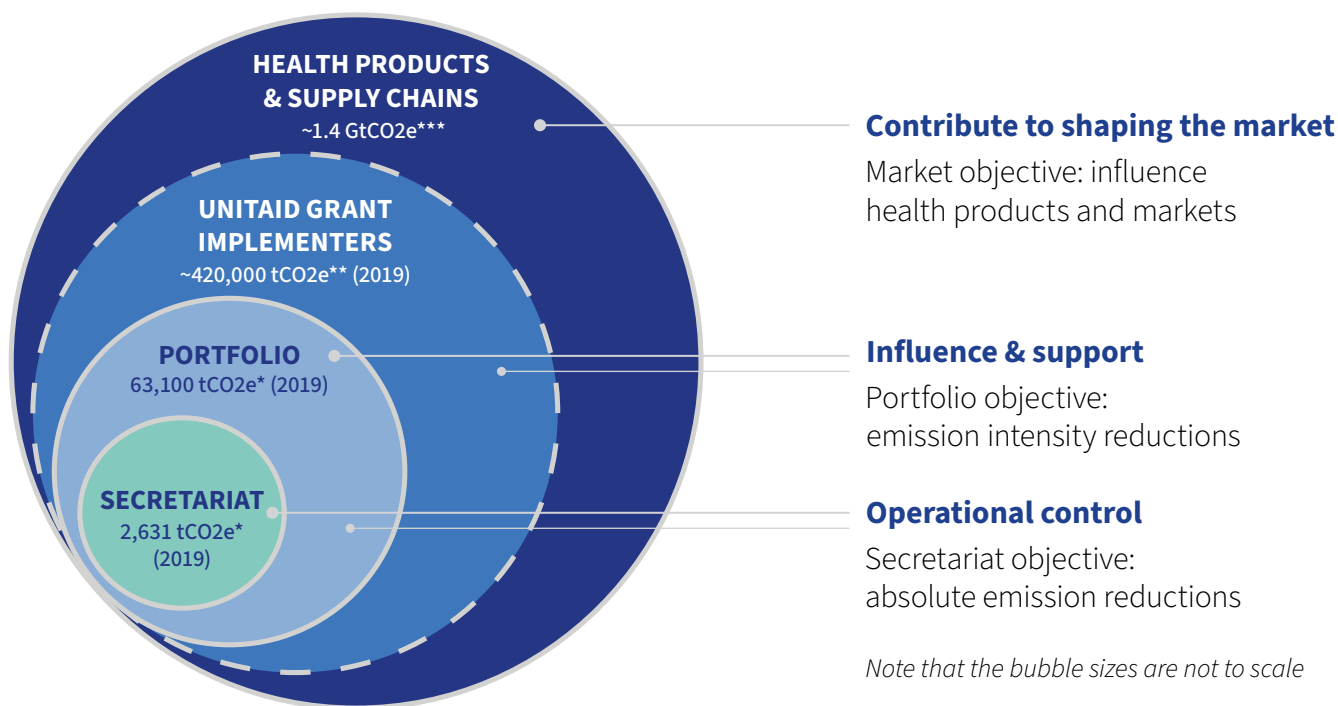
1. **Secretariat:** Achieve absolute emission reductions in internal operations – covering travel, procurement, and office energy use
2. **Portfolio:** Reduce the carbon intensity of investments by working with implementing partners to integrate low-carbon practices
3. **Market influence:** Encourage sector-wide decarbonization through market shaping and policy work (note that this area goes beyond the scope of this roadmap and refers to broader work done under the Unitaid Climate & Health Strategy)

Targets:

- **60% reduction in absolute emissions by 2035** for the Secretariat (2019 baseline)
- **60% reduction in portfolio emissions per dollar spent by 2035** (2019 baseline)
- **Net-zero by 2050**, in line with global best practices



Figure 1: From operations to markets: three levels of climate action for Unitaid



* Unitaid's Secretariat and Portfolio footprints as calculated in 2019 (baseline year)

** Unitaid's implementers' emissions estimated based on the hypothesis that 10 to 50% of their funding is through Unitaid (leading to an estimated 140,000 to 700,000 tCO₂e, average 420,000 tCO₂e)

*** The healthcare sector represents about 5% of the estimated global emissions of >40 Gigatons of CO₂, or about 2 Gigatons of CO₂e. Health products supply chains are known to represent over 70% of healthcare's emissions. Romanello et al., Lancet Countdown, The 2023 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change

This approach and its targets align with international frameworks, including the **Paris Agreement**¹ and the **United Nations Strategy for Sustainability Management**², and are embedded in **Unitaid's Climate & Health Strategy**.³

1 <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

2 <https://unsceb.org/strategy-sustainability-management-united-nations-system-2020-2030>

3 <https://unitaid.org/uploads/Unitaid-Climate-and-Health-Strategy-2023-2027.pdf>

3.

Major levers and solutions

Unitaid's roadmap focuses on practical, high-impact levers across both its **Secretariat** and **portfolio**.

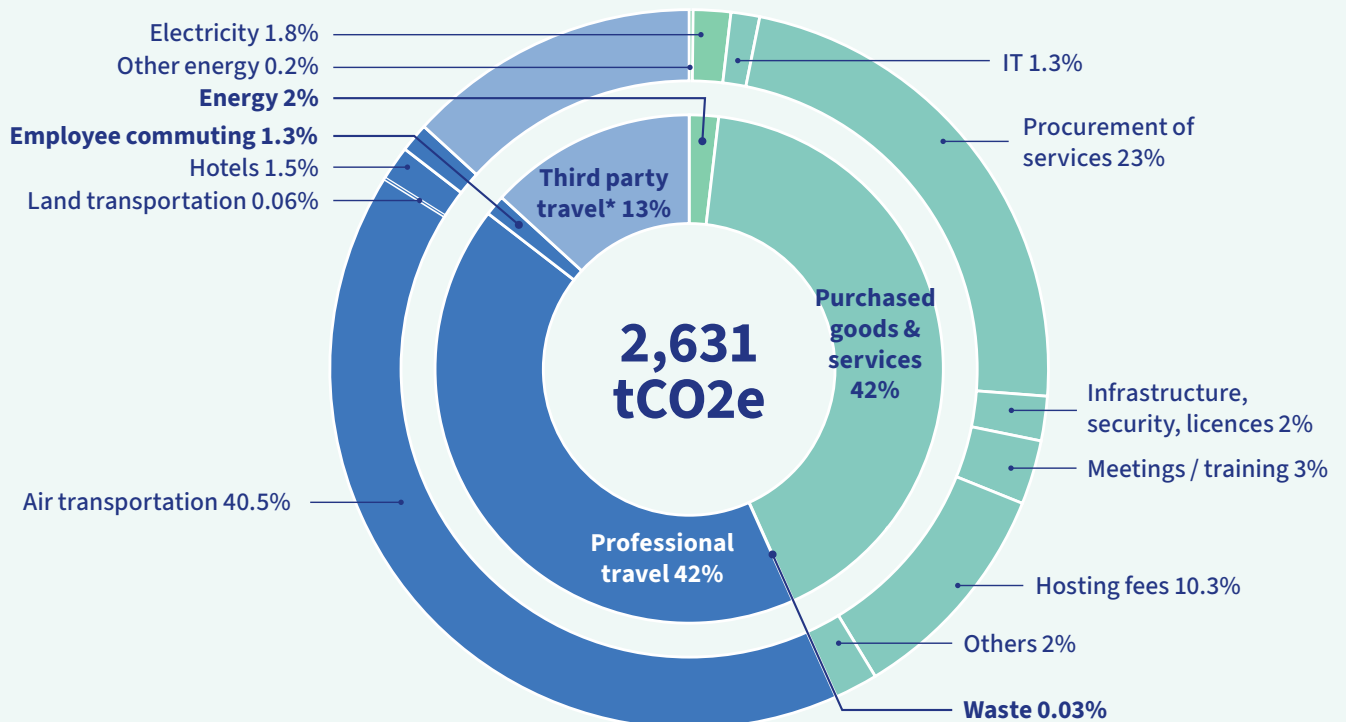
At the Secretariat level:

Two categories (**travel** and **procurement**) account for more than 80% of Unitaid's operational emissions. Between **2019 and 2023**, Secretariat emissions fell by **16%**, reflecting early progress through efficiency measures and lessons from pandemic-era adaptations (**Figure 2**).

Plans include reducing **travel emissions by 55% by 2030**, cutting **procurement emissions by 35% by 2030**, and promoting **sustainable office practices**.

Figure 2: Unitaid's Secretariat carbon footprint in 2019 and 2023

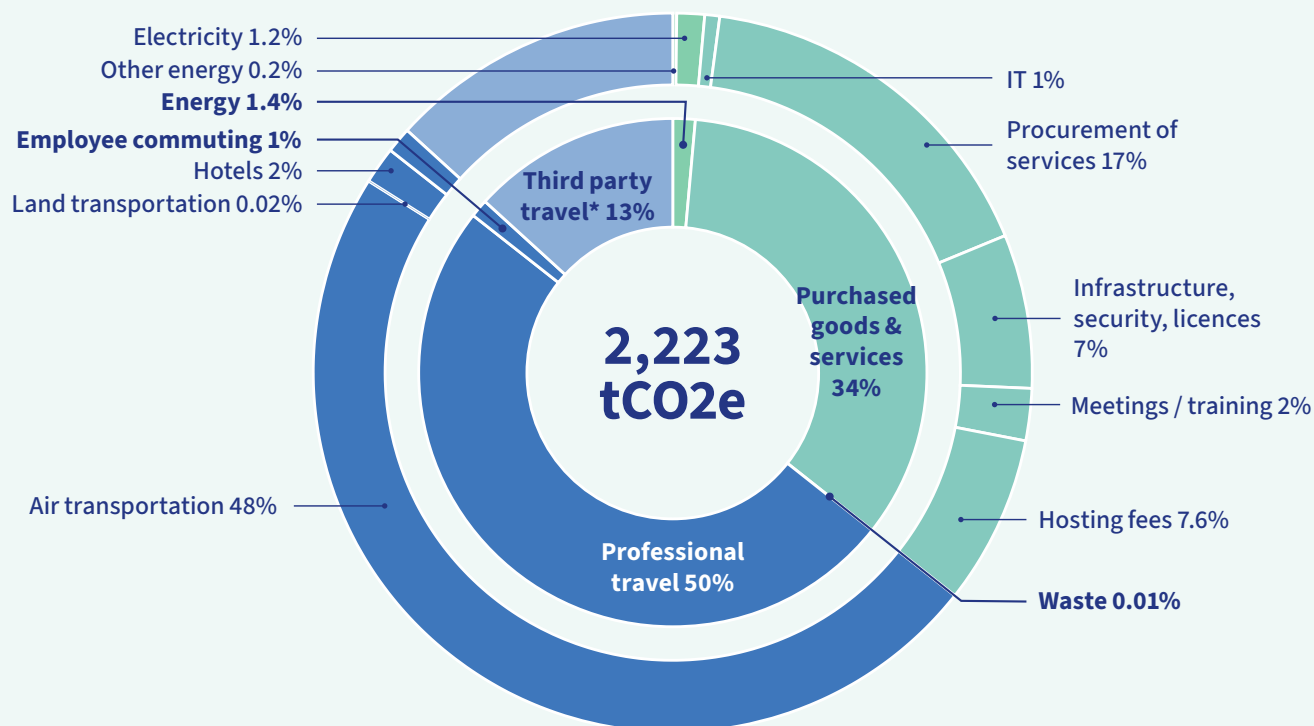
2019



* Third-party travel refers to non-Unitaid staff attending meetings or events organized by Unitaid (e.g., members of the Executive Board and other external stakeholders)

Figure 2 continued: Unitaid's Secretariat carbon footprint in 2019 and 2023

2023



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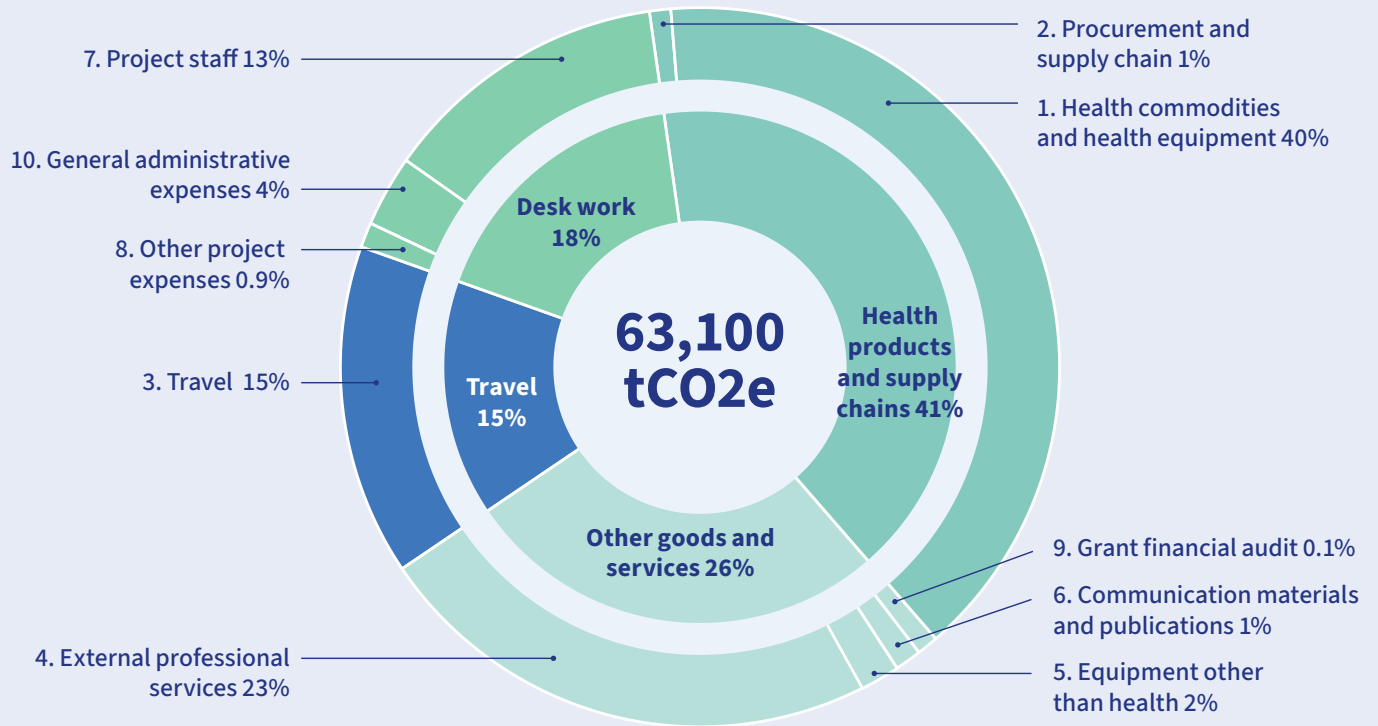
At the portfolio level:

The majority of emissions come from **purchased goods and services** (notably health commodities and supply chains), alongside **travel** and **implementation activities** by partners. Between **2019 and 2023**, portfolio emissions dropped by **37% in absolute terms**, and carbon intensity decreased by **18%**, showing encouraging early shifts in investment mix and delivery models (**Figure 3**).

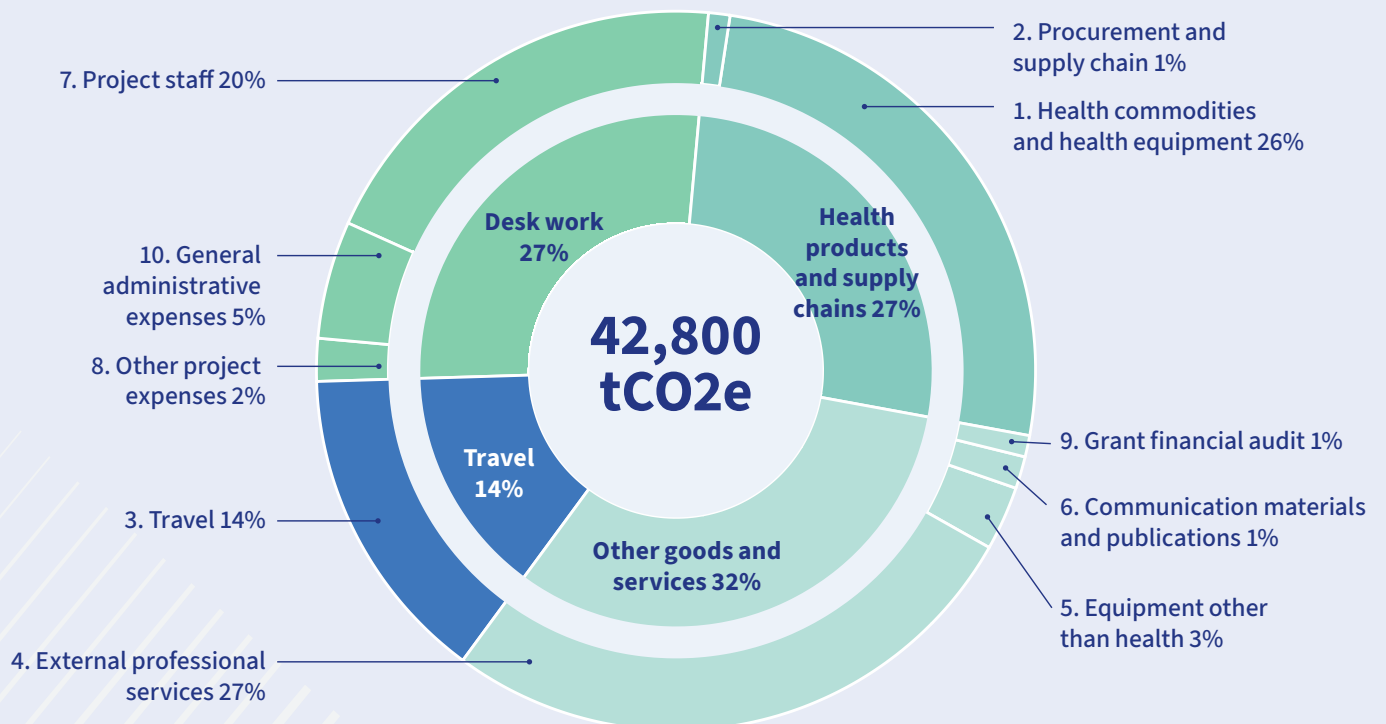
The roadmap emphasizes **climate-smart investment scope and design, low-carbon practices in grant development and management**, and **building capacity and accountability** through technical assistance and shared platforms.

Figure 3: Unitaid's portfolio carbon footprint in 2019 and 2023

2019



2023






4. Phased implementation (2025-2035)

Unitaid's roadmap follows a three-phase approach:

- 1. 2025–2027: Building capacity and fostering voluntary adoption.** Focus on training, incentives, piloting solutions, and encouraging voluntary adoption of climate-smart practices
- 2. 2027–2030: Strengthening expectations and embedding climate accountability.** Introduce clear guidelines, require climate roadmaps for lead implementers, and strengthen funding criteria.
- 3. 2030–2035: Driving accountability for climate commitments.** Increase oversight, expand requirements, and prioritize partners demonstrating sustained climate action.

This phased plan ensures progress is ambitious, inclusive, and achievable. It combines early action with long-term sustainability.



5.

Supporting partners and ecosystem transformation

Climate action in global health cannot be achieved in isolation.

As a catalytic funder embedded in a wider ecosystem, Unitaid's success depends on the collective ability of partner countries, implementing agencies, and peer institutions to advance and transform together.

To enable this transformation, Unitaid acts at three levels:

- **Internally:** embedding climate considerations across governance, operations, and staff capacity.
- **With partners:** providing tailored technical assistance, seed funding, and tools to build climate capacity and accountability.
- **Across the ecosystem:** engaging in joint initiatives and platforms to share knowledge, align standards, and accelerate collective progress.

Since 2023, Unitaid has launched **seven Climate Action Pilots** with implementing partners to assess emissions, develop roadmaps, and implement early reduction actions. In 2025, **36% of partners report that Unitaid's support has accelerated their climate and environmental efforts.**⁴ As **Sylvia de Haan, Head of Programmes at Wemos**⁵, explains:

“The pilot gave us the opportunity to firstly learn more about the effects of climate change on health, which we can use in our work, and secondly to become active as an organisation – by understanding our own carbon footprint and by jointly developing measures to reduce this footprint which we are currently implementing.”

Through collaboration with the **Climate Action Accelerator**⁶ and active engagement in global initiatives and forums such as UNFCCC **COP** and the **WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH)**⁷, Unitaid continues to foster alignment, shared learning, and accountability across the health and climate communities.

⁴ 2025 Implementers Survey

⁵ Since 2024, Wemos is leading a Unitaid-funded project aimed at making critical health products more affordable and available in low- and middle-income countries by addressing intellectual property-related challenges. More info at: <https://unitaid.org/project/enabling-access-to-medical-innovations-for-all/>

⁶ <https://unitaid.org/news-blog/unitaid-partners-with-the-climate-action-accelerator/>

⁷ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/alliance-for-transformative-action-on-climate-and-health>

6. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

A robust framework will track progress, enable course corrections, and share lessons learned. Progress will be measured against the 2019 baseline, with annual milestones and shared reporting to promote accountability and continuous improvement.



7. A shared call to action

Unitaid's Climate Action Roadmap is both a **pledge and an invitation**. By embedding climate action across its operations, investments, and partnerships, Unitaid is **leading by example**, showing that sustainability and access to life-saving health products can go hand in hand.

Together with partners, donors, and countries, Unitaid is helping build the foundation for **a healthier, more resilient world**, a world where every health innovation protects not only people's lives, but also the planet that sustains them.





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