



CASE STUDY

Streamlining climate commitments
across an organisation:

ACTED's story





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As part of its overall **3 zero approach**¹ (zero poverty, zero carbon, zero exclusion), ACTED was among the first humanitarian organisation to demonstrate a strong commitment to "walk the talk" on carbon emissions. Since 2020, the organisation is indeed committed to align its practices with global emissions reductions efforts and **half its carbon footprint by 2030**².

RESULTS



In 2024, **overall emissions reduced emissions by 28%**³ in relative terms (ie : calculations reflecting variations in volumes of activity).



Travel emissions reduced **by 27%** and **energy** emissions **by 9%** in 2024 (compared to 2021)⁶.



Monitoring of emissions since 2017 (every 2 years) covering all 3 scopes of the GHG protocol⁴. In 2024, ACTED's total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) amounted to 98.457tCO₂ eq⁵ equivalent to the annual consumption of 10 000 inhabitants in France.



Environmental sustainability embedded in all the organisation's **strategic and policy frameworks**³.



A "**culture**" of **environmental sustainability** developed across the organisation (headquarters, field offices, board of directors).



SUCCESS CONDITIONS

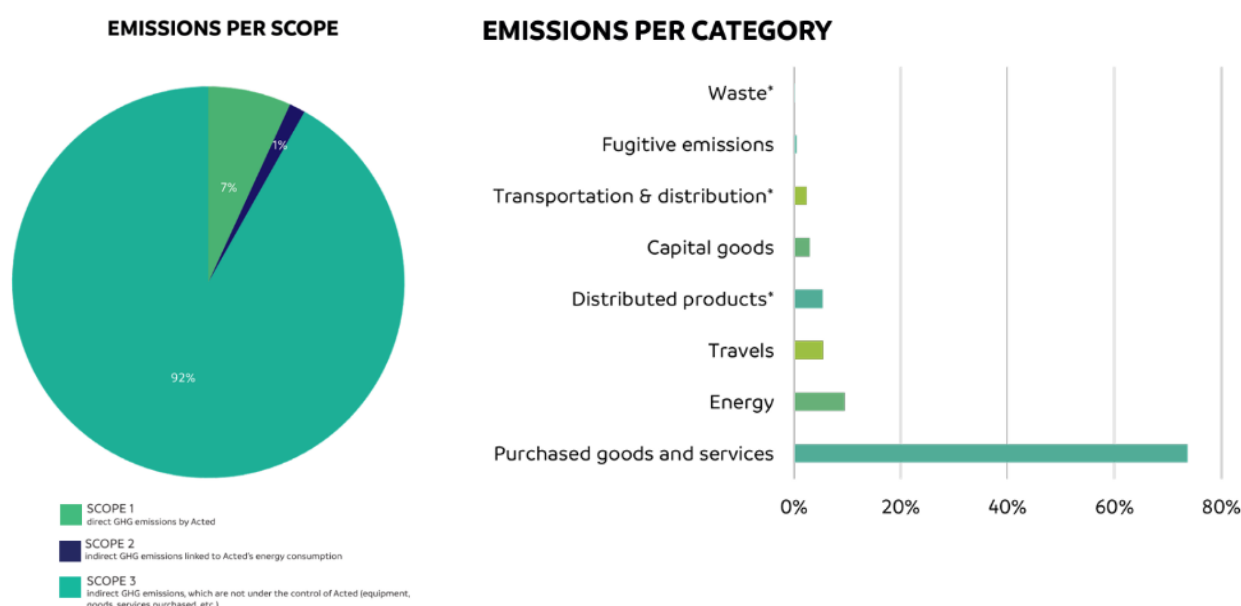
- **Top management support:** Decarbonisation agenda pushed by the management team and the board of directors sending a strong signal for the prioritisation of decarbonisation measures as well as generating learnings across departments and projects³.
- **Strategic approach:** A decarbonisation roadmap and trajectory developed identifying the main source of emissions and targeting impactful measures.
- **Streamlined approach across the organisation:** Environmental stewardship embedded in the scope of work of all staff as well as in the organisation's plans and strategies.
- **Diversification of funding:** Multiple funding strategies to finance the environmental and climate transition of the organisation.
- **Appropriation of field team:** Strong appropriation of decarbonisation objectives by field teams.
- **Holistic approach:** Implementing measures to reduce the organisations' emissions and environmental footprint while developing environmental-stand-alone projects and contributing to global advocacy efforts on climate.

WHY THIS CASE STUDY ?

ACTED's experience is noteworthy in that it illustrates how a humanitarian actor can **streamline** environmental sustainability and decarbonisation principles at different levels of the organisation (Head Quarters, field, board of directors). It also demonstrates that one of the main factors of success of the ecological transition is the **commitment and drive of an organisation's management**. Finally, it describes how an organisation can fund its transformation through a **diversified funding strategy**.



In terms of its emissions reduction ambitions, this case study is also interesting as it demonstrates **how humanitarian actors can continue to align with the GHG protocol and recommendations** from the scientific consensus (covering all three emission scopes and all its intervention countries and headquarters), **despite the challenging nature of reducing scope 3 emissions**. Over the years, ACTED has worked on improving data quality, digitalising the data entry to allow for easier global aggregation and harmonising emission factors with the *Humanitarian Carbon Calculator (HCC)*⁶. Going beyond common practices in the sector, ACTED 's approach is interesting as it extended the parameter of calculation to include *downstream logistics* (including emissions such as last mile logistics in trucks from warehouses to beneficiaries.)



ACTED's 2024 carbon footprint across scopes.³

It is to be noted that **scope 3 emissions are only partially calculated** as emissions related to cash- and voucher assistance (CVA) have not been systematically integrated in the calculation across regions (e.g.: some country teams have excluded it while other have included voucher related emissions) and are not included in the overall emissions reduction trajectory of ACTED. This position stems from the fact that the organisation considers it has very little decarbonisation levers for CVA operations.



WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS ?

Based on a general strive for exemplarity, ACTED has worked simultaneously on implementing measures to reduce its footprint, building staff expertise and awareness as well as developing projects aimed at protecting and reinforcing local environments in the countries of operations.

● A strategic approach to decarbonisation

Following a first carbon assessment in 2017 funded by the organisation's core funds, ACTED was one of the first humanitarian agency to **take targeted decarbonisation commitments** (halving emissions by 2030) as early as 2020 through its endorsement of *Humanitarian Environment Network*⁷ (REH)'s letter of commitment and in 2021, the organisation signed the *Charter for Humanitarian Organisations on Climate and Environment*⁸. These organisational wide commitments were made possible by :

- The **push provided by the organisation' board of directors**, particularly its environmental committee which advocated for a strong and unequivocal stand on environmental and climate issues.
- The continuous support provided by ACTED's top management giving as such a strong signal to the rest of the organisation and **allowing for the prioritisation of climate and environmental measures**.
- The anchoring of decarbonisation efforts in **the overall global vision** (3 zero vision¹) for the organisation; making it accountable to "walk the talk" on carbon and turning their climate commitments into practice.

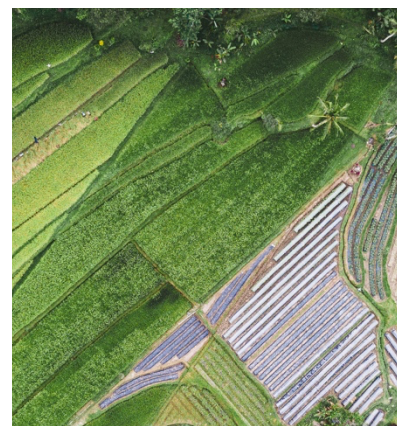
● The development of a decarbonisation roadmap which unpacked how climate commitments were going to be achieved

ACTED's decarbonisation roadmap and trajectory³ is **the backbone of the organisation's internal climate work**. It provides a breakdown analysis of how commitments are going to be translated into concrete measures using with a targeted approach on high impact areas. The roadmap also includes an analysis of the financial implication (investments and savings) and timeframe towards which measures are going to be implemented.



● A transparent approach

Measuring and reducing the carbon footprint of humanitarian organizations **is challenging**, especially as global needs and responses expand. While ACTED has shown a strong commitment to reducing emissions, its absolute emissions rose by 6% in 2024. This increase is due to improved data collection, expanded scope 3 coverage, and the inclusion of more field missions in calculations. ACTED's transparent reporting of both progress and setbacks reflects its integrity in addressing emissions reduction.



● Environmental stewardship promoted across staff

In addition to having a specific environmental and decarbonisation expert supporting the emissions reduction efforts, environmental sustainability has been embedded and **mainstreamed in the role of every employee whether at HQ** or in the field. Reducing emissions and environmental footprint is directly integrated into job descriptions and terms of reference. Staff also have to adhere to the organisations' environmental policy and code of conduct which emphasise the individual role of each staff to contribute to the organisation efforts³. To support this, **guidance and regular training is provided** ensuring as such that everyone understands the importance of environmental sustainability and is equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to uphold the organisation's commitments.

"Green squads" have also been set up in each country office. These inter-disciplinary working groups are composed of staff from various roles (e.g. logistics, administration, program), and who are responsible for the design and monitoring of greening actions.

This strategy is particularly pertinent as it ensures that environmental commitments and efforts are maintained despite financial crisis which can result in the de-prioritisation of environmental and climate efforts.

● A holistic approach to sustainability:

Implementing environmental stand-alone projects and climate advocacy work

In addition to reducing its environmental and climate footprint, ACTED is taking a holistic approach by implementing various medium-long term environmental projects (THRIVE⁹, COLIBRI¹⁰, SIRGE¹¹ etc...) across humanitarian settings. Projects include activities typically

outside the scope of humanitarian organisations such as the restoration of land and soil through climate-smart agricultural practices, promotion of conservation agriculture with farmers, support of renewable energy solutions in communities, and including disaster risk reduction measures in humanitarian projects etc. ACTED seeks to expand its climate and **environmental initiatives to comprise at least 25% of its overall program portfolio**³.

ACTED is also committed to raising awareness on climate action globally (including in Europe) through its involvement in initiatives such as 1 Planet4 all¹² and Convergence¹³. This three-fold approach reinforces the pertinence and the overall coherence of its work on climate change and environmental protection.

● A diversified funding strategy

As an organisation mainly funded by institutional sources, **financing climate and environmental transformation has been challenging**. However, country teams have proactively integrated related costs into project proposals and donor discussions.

For example, ACTED used core funds for upfront solar investments and charged depreciation costs to its donors. Additionally, ACTED is pursuing **private and development funds**, and its recent accreditation to the Green Climate Fund¹⁴ will significantly scale up its climate work.



● A strong focus on decarbonising supply chains

With the highest share of emissions coming from purchased goods and services (overall scope 3 emissions represent approximately 90% of emissions), supply chains represent a **key decarbonisation lever for the organisation**. Actions aiming at reducing procurement emissions include :



- The engagement and **dialogue with ACTED' suppliers** to identify how purchased products and services can be more environmentally friendly.
- The development of a **green procurement policy** and the introduction of a 10% environmental weighting criteria in the bid analysis. This gives a strong signal to suppliers and encourages them to adapt to the organisation's evolving demands.
- Working towards **identifying more sustainable alternatives** for key high-impact products such as rice, canned meat, and machinery equipment.
- The **development more sustainable agriculture practices** in the field in order to prioritise local sourcing.

Despite the challenges of decarbonising supply chains represent for humanitarian organisations, **ACTED continuously works towards reducing procurement-related emissions**, contributing as such to global mitigation in a principled manner and in line with international standards.

CONCLUSIONS

Building on several years of implementing measures aiming at reducing its environmental and carbon footprint, **ACTED continues to make progress towards its 50% reduction target by 2030³**.

Achieving this target will rely on sustained employee and top management engagement, ambitious action to reduce procurement emissions, and the full integration of climate considerations into all operations. ACTED's experience demonstrates both the feasibility and the **strategic approach to greening humanitarian operations while continuing to deliver effective aid**.

Andre Krummacher

ACTED's vice CEO programmes, impact and accountability :

"As the environmental crises deepens, aid agencies such as ACTED are faced with two simultaneous challenges. We must propose coherent and proactive actions to respond to this crisis and support populations to be more resilient (...) and we must positively contribute to the collective responsibility by greening our operations."



RESSOURCES



¹ The 3 zero house, ACTED 2023 <https://www.ACTED.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/3zero-house-presentation-updated-2023-compressed-1-1.pdf>.

² Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations (www.climate-charter.org)

³ Annual Reports, Environment and Social Protection Policy, 2024; Code of conduct 2024; Greening Strategy 2021-2025' etc.

⁴ Greenhouse Gas Protocol, overview of the GHG protocol scopes and emissions over the value chain https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/ghgp/standards_supporting/Diagram%20of%20scope%20and%20emissions%20across%20the%20value%20chain.pdf

⁵ ACTED , 'Annual report 2024', ACTED , 2025.
<https://www.ACTED.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/ar24-for-website-1.pdf>.

⁶ Humanitarian Carbon Calculator tool, <https://www.climate-charter.org/humanitarian-carbon-calculator/>

⁷ Statement of Commitment on Climate by Humanitarian Organisations, Environment Humanitarian Network, 2020 <https://www.urd.org/en/news/statement-of-commitment-on-climate-by-humanitarian-organisations/>

⁸ Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, 2022
<https://www.climate-charter.org>

⁹ THRIVE project : Towards Holistic Resilience in Vulnerable Communities
<https://www.acted.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/thrive-eth-final.pdf>

¹⁰ COLIBRI project : Community Livelihood and Biodiversity Recover
<https://www.acted.org/en/colibri-community-livelihood-and-biodiversity-recover/>

¹¹ SIRGE project : Working Towards Climate-Smart Cattle Farming in Uganda
<https://www.acted.org/en/sirge-working-towards-climate-smart-cattle-farming-in-uganda/>

¹² 1 Planet4all, <https://www.acted.org/fr/1planet4all/>

¹³ Convergences, <https://www.acted.org/fr/a-propos/groupe-acted/convergences/>

¹⁴ Green Climate Fund, <https://www.greenclimate.fund>