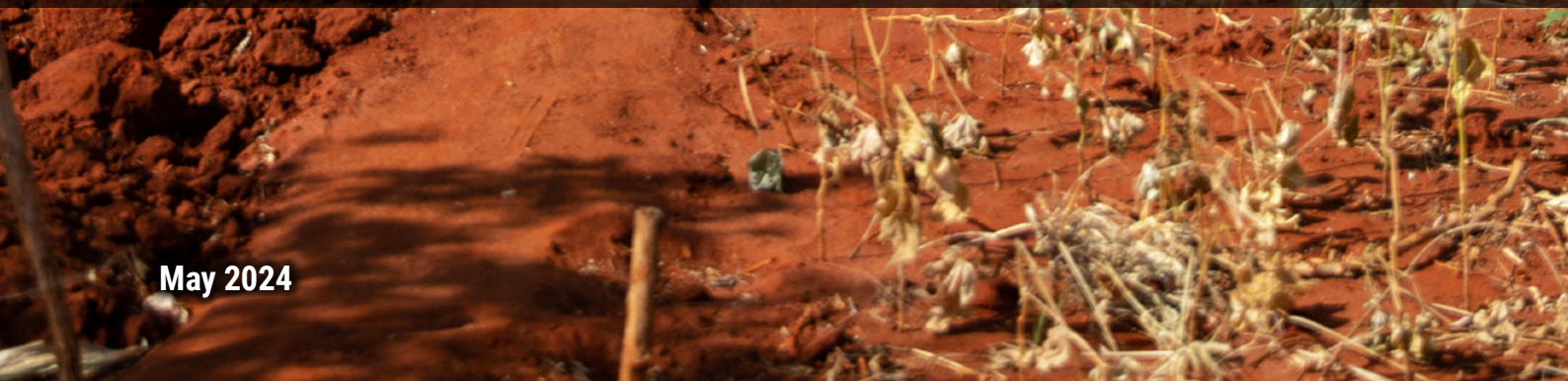
NRC

NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

REPORT

2023 | CARBON FOOTPRINT



May 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) second annual carbon footprint report presents comprehensive details about our 2023 carbon emissions and our strategies for reduction.

Fareed Baram/NRC

This report shares the results of our 2023 carbon footprint measurement and progress against our emissions reduction goals. The data enables us to monitor the effectiveness of carbon reduction initiatives and identify areas that may require targeted interventions to achieve these goals. This report also aims to keep our donors, partners, and the public informed about our efforts to increase environmental sustainability. Furthermore, we hope it will offer valuable insights and guidance to the broader humanitarian sector.

The main findings of this report are as follows:

- NRC's total carbon footprint for 2023 is 133,890 tonnes of CO2e.
- Carbon emissions have increased 17.4% since our 2019 baseline which does reflect growth in the size of the organisation in that time. NRC is responding to humanitarian crises in more countries and on a larger scale.
- Emissions per full time equivalent (FTE) staff member have decreased by 9.4% since 2019, indicating that we are more carbon efficient and on track to meet our 2030 target of reducing carbon emissions by 20% per staff member (FTE).
- We are seeing positive trends downwards in the areas of business travel, which has decreased 9.4% per staff member (FTE) since 2019
- The biggest contributors to our emissions are construction materials, financial assistance, and food distribution, which makes up 73% of our emissions in 2023

In 2024 we are focusing on two main areas:

- Working with country offices with the highest emissions to design, implement, and monitor tailored reduction strategies.
- Targeting particularly large emissions related to our operations by transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving the efficiency of our fleet, and reducing flights.

2 INTRODUCTION

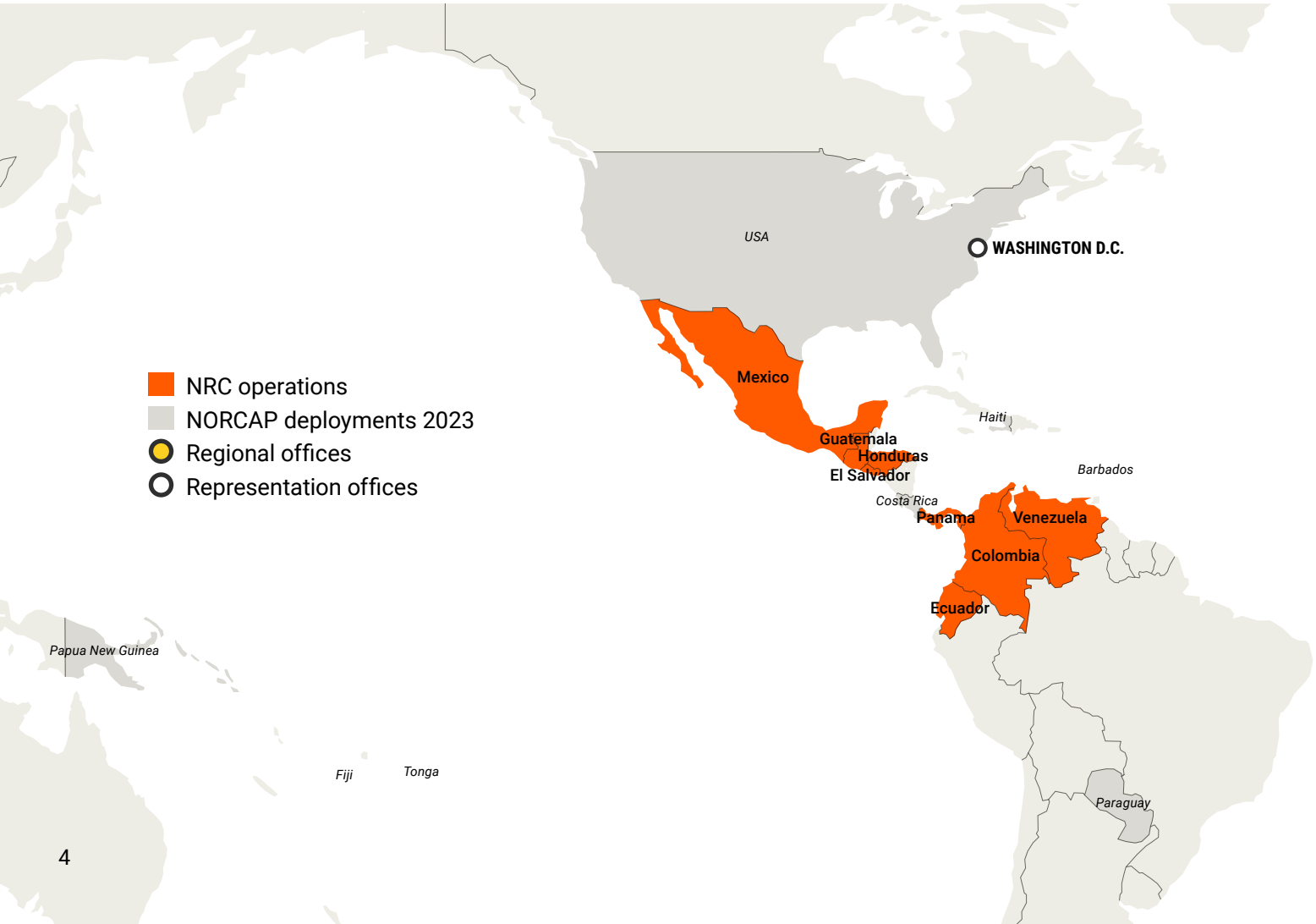
1.1 BACKGROUND

NRC is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee. Founded in 1946, today NRC works in both new and protracted crises across 40 countries, providing life-saving and long-term assistance to millions of people every year. We specialise in six areas: food security, education, shelter, legal assistance, camp management, and water, sanitation, and hygiene. As an organisation working with the world's most vulnerable people, NRC observes first-hand that those who have contributed least to the climate and environment crisis are hardest affected by the consequences. We recognise our own responsibility to minimise harm to the environment caused by our greenhouse gas emissions and direct impact of our programmes on the local environment.

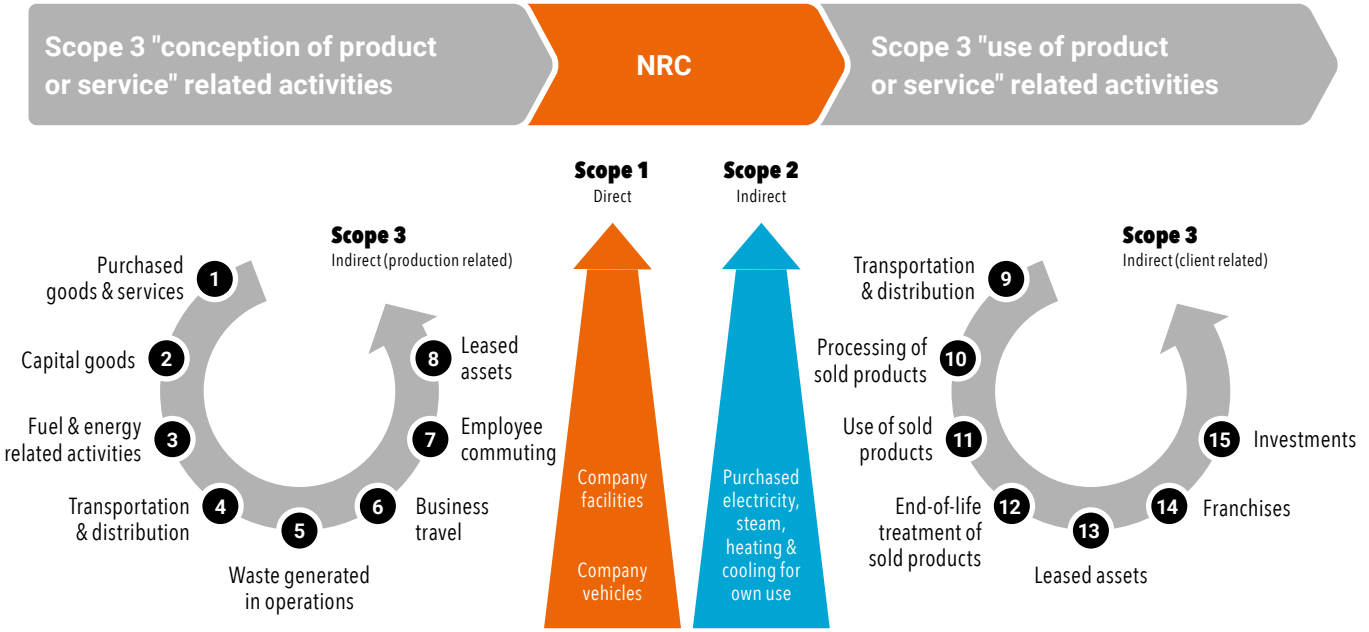
NRC seeks to incorporate environmental awareness and stewardship into all aspects of our work without changing our mandate or the communities we serve. We will continue to respond to displacement crises, go to hard-to-reach places and prioritise quality in our humanitarian responses.

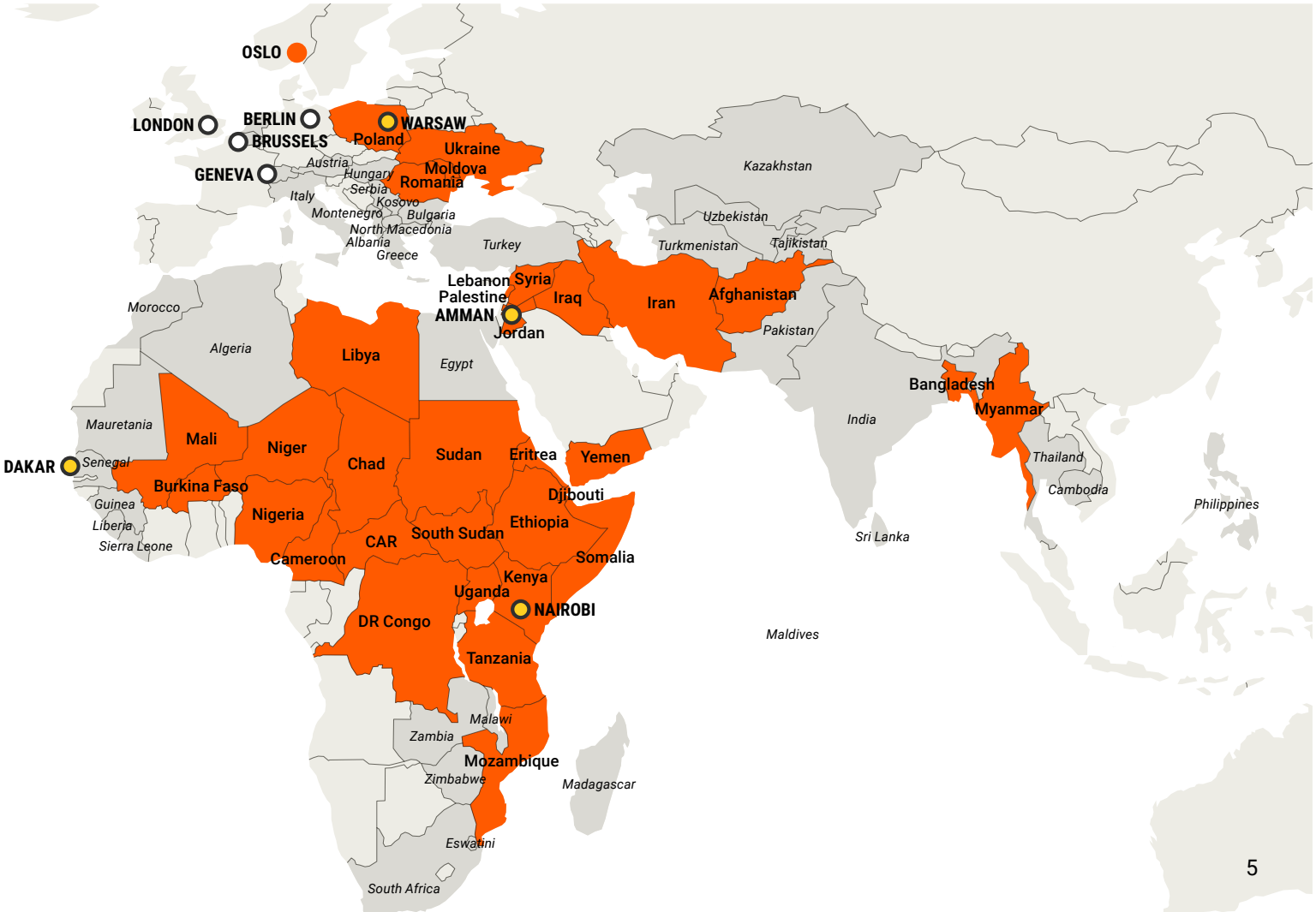
1.2 BOUNDARIES

Information for this report was gathered from 46 countries where NRC has operations, including 36 Country Offices, 4 Regional Offices, and 6 Representation Offices, including the NRC Head Office and NORCAP. Following the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol guidance, we calculate NRC's emissions from 13 categories across Scopes 1, 2, and 3. All data collected and analysed and calculation methods within this report follow the World Resources Institute GHG Protocol standards. More details on NRC's carbon accounting methodology can be found in Annex A.



NRC'S BASELINE COVERS EMISSIONS ACROSS 3 SCOPES IN LINE WITH THE GHG PROTOCOL





3 RESULTS

3.1 KEY FINDINGS

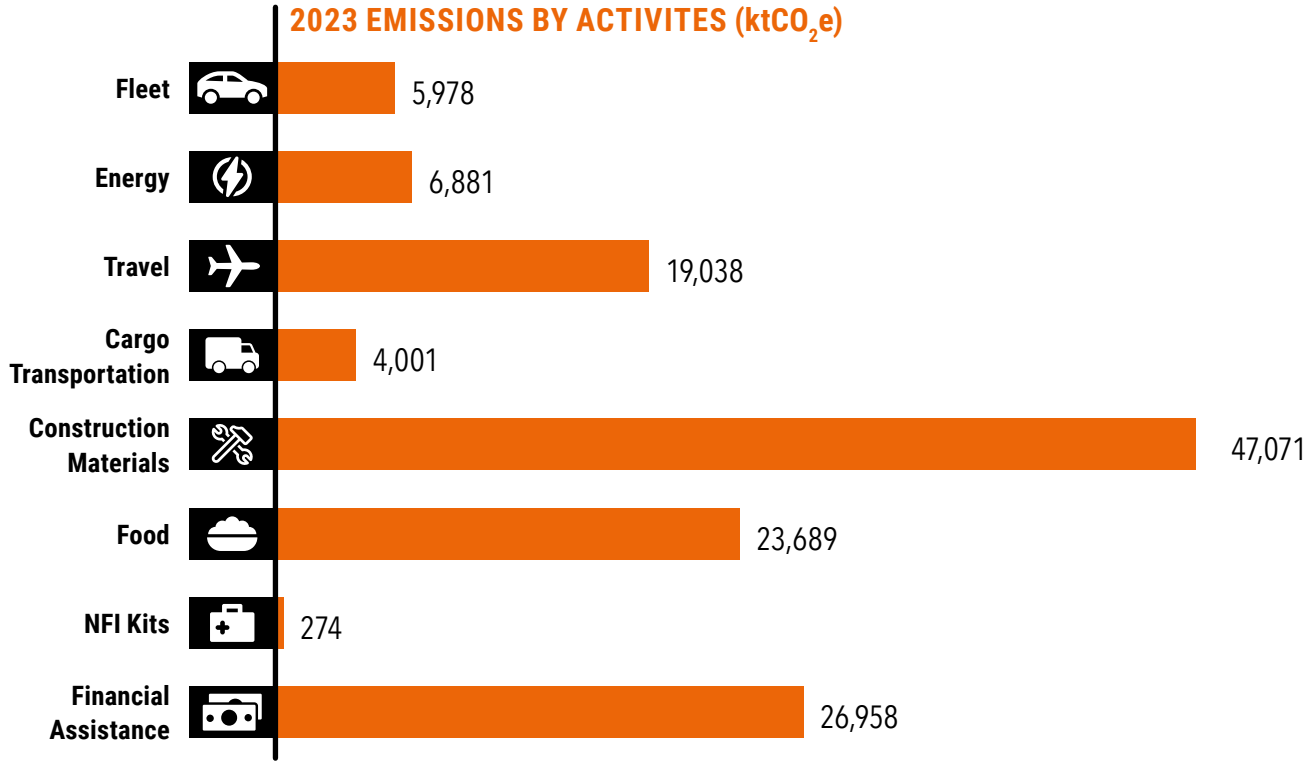
133,890
Tonnes of CO_2e in 2023

=

8,220
staff working with 9.3M participants affected by displacement

=

15,829
flights around the world



SCOPE 1
Emissions from NRC owned or leased facilities and vehicles

7,380.3 tCO_2e

5.5%

SCOPE 2
Emissions from purchased grid electricity

2,366.5 tCO_2e

1.8%

SCOPE 2
Emissions that occur during the conception or use of products and services purchased by NRC

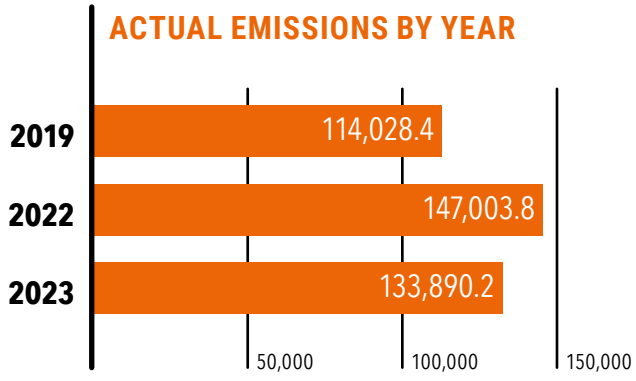
124,143.3 tCO_2e

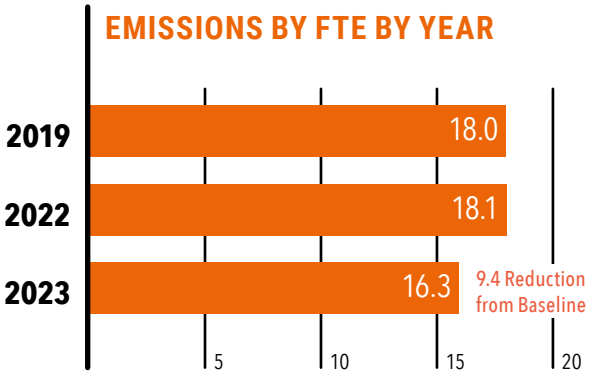
92.7%

3.2 EMISSIONS OVER TIME

When adjusted for organizational growth, NRC's carbon intensity has decreased by 9.4% since 2019. This carbon intensity measurement quantifies total carbon emissions, in kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e), per full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member. When not adjusted for carbon intensity, our emissions have increased 17.4% from our 2019 baseline report. Monitoring progress per staff member enables us to track the impact of efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, which would otherwise be overshadowed by increased activities due to organisational growth. We are committed to improving our carbon efficiency over time, no matter the size of our organisation.

Given the nature of our work we expect some volatility in our carbon footprint, particularly in areas directly linked to our programme actvities such as construction, food, NFI kits, and financial assistance. Consequently, we are concentrating our efforts on reducing emissions in areas that we have we have the most control over: fuels for vehicles and generators (Scope 1), purchased electricity (Scope 2), and travel (business travel and employee commuting). By implementing reduction strategies in these key areas and closely monitoring our progress, we can best assess our effectiveness in meeting our emission reduction targets.

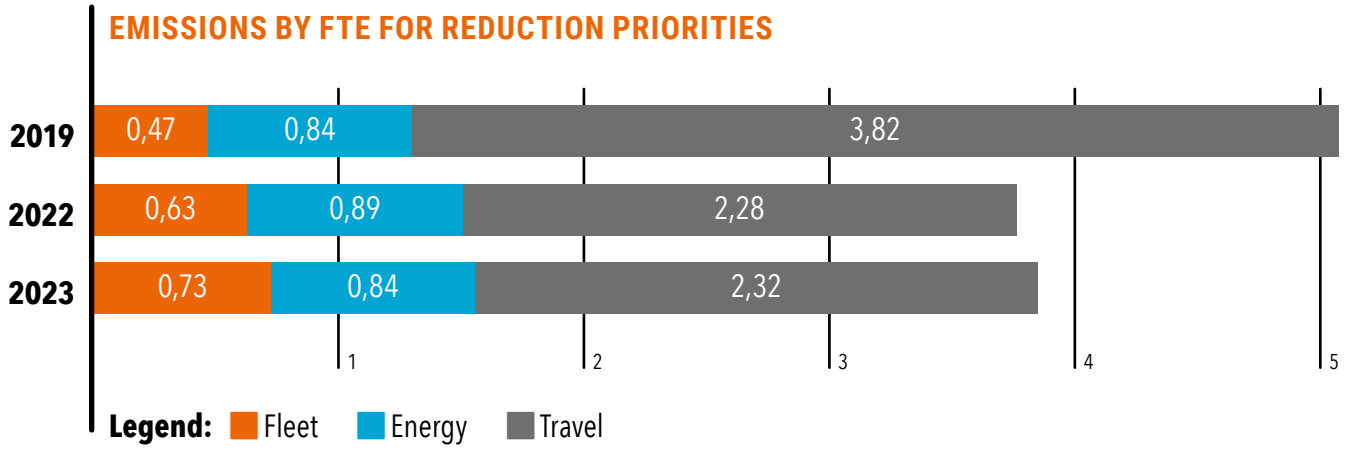




2023 EMISSIONS BY ACTIVITES ($ktCO_2e$)

Category	Emissions by FTE (TCo2e)	Variance	Scopes & Activities
Fleet	0.47 0.63 0.73	↑ 54%	❶ Fuel for vehicles ❸ Capital expenditures for vehicles ❸ Fuel and energy-related activities
Energy	0.84 0.89 0.84	– 0%	❶ Purchased generator fuel ❶ Purchased heating fuels ❷ Purchased electricity ❸ Capital expenditures for generators ❸ Fuel and energy-related activities
Travel	3.82 2.28 2.32	↓ -39%	❸ Business Travel ❸ Employee Commuting, incl. homeworking
Cargo Transportation	0.99 0.56 0.49	↓ -51%	❸ Upstream land and air transportation ❸ Downstream land and air transportation
Construction Materials	6.44 6.22 5.73	↓ -11%	❸ Purchased construction materials ❸ Construction contractor services
Food	1.17 3.06 2.88	↑ 147%	❸ Home cooking of food distributed
NFI Kits	0.03 0.04 0.03	↑ 1%	❸ Disposal of items in kits distributed
Financial Assistance	4.23 4.42 3.28	↓ -22%	❸ Assumed items purchased by our cash and voucher programmes

EMISSIONS BY FTE FOR REDUCTION PRIORITIES



4 CLIMATE ACTION

Enayatullah Azad/NRC

4.1 GREENING NRC'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE: OUR COMMITMENT TO REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS

"We have to become greener," says Jan Egeland, NRC's Secretary General. "We want to not only mitigate the consequences of climate change, but also do our bit to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that leads to climate change in the first place."

Measuring, understanding and monitoring our carbon footprint is an important step to reducing our contribution to global climate change. We have set an initial target to reduce our carbon emissions by 20% per staff member (FTE) from our 2019 baseline by 2030. This target is a first step on our decarbonisation journey based on the actions which we have identified we can take to reduce our carbon footprint without reducing the quality and quantity of humanitarian assistance.

In 2022 we launched an ambitious environmental strategy which focusses on:

1. **Reducing our environmental footprint** by actively working towards reducing our carbon emissions and direct impact of our programmes on the local environment.

2. **Addressing the impact of climate change on displacement-affected people** through environmental analysis, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and collective action.

Our decarbonisation roadmap begins with emissions reductions from travel, energy, vehicles and procurement. We aim to avoid travel when we have other options and travel as efficiently as possible when it is necessary. Our energy emissions will be reduced through transition of many of our diesel generators to solar power and we will work to avoid the over-procurement of construction materials.

4.2 POWERING HUMANITARIAN AID: NRC'S SOLAR TRANSITION FOR SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

Transitioning to renewable energy, usually solar energy, is an important component for decarbonisation which can also provide financial savings in the long term and improvements to staff safety and wellbeing. Initial sites have already implemented solar power but the biggest barrier to solarising humanitarian operations is financial. In November 2023, NRC launched a new fund to enhance the sustainability of humanitarian operations, with the initial focus of financing the replacement of diesel generators with solar technology with funds that can be affordably repaid over time.

Most crises last more than 5 years and the use of diesel generators to power humanitarian operations is costly both in terms of money and carbon emissions. Generators also depend on supply chains which can be unreliable, particularly in remote areas. The shift from diesel to solar power ensures reliability and affordability, while minimizing the environmental impact of the humanitarian response.

NRC is piloting solarisation with the support of the Capital Fund in operations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. NRC plans to scale up the solarisation programme to transition to clean energy use at over 200 sites. Going forward, the Capital Fund plans to broaden its focus to further improve the sustainability of other aspects of our humanitarian operations.

4.3 MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: NRC'S NEAT+ TOOL ENHANCES HUMANITARIAN PLANNING

Humanitarian initiatives can be accompanied by environmental repercussions, such as deforestation or depletion of water sources. These potential environmental impacts underscore the importance of considering environmental impacts during the planning phase of humanitarian operations.

To address these issues, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is spearheading a two-year project funded by ECHO, titled 'Strengthening the Capacity of Humanitarian Actors to do Environmental Screenings'. The primary tool for this initiative is the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+), a rapid, user-friendly tool designed specifically for the humanitarian sector.

NEAT+ is particularly effective during the planning phases of long-term humanitarian efforts in protracted crises, camp settings, or recovery support, providing a clear picture of environmental vulnerabilities and associated risks. This tool not only helps in identifying how to mitigate these risks but also aids in advocacy and fundraising by highlighting environmental issues. This project represents a critical step towards reducing the negative environmental impacts of humanitarian actions, ensuring they are sustainable and do not inadvertently harm the communities they aim to help.

As part of this project in 2023, NRC and NORCAP led 24 NEAT+ technical trainings and 11 Training of Trainers programs across 24 locations in 14 countries. In Syria, one training participant commented, ‘Even though I worked many years (in the project site), I never looked at issues from an environmental lens. Looking at the results generated by the NEAT+, I see that this area (project site) looks very new to me, and it’s a pity that I never paid attention to the existing climate and environmental risks earlier, which directly affect the people and our projects. This tool (NEAT+) is an eye-opener for me, and must be integrated into the project development process’.

4.4 STRENGTHENING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND SUSTAINABILITY: NORCAP'S IMPACT IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

NORCAP, our global provider of expertise, works to better protect and empower people affected by crises and climate change. NORCAP has strengthened the humanitarian sector by adopting a comprehensive approach to minimise the environmental footprint of the sector and enhance sustainable responses through support provided to over 50 assignments across more than 25 countries in Africa and the Middle East.

In 2023, NORCAP, in collaboration with key partners, such as UNHCR, WFP, and IOM, successfully carried out a total of 16 decarbonisation projects as part of a broader effort by the UN and INGOs to mitigate their environmental impact. A crucial component is the investment in clean energy projects and greening humanitarian operations. These projects have achieved a measurable impact on reducing operational emissions. Through the decarbonisation of partner facilities, an estimated reduction of approximately 52,000 tons of CO2 emissions was achieved, with substantial reductions coming from UNHCR operations in Mauritania and Niger.

The Decarbonising Humanitarian Energy (DHE) programme was initiated by NORCAP, in partnership with UNDP and the Global Platform of Action in Displacement Settings (GPA) at UNITAR. The DHE aims to bundle energy projects across countries, initially in Nigeria and Niger, with an emphasis on enhanced partner coordination, de-risking, increasing private sector collaborations to increase decarbonisation efforts and energy access initiatives for end-users.

NORCAP has been supporting UNHCR Mauritania since 2022 to enhance its environmental programmes in Mbera camp and the surrounding villages. Read more about that project here.

A ANNEX

NRC is committed to publicly sharing our footprint and promoting transparency between humanitarian agencies. We are working with other organisations to unify our approach to measuring emissions and tackle the challenges of collecting and analysing data from complex humanitarian responses. This annex outlines NRC's carbon calculations methodology for each of the categories contained in this report.

Grant Lee Neuenburg/NRC

This annex includes details of:

- Sources of internal data and limitations of that data
- Assumptions made where data was unavailable or incomplete
- Source of carbon emissions conversion factor used
- Calculation method used

A.1 SOURCES OF EMISSIONS NOT INCLUDED

The calculated carbon footprint is as complete as possible but as not all data is available, priority has been given to the most significant sources of emissions across NRC. We continue to improve our data collection for carbon footprint monitoring and some of these may be possible to measure in future years. These are notable sources of emissions defined in the GHG protocol but not included in NRC's calculation:

- Purchased goods and services includes only the highest emitting goods which is construction materials as assessed for the 2019 baseline with the support of Boston Consulting Group. The capture of complete data for other purchased goods and services is not currently possible from NRC systems.
- Production of capital goods has been limited to vehicles and generators as these are the largest and most common assets purchased.
- Hotel accommodation has not been included as NRC does not have a centralised booking system at present.
- Waste and fugitive emissions from refrigerants are not included in this report as we currently do not have data in these areas.

A.2 CALCULATING STAFF MEMBERS

In line with other humanitarian organisations, NRC employees different staff members in different capacities. For the purposes of this report, we have only counted the classifications of staff that use our facilities, fleet, and carry out our core programme objectives. This means that we do not include contractors, interns, casual or daily workers, and NORCAP deployees or roster members for our FTE calculations. As staff numbers fluctuate throughout any given year, we calculate FTE by averaging together the number of staff employed each trimester (April, August, and December).

A.3 SOURCES AND CALCULATION OF EMISSIONS DATA

1.1
Static combustion

This category is calculated on diesel fuel used to power generators and other purchased fuels for office heating. This category falls under GHG Scope 1.

Data for generators was collected from NRC's internal logistics KPI reporting system regarding the amount of fuel in litres purchased per location. Data for purchased fuels used for office or guesthouse heating was collected from manual country surveys regarding the amount and fuel type purchased. Surveys were filled out based on invoices, bills, or meter readings. This section was calculated using DEFRA 2022 conversion factors.

1.2
Mobile combustion

This category is calculated on diesel or petrol used for owned and leased vehicles. This category falls under GHG Scope 1.

Data was collected from our internal logistics KPI reporting system regarding the number of owned and leased vehicles per office and the total amount of fuel received in litres. Where the amount of fuel purchased was not available, we used the number of kilometres travelled. We calculated this section using DEFRA 2022 conversion factors.


Hatar Abdulhamid/NRC

2.
Purchased electricity

This category is calculated on the amount of on-grid electricity purchased by NRC offices, guesthouses, and other facilities. This category falls under GHG Scope 2 and the emissions calculated are for the production of the electricity generated.

Data was collected from manual country surveys regarding the amount of electricity in kilowatts purchased and consumed. The response rate to this survey was 87%. Surveys were filled out based on invoices, bills, or meter readings. We then extrapolated how much electricity was purchased for the entire year. In instances where data was not available, we extrapolated how much energy was purchased based on the amount of electricity purchased in 2022 and increased this amount in relation to staff growth in 2023. We calculated our carbon emissions for this category using the GHG Protocol Location-Based Method and used the corresponding DEFRA 2019 conversion factors for purchased electricity by country.

3.1

Purchased goods and services

This category is calculated on the total purchased construction materials and construction contractor services. This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and the emissions calculated are for the production of goods purchased by the organization.

Data was collected from NRC's financial system as to the total amount in U.S. Dollars spent on construction materials and contractor services. Limitations of this data is that generally the specific type or weight of construction material being used is not captured. In 2024 we completed a review of 18 different construction projects across 10 different countries. These projects were segregated by geographical region and construction project type (shelters, latrines, school rehabilitations, etc.). From each project we pulled the materials used from purchase orders or contracts, calculated the weight of each item based on their description, and averaged commodity prices across projects and regions. Using the extrapolated materials prices and weight purchased we calculated our carbon emissions for this category using the GHG Protocol Spend-Based Method and DEFRA 2022 conversion factors. The most significant material for carbon emissions at NRC is concrete followed plastics and metals.

3.2

Capital goods:

This category is calculated on the total purchased generators and vehicles. This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and the emissions calculated are for the production of capital goods purchased by the organization and applied in the year of purchase.

Data was collected from NRC's financial system as to the total amount in U.S. Dollars spent on generators and vehicles. We used the GHG Protocol Average Spend-Based Method and calculated our carbon emissions for this category using DEFRA 2014 conversion factors (Table 13 – Indirect emissions from the supply chain), which is the most recent version available.

3.3

Fuel and energy-related activities

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates the upstream emissions of the production of fuels and electricity purchased by NRC. This includes activities related to fuel extraction, production, and transportation and assumed transmission and distribution losses for electricity.

The data for this section matches all the data from categories 1.1 Static Combustion, 1.2 Mobile Combustion, and 2. Purchased Electricity. Calculations for this section were done using the GHG Protocol Average-Data method and DEFRA 2022 conversion factors.

3.4

Upstream transportation & distribution

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates emissions related to land and air transportation and distribution of purchased products to NRC warehouses.

LAND TRANSPORTATION

Data was collected from manual surveys filled out by NRC warehouse staff regarding the type of delivery vehicles used, average number of deliveries per month, and distances travelled in relation to deliveries between suppliers and NRC warehouses. The response rate to this survey was 64%, which was a 28% increase in survey responses from last year. In the instances where a country had missing data from one or more warehouse locations, we extrapolated emissions to the missing locations based on the average carbon emissions from other warehouses in the country. In the case no survey responses were collected from any warehouses within a country, we extrapolated the average carbon emissions from all warehouses globally, to those with missing data. The increase in response rate from the 2022 survey gave us more accurate data for this data extrapolation. All calculations assumed that delivery vehicles were making roundtrips. Calculations for this section were done using the GHG Protocol Distance-Based Method and DEFRA 2022 conversion factors.

Gianluca Galli / NRC

AIR FREIGHT

Data was collected from supplier reports containing the weight of equipment shipped to each NRC location. Calculations for this section were done using the GHG Protocol Distance-Based Method and DEFRA 2022 conversion factors.

3.6 Business travel

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates emissions related to flights and land travel (which includes buses, trains, rented vehicles, ferries and taxis).

FLIGHTS

Flight data was collected from our travel agency, which included kilometres travelled and cabin type. For flights booked outside of the travel agency, data was collected from our financial system which categorises flights as either international or domestic. Where origin and destination locations were available, kilometres travelled were calculated. Where either origin or destination locations were not available, we extrapolated the distance by calculating the average of kilometres travelled for either domestic or international flights for that country and applied it. Using this data, we calculated emissions using DEFRA 2022 conversion factors using the GHG Protocol Distance-Based Method.

LAND TRAVEL

Data for taxis, buses, trains, ferries, and rented vehicles was collected from our financial system. As this data did not capture origin or destination cities, we were not able to calculate kilometres travelled. Therefore, we used ADEME[1] Base Carbon conversion factors to calculate emissions using the GHG Protocol Spend-Based Method.

[1] French governmental Ecological Transition Agency.

Ingebjørg Kårstad/NRC

3.7 Employee commuting

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates emissions related to how employees get to and from the office and includes homeworking. This does not include employees who use an NRC vehicle to get to work, as those emissions are captured under section 1.2 Mobile Combustion: Fuels for Owned & Leased Vehicles.

For Employee Commuting data was collected from a manual survey in which 24% of employees responded, which was a 3% increase in survey responses from last year. The survey allowed respondents to choose up to two types of transportation, enter the average distance travelled, number of days a week taken, and if choosing a vehicle, the number of people that they carshared with. Additionally, NRC has implemented more flexible working options since 2019 and in this year's survey respondents were asked to enter how many days a week they worked from home; 93% of respondents reported working from home at least one day a week.

Using the responses from the survey, we calculated the total number of kilometres travelled using each transportation type for working weeks in the year, dividing total kilometres travelled by the number of people in the carshare where applicable. We also calculated number of hours spent working from home where respondents did not travel into the office daily. Using staff counts per country and the number of respondents per country, we then extrapolated kilometres travelled by transportation type and hours spent working from home to the remaining staff where data was not available. Emissions were then calculated using the GHG Protocol Distance-Based Method using DEFRA 2022 conversion factors for transportation and DEFRA 2022 conversion factors for Homeworking.

3.9 Downstream transportation & distribution

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates emissions related to land and air transportation NRC warehouses to distribution sites.

LAND TRANSPORTATION

Data was collected from manual surveys filled out by NRC warehouse staff regarding the type of delivery vehicles used, average number of deliveries per month, and distances travelled in relation to deliveries between suppliers and NRC warehouses. The response rate to this survey was 64%, which was a 28% increase in survey responses from last year. In the instances where a country had missing data from one or more warehouse locations, we extrapolated emissions to the missing locations based on the average carbon emissions from other warehouses in the country. In the case no survey responses were collected from any warehouses within a country, we extrapolated the average carbon emissions from all warehouses globally, to those with missing data. The increase in response rate from the 2022 survey gave us more accurate data for this data extrapolation. All calculations assumed that delivery vehicles were making roundtrips. Calculations for this section were done using the GHG Protocol Distance-Based Method and DEFRA 2022 conversion factors.

AIR FREIGHT

NRC does not typically use air freight to ship goods; however, we may use UN flights for emergency cargo shipments. In these cases, the UN provides NRC with detailed reports about the cargo's weight and the associated flight emissions.

Juan Amarú/External photographer

3.11

Use of distributed products

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates emissions related to home cooking of food distributed to participants.

Data was collected from our internal programmes KPI system as to the kilograms of food distributed by country. Our calculations in this area this year changed from the methodology used in 2019 and 2022. This year we received lists of the average food items and amounts distributed, in kilograms. Using the heat capacity and average cooking time of each food type we calculated the emissions emitted by cooking using wood. We then apply these emissions factors to the kilograms of food distributed by country to get the total emissions in this category.

Note: Under the GHG Protocol this category is titled Use of Sold Products, which we have changed here to match our operations.

3.12

End-of-life treatment of distributed products

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates emissions related to the disposal of items in NFI kits distributed to participants.

Data for this section was collected from our internal programmes KPI system as to the type of kit and quantity distributed. We also made assumptions around weight of packaging of food distributed (see 3.11 Use of distributed products). Using item lists from select countries, we calculated the weight of non-perishable items, such as various plastics, metals, paper, clothing, and small electronic items contained in the kits. We assumed all items were disposed of in a landfill, except for paper which we assumed was assumed to be combusted. Emissions in this area were calculated on all products distributed in 2023, regardless of which year they are actually disposed. Emissions were then calculated using the relevant DEFRA 2022 conversion factors under Waste Disposal using the GHG Protocol Waste-Type-Specific Method.

Note: Under the GHG Protocol this category is titled End-of-life treatment of sold products, which we have changed here to match our operations.

3.16

Financial assistance

This category falls under GHG Scope 3 and calculates the estimated emissions associated with the spending of cash and vouchers distributed to participants. Financial assistance is used to purchase goods and services by the participants, so NRC includes the estimated emissions of those in our footprint.

Data for this section was collected from our financial system in U.S. Dollars. To calculate carbon emission conversion factors, we used datasets for all countries for GDP Per Capita and Consumption of CO2 Per Capita. Both datasets are collected and made publicly available by the World Bank. Some countries, especially those that face extreme political or economic instability, may not have updated data in these datasets. If updated data was not available for a country in the GDP Per Capita file, we used the data for the year that it was most recently available. If a country did not have data in the Consumption of CO2 Per Capita file, we used the data provided for the category of Low-Income Countries. By dividing Consumption of CO2 Per Capita by GDP Per Capita data we get a conversion factor of CO2 emitted by person per U.S. Dollar spent. We then multiplied the amount of financial assistance distributed by country by this calculated CO2 conversion factor to get the total carbon emissions in this section.

Note: Financial assistance is not an area of emissions calculations that the GHG Protocol covers but is a standard humanitarian category.

Grant Lee Neuenburg/NRC

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