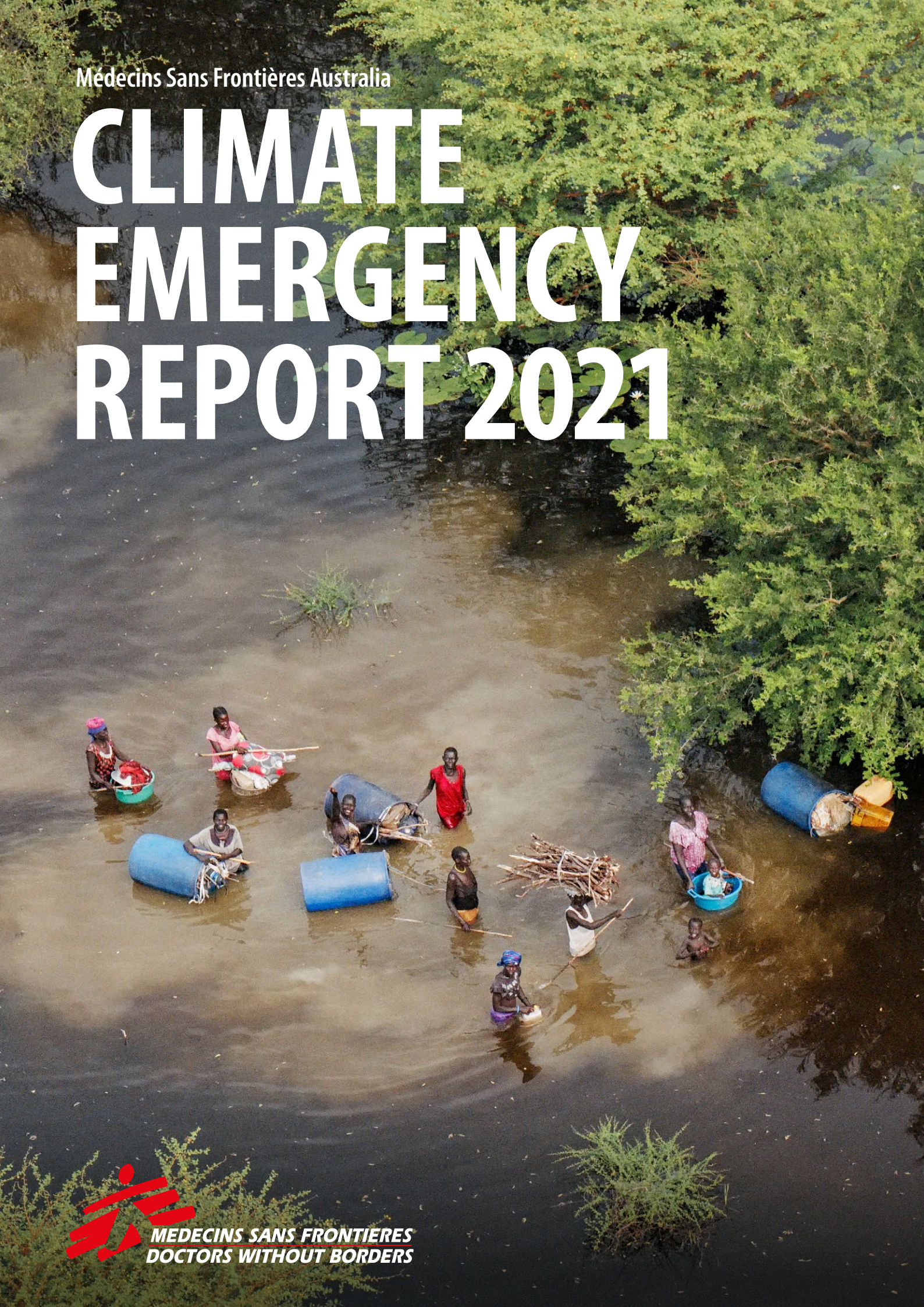


Médecins Sans Frontières Australia

# CLIMATE EMERGENCY REPORT 2021



**MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES**  
**DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

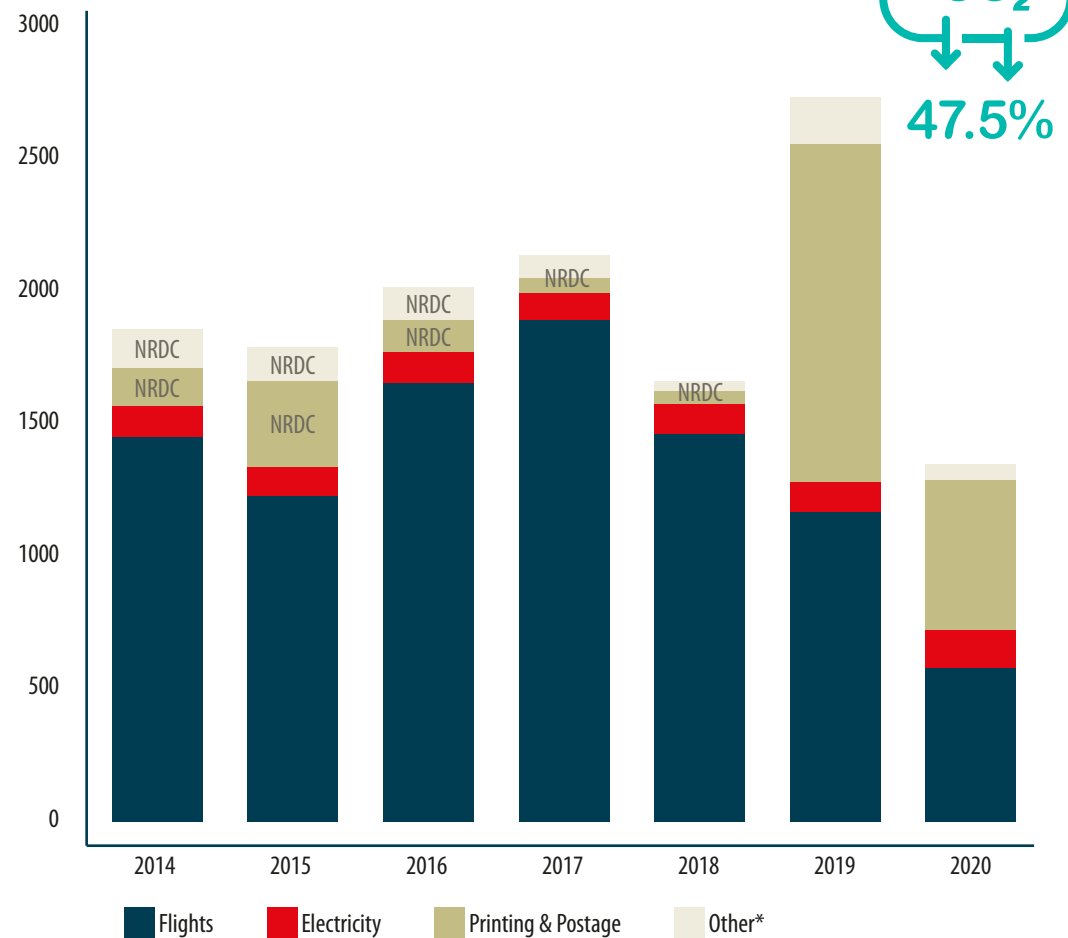
**The first annual Climate Emergency Report describes the commitments and progress of Médecins Sans Frontières Australia (MSF Australia) in reducing its own carbon emissions footprint (CEF) and in supporting MSF-wide climate crisis mitigation and adaptation goals and activities.**

MSF Australia's total CEF in 2020 was 1,446 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) or 14.6 tonnes per person. This was a significant reduction on the 2019 baseline CEF of 2,753 tCO<sub>2</sub>e or 27.8 tonnes per person – a 47.5 per cent reduction in one year. Much of this reduction in carbon emissions was attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic – including restricted international travel, Sydney office closures and working from home arrangements.

However, it also illustrates the potential for MSF Australia to sustain reductions in carbon emissions whilst still delivering on our medical humanitarian mission through remote work, and less reliance on printing and postage.

Whilst focusing on our CEF performance for 2020, the report also looks at important immediate measures MSF Australia needs to take to reduce carbon emissions to as low a level as practical – highlighting key longer-term policy and management decisions towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

Finally, the report describes the broader contributions MSF Australia is making to advance climate crisis mitigation and adaptation across MSF internationally. This includes practical measures that can be implemented at field level, such as reducing medical waste, and the use of reusable masks and respirators in place of disposables.



\*Other includes: staff commute, working from home, IT equipment, stationery, hotels and taxis. NRDC: no reliable data collected, so results for 2014-2018 are likely to under-estimate tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 30-50%.

Chart 1: MSF Australia's Carbon Emissions Footprint 2016-2020. Source: Pangolin report CY2014, CY2016, CY2017, CY2019.

Front cover: Families heading to dry land after flooding in Bentiu affected 835,000 people. Unity State, South Sudan. © Sean Sutton/MSF.

# OUR COMMITMENTS

**MSF Australia has made specific commitments to address the climate crisis in its Strategic Plan 2021-2023:**

**Goal 3** – By 2023, in association with partner sections, we will have:

- Reduced our carbon footprint by 15 per cent, with the target of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- Supported research on climate change.
- Explored options for green finance in partnership with other sections and operational centres.
- Worked to reduce medical waste in our programs.

**Goal 4** – By 2023, aligned with MSF internationally, MSF Australia will communicate with our audiences on societal issues that impact the people we support, such as diversity and inclusion or climate change.

**Goal 5** – We will be creative in our communication methods, reducing paper communication by at least 30 per cent by 2023 and maintaining donor retention through less expensive and more climate-friendly ways of communicating.



People in Ngala displaced persons camp, where access to water is a major problem, queue to fill their water buckets. Nigeria, October 2016. © Sylvain Cherkaoui

**MSF Australia is also guided by MSF organisation-wide commitments agreed at the 2019 International General Assembly (IGA) and through the 2020 International Board-brokered Environmental Pact. These are summarised below:**

## 2020 MSF ENVIRONMENT PACT

1. Measure, report, and set targets to minimise the carbon and waste footprint of every entity and MSF project, optimising outputs through mutualisation.
2. Adapt our responses to continue to deliver high-quality care and improved public health while also minimising ecological damage and conserving finite natural resources.
3. Engage and collaborate with communities, local actors, and organisations. Develop partnerships to share medical-operational data to contribute to knowledge generation and translation. Research should prioritise questions that improve our understanding of the humanitarian and health impacts of climate and environmental change to strengthen operations and inform and support our advocacy objectives.
4. Bear witness to people experiencing the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, paying attention to disproportionate impacts felt by vulnerable groups. Align diverse experiences with our humanitarian operational and advocacy goals.
5. Hold ourselves accountable through our associative governance mechanisms to ensure that MSF upholds these commitments and takes proactive measures to mitigate risk and the negative impact of the climate crisis on health.

## 2019 IGA Climate Emergency Motion

1. Introduce sound travel policies, which should include investment in proper connectivity that would encourage less travel and increase virtual communication, and increase telemedicine.
2. Use green energy and technology (for example, solar power replacing generators, LED) in both HQ and projects, following fair assessments, with resource allocations.
3. Ensure an efficient and socially responsible supply chain, including improving purchasing practices and stock management to reduce wastage, investing in partnerships with responsible suppliers, and the promotion of ethical procurement.
4. Improve safe (medical) disposal in the projects and provide room for innovative ideas to enable and promote safe (medical) disposal.
5. Develop tools and advocacy guidelines on different subjects concerning and affecting the environment.
6. Adding climate change effects as triggers for intervention and stepping up our research, analysis and response in a coordinated manner.
7. Adapting our medical, operational and logistics approaches with an emphasis on those impacted by displacement, environmental degradation, food and water scarcity, evolving epidemiological patterns, and extreme weather events.
8. Adapting MSF emergency preparedness, monitoring and intervention tools to climate-driven medico-humanitarian contexts, to ensure timelier, more efficient and better-tailored responses to climate-driven public health crises.
9. Exploring functional links and knowledge exchange with global climate centres/networks whose experience and insights complement those of MSF operations.
10. Increasing internal MSF climate knowledge and response capacity, such as through professional training and an expanded pool of HR profiles to better support MSF missions in climate hotspots.

# OUR CARBON EMISSIONS FOOTPRINT 2020

In 2020 the total carbon emissions for MSF Australia were 1,446 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e). This represented a decrease of 1,307 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 47.5 per cent, compared to our 2019 carbon footprint of 2,753 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. Much of this decrease in carbon emissions can be attributed to the reduction in MSF Australia's business activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic – particularly the reduction in field worker deployments, staff travel, printing, postage and other related office costs.

However, improved reporting also played an important part in reducing MSF Australia's overall CEF, particularly increasingly accurate data (rather than estimates) from MSF Australia sources and third-party suppliers (including Australia Post) and better information on emission factors for local utilities (electricity). In both 2019 and 2020, our largest sources of carbon emissions were flights, printing, postage and electricity.

For the purposes of measuring achievements in reducing our CEF against targets set in the MSF Australia 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, and recognising the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on 2020 data, the Annual Climate Emergency Reports will use 2019 CEF data as a baseline.

In 2020, MSF Australia supported the departure of 108 field workers from Australia and New Zealand to 30 countries (2020 Annual Activity Impact Report, p10).

Flights	2019		2020
	1,145.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	↓ 53%	533.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

Type <sup>1</sup> (PA, 9)	Passenger km	Percentage of total passenger km	Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> -e/year)	Percentage of total emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> -e)
Domestic	3,461	0.1%	0.9	0.2%
Short haul	446,307	16%	77.6	14.5%
Medium haul	962,289	34.5%	183.4	34.3%
Long haul	1,380,227	49.4%	271.8	60% <sup>2</sup>
2020 total	2,792,286		533.7	

Flight data		
2020	2,792,284 km	533.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	6,970,972 km	1,145.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

<sup>1</sup> Flight type: domestic (less than 400km), short haul (400km to 3,700km), medium haul (3,701km to 10,000km), long haul (10,001km +)  
<sup>2</sup> Report states 50.9%; rounded up here so total is 100%

In 2019 MSF Australia staff flew a total of 6,970,972 km. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 4,178,686 km flown, or 59.9 per cent.

In 2019 our total carbon footprint from flights was 1,145.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 612.0 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 53.4 per cent.

Printing & Postage	2019		2020
	1,349.1 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	↓ 63%	496.2 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

Whilst our overall CEF on combined printing and postage decreased significantly between 2019 and 2020, there were big year-on-year differences for printing and postage separately. This reflects changes in data collection and reporting methods and data quality issues that will need to be addressed in future reports.

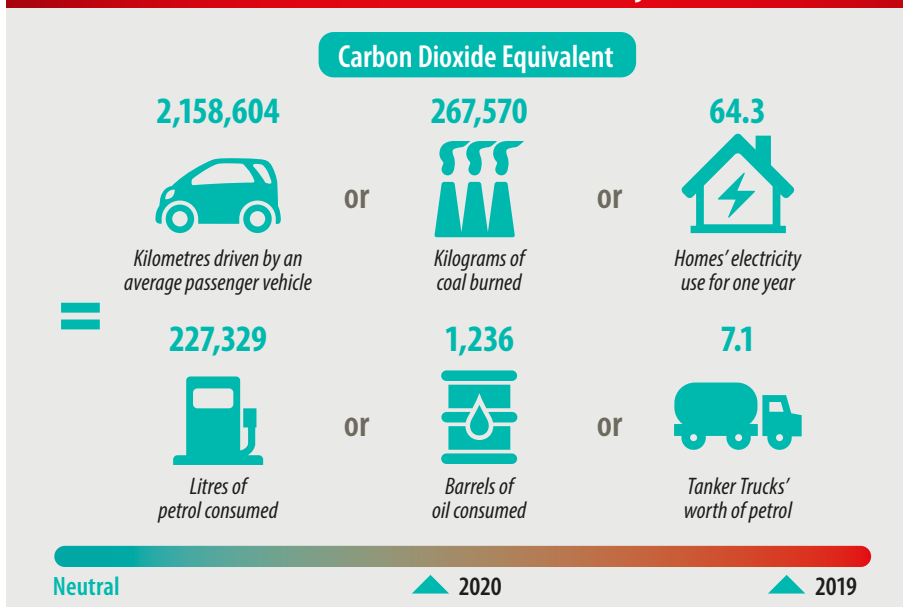
In 2020 our total carbon footprint from printing was 388.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, and our total carbon footprint for postage was 107.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. In 2019, our total carbon footprint from printing was 107.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects an increase in 2020 of 280.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 260.6 per cent.

In 2019, our total carbon footprint from postage was 1,241.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 1,133.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 91.3 per cent.

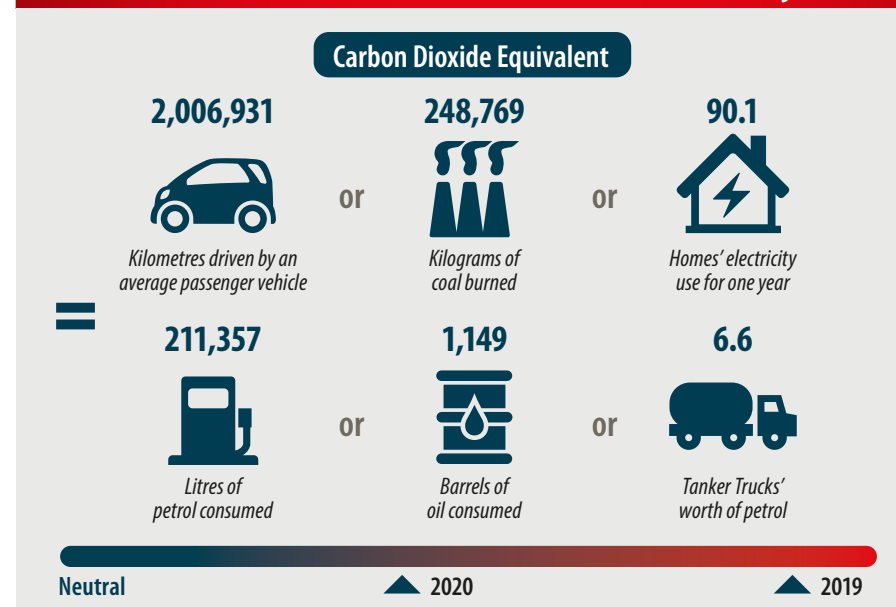
Printing			Percentage of total MSF tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2020	\$537,422.6	388.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	32.1
2019	\$362,646.0	107.8 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	Not available

Printing			Percentage of total MSF tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2020	1,513,874 items	107.5 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	8.9
2019	1,258,255 items	1,241.3 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	Not available

## CLIMATE IMPACT OF AIR TRAVEL (more than just CO<sub>2</sub>)



## CLIMATE IMPACT OF PRINTING & POSTAGE (more than just CO<sub>2</sub>)



## OFFICE GREEN INITIATIVES



- An MSFA staff Green Committee will be established in early 2022. It will coordinate initiatives to increase sustainability and act as a platform to share ideas and actions supporting our roadmap to decarbonisation.



- Waste and recycling suppliers are continuously assessed to ensure sustainability.



- Suppliers with sustainable practices will be preferred under procurement policies under development.



# OUR CARBON EMISSIONS

In 2019 our total carbon footprint from base building electricity was 21,741 kWh. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 10,831 kWh, or 49.8 per cent. Our usage in 2019 emitted 19.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 9.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 50 per cent.

## Electricity



In 2020, our total carbon footprint from office electricity usage was 80,829 kWh, emitting 72.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. Our total carbon footprint from base building electricity (for example elevator, garage, etc) was 10,910.2 kWh, emitting 9.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

In 2019 our total carbon footprint from office electricity usage was 102,049 kWh. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 21,220 kWh, or 20.8 per cent. Our

2019

111.2  
tCO<sub>2</sub>-e

↓ 26%

2020

82.5  
tCO<sub>2</sub>-e

usage in 2019 emitted 91.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 19.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 20.8 per cent.

In 2019 our total carbon footprint from base building electricity was 21,741 kWh. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 10,831 kWh, or 49.8 per cent. Our usage in 2019 emitted 19.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 9.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 50 per cent.

Office electricity		
2020	80,829 kWh	72.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	102,049 kWh	91.8 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Base building		
2020	10,910.2 kWh	9.8 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	21,741 kWh	19.6 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Office electricity + base building		
2020	91,739.2 kWh	82.5 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	123,790 kWh	111.4 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

## MSF Australia carbon footprint

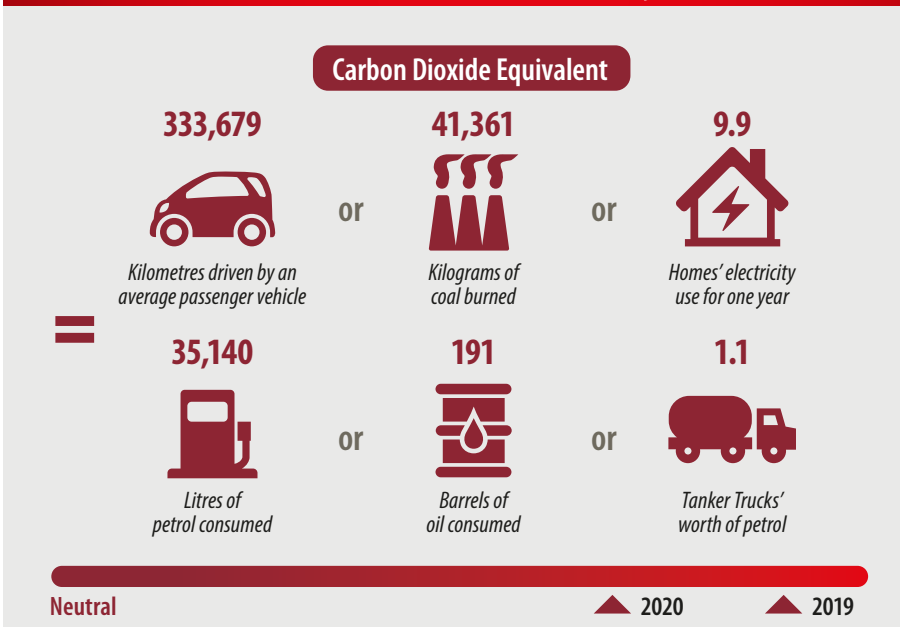


47.9%  
Flights

44.6%  
Print & Postage

7.4%  
Electricity

## CLIMATE IMPACT OF ELECTRICITY (more than just CO<sub>2</sub>)



# STAFF TRAVEL & SUPPORT

## Staff support & other



2019

117.2  
tCO<sub>2</sub>-e

↓ 49%

2020

59.6  
tCO<sub>2</sub>-e

## Staff commuting

### Staff – work commute

2020	115,255 km	7.4 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	548,364 km	81.9 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

In 2020, staff travelled a round-trip total of 115,255 km to work in the office. The total carbon footprint of our staff's commute was 7.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

In 2019 our total carbon footprint from flights was 1,145.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 612.0 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 53.4 per cent.

## Staff taxis

### Staff – taxis

2020	0.1 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	1.5 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

In 2020, our total carbon footprint from using taxis was 0.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. In 2019, our total carbon footprint from using taxis was 1.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflected a decrease of 1.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 91.1 per cent.

## Staff working from home

In 2020, the total carbon footprint of our staff working from home was 22.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

## Stationery

In 2020, the total carbon footprint of stationery supplies was 2.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

In 2019, the total carbon footprint from stationery supplies was 2.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

## Domestic hotel accommodation

### Staff – domestic hotel accommodation

2020	85 occupancy nights	2.4 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	135 occupancy nights	7.9 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

In 2020, there were 85 occupancy nights in domestic hotel accommodation. The total carbon emissions of this activity were 2.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

In 2019, there were 135 occupancy nights in domestic hotel accommodation. This reflects a decrease of 50 nights, or 37.2 per cent.

In 2019, the total carbon emissions of occupancy in domestic hotels were 7.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 5.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 70.1 per cent.

## International hotel accommodation

### Staff – international hotel accommodation

2020	67 occupancy nights	0.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	584 occupancy nights	18.2 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

In 2020, there were 67 occupancy nights in international hotel accommodation. The total carbon emissions of this activity were 0.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

In 2019, there were 584 occupancy nights in international hotel accommodation. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 517 nights, or 88.5 per cent.

In 2019, the total carbon emissions of occupancy in international hotels were 18.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects a decrease in 2020 of 17.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 96 per cent.



MSF Australia is thankful for the pro-bono support we receive from Pangolin Associates for our annual greenhouse gas assessments. <https://pangolinassociates.com/>

## IT equipment

### Staff – IT equipment

2020	26.1 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
2019	7.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e

In 2020, the total carbon footprint from our IT equipment was 26.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, 2.2 per cent of total carbon footprint emissions.

In 2019, the total carbon footprint from our IT equipment was 7.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. This reflects an increase of 19.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, or 248.9 per cent.



Pearl millet is an important staple food in the south of Niger but changes to rain distribution have reduced the harvest, plunging families into food insecurity, Magaria, Niger. © Mario Fawaz/MSF

# OUR ROADMAP TOWARDS CARBON NEUTRAL

MSF Australia supports setting a global MSF-wide carbon reduction target of 50 per cent by 2030 (against a 2019 baseline) and MSF Australia has set its own local target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

**Our roadmap towards carbon neutral is framed within three pillars:**

1. *Operations* – supporting MSF missions and projects to reduce carbon without compromising patient care.
2. *Footprint* – reducing our own MSF Australia carbon footprint as much as possible whilst maintaining an acceptable social mission ratio.
3. *Advocacy* – sharing evidence and analysis of the health impacts of climate change with policy and decision makers in Australia and the South-east Asia and Asia-Pacific region.

# 2019-2030

**Improved data collection**

Mapping MSF needs and gaps

Awareness raising

**Improved climate-related research capacity and partnerships**

Exploring green financing

Field worker/mission support:

- Carbon audits
- Waste reduction
- Renewable energy





# IMPROVED DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY?

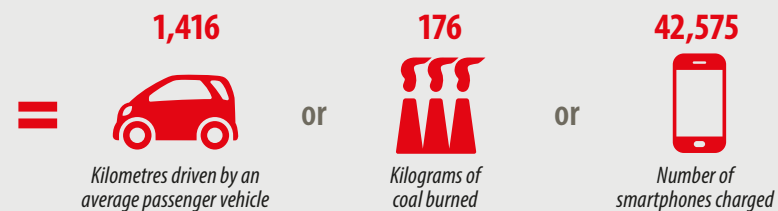
While we have a good understanding of our key emissions, a priority area for improvement in 2022 is to design and implement a more coherent system of data collection and management within our organisation. This will facilitate more accurate measurements, identifying ambitious but achievable time-bound carbon management targets and ongoing monitoring and tracking of our decarbonisation progress.

## HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS:

- Foster communication among staff about what kinds of data each department can collect easily, especially from third-party services used for printing materials. This can be achieved through a more inclusive/representative 'transversal group' on climate in MSF Australia.
- Product stewardship: partnering with suppliers committed to sustainability. Establishing relationships with environmentally conscious suppliers who monitor the life cycle of their products, allowing MSF to collect relevant data. This can be supported by the new procurement policy and rollout of social and ethical procurement practices in 2022.
- Draw on resources made available by the broader MSF organisation, such as Climate Smart TIC, and the Planetary Health Community, including through the partnership with OCG on planetary health learning and development in 2022.
- Better categorisation of third-party services used by MSF Australia to more accurately measure our emissions with the support of the MSF Australia office management team and our pro-bono carbon auditors – Pangolin Associates.

## CLIMATE IMPACT OF PAPER (more than just CO<sub>2</sub>)

In 2020 MSF Australia used carbon-neutral paper for printing in the office, saving emissions that would otherwise be emitted from printing 277.5kg of paper – over 0.35 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.



## Paper and printing: fostering collaboration

A large portion of MSF Australia paper materials printed is outsourced to third-party providers. This poses a challenge to data collection. While we want to continue to share stories of our impact with our supporters in accessible ways, we need to assess the extent to which printed and mailed material could transition to a digital format.

## HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS:

- Develop a clear paper and printing decarbonisation strategy and detailed plan with input from all departments.
- Work with third-party suppliers and services to improve emissions estimates and encourage reduction actions down the supply chain. For example, explore the materials used by third-party services and identify potential for suppliers to use ink and paper with less environmental impact.
- Adopt a sustainable procurement policy that considers the environmental impact of the products and services we procure and weighs selection criteria in favour of responsible suppliers.
- Reduce the use of printing materials in the office.

## Flights: Less non-essential travel and using lower-emissions aircraft

The nature of our medical humanitarian work has always meant a high level of flight activity. While this will be harder to reduce for our field workers, more action can be taken to reduce the flights of staff in the longer term. We can also be more selective about which aircraft our field workers and staff fly on – preferring more modern, lower-carbon-emitting aircraft where the fare differential is acceptable. The COVID-19 pandemic has already shown that many meetings or workshops that required colleagues to travel overseas can be effectively done online.

## HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS:

- Develop a green travel policy that requires consideration of the environmental impact of all travel booked, reduces non-essential air travel and encourages use of videoconferencing and telehealth software where possible.
- Consider flight schedules with less connections, as most fuel is used at take-off and landing.
- Start exploring options for purchasing carbon credits to offset emissions from flights.
- Collect more detailed flight data from travel agents.

## Electricity: managing our energy

Australia's electrical grid is one of the worst carbon emissions producers in the world per capita. However, there is also no shortage of renewable electricity providers available in Sydney. Procuring 100 per cent renewable energy offers a quick win to significantly reduce our carbon footprint.

## HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS:

- Switch to a 100 per cent renewable electricity provider.
- Develop and implement an office electricity usage policy to encourage green-friendly routine practices, such as switching off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Installing sensors and timers for lights in office.
- Consult staff to better understand the carbon footprint of working from home (WFH) and develop guidance and incentives for reducing home carbon emissions.

## Other key decarbonisation measures for 2022

- Support the MSF Climate Smart initiative and the mitigation and adaptation activities of all operational centres.
- Develop and implement MSF Australia policies or strategies in key mitigation areas (for example, sustainable procurement policy, office electricity usage policy, green travel policy).
- Engage more with MSF Australia staff and the Association through internal communications on MSF organisation-wide commitments to decarbonisation; provide forums for direct engagement.
- Promote knowledge sharing with other MSF sections and adoption of best practices.
- Conduct our own research and collaborate with others (including Healthcare Without Harm) to better understand the health impacts of climate change.



## Supporting climate emergency mitigation and adaptation activities across the MSF organisation

In addition to focusing on the MSF Australia carbon footprint, the MSF response to the climate emergency compels us to support organisation-wide mitigation and adaptation activities and to put patients at the centre. This includes looking beyond our carbon footprint at the overall environmental impacts (positive and negative) of our operational practices and our engagement with the communities we serve.

MSF Australia is providing support to MSF operational centres and field missions targeting practical initiatives that can have an immediate impact on planetary health and patient wellbeing. This includes looking at reducing medical waste and more sustainable use of key protective equipment like surgical masks, respirators and gloves. It will also include providing our field workers with the relevant knowledge and expertise to change practices and introduce new technologies.

MSF Australia is promoting a holistic planetary health understanding across the MSF organisation and with our patients and other stakeholders, including through our humanitarian representation, communications and advocacy.





# RETHINKING SINGLE-USE: ADAPTING OUR RESPONSES TO REDUCE HARM

The current COVID-19 pandemic and phenomenal increase in the procurement of single-use personal protective equipment has raised awareness of the negative environmental impacts that healthcare can have.

## Rethinking single-use: adapting our responses to reduce harm

The current COVID-19 pandemic and phenomenal increase in the procurement of single-use personal protective equipment has raised awareness of the negative environmental impacts that healthcare can have.

In response to growing interest within MSF, and with encouragement from MSF Australia, OCG has recently tasked a small project team to rethink single use. The aims of this project are essentially to review initiatives and innovations for reducing consumption of single-use items (through reducing use, re-use or recycling) and identify less harmful alternatives to current models.

To start, the focus is on just three items: gloves, masks and respirators. The project team has linked with manufacturers, organisations, innovators, researchers and health practitioners in multiple countries and has already identified some alternatives to be presented for technical validation and possible pilot in the field. Some examples of what is being considered:

## Reducing potential overuse of gloves

An important first step. Gloves are sometimes used unnecessarily in healthcare. This can lead to increased waste (and even poorer hand hygiene). OCG and OCA will run webinars and discussions to ensure standard precautions guidelines are adhered to and possibilities of overuse reduced.

## Identifying gloves and masks that are more biodegradable

The substantial time it takes a nitrile glove to break down in landfill is concerning. New models currently under review aim to reduce this time considerably.

## Reusable respirators as an option to disposable N95

Elastomeric respirators (historically used in industry) have now been redesigned specifically with health workers in mind and offer as safe or safer protection from respiratory pathogens as the disposables. They have already been used in some settings with significant cost savings. We await environmental life-cycle assessments to be carried out on the models we have identified.

## Reusing or reusable surgical masks

Reuse of single-use masks raises many issues such as safety, cost, feasibility and environmental benefits. These are being looked at in more depth. Alternatively, work on reusable surgical masks is gaining momentum globally. One model is currently on trial in the NHS in the UK and is being reviewed by the MSF team.

## Bridging the gap between theory and practice

There are multiple medical and logistic initiatives underway across the organisation to identify practical solutions that can be incorporated into usual practice in the field. In 2022 MSF Australia will support a new position to develop materials and an accessible information hub with OCG. This contribution aims to ensure that field workers can be more adequately prepared to contribute to reducing the environmental harms of our interventions in a variety of ways.



REUSING OR REUSABLE SURGICAL MASKS



BIODEGRADABLE INSTEAD OF NITRILE



REUSABLE RESPIRATORS INSTEAD OF DISPOSABLE

## ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Reusable surgical masks can be cleaned and disinfected in the washing machine
- Disposable biodegradable FFP2 and Type II R masks degrade in six months, not 500 years
- Reusable respirators (N95 equivalent) being evaluated
- PVC-free biodegradable gloves degrade in one year, not 100+



Disposing of used PPE at MSF's Ebola treatment centre in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Reusable PPE would reduce the need for incineration. Mangina, DRC. © Carl Theunis/MSF





**MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES**  
**DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS**

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Back cover: Shelters underwater in  
Rann, Nigeria, during the rainy season.

© Sylvain Cherkaoui/COSMOS.

