



Educo Environmental Policy

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At Educo, we believe that the defence and protection of the environment is an essential element for children and adolescents to fully enjoy their rights and well-being.

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Introduction

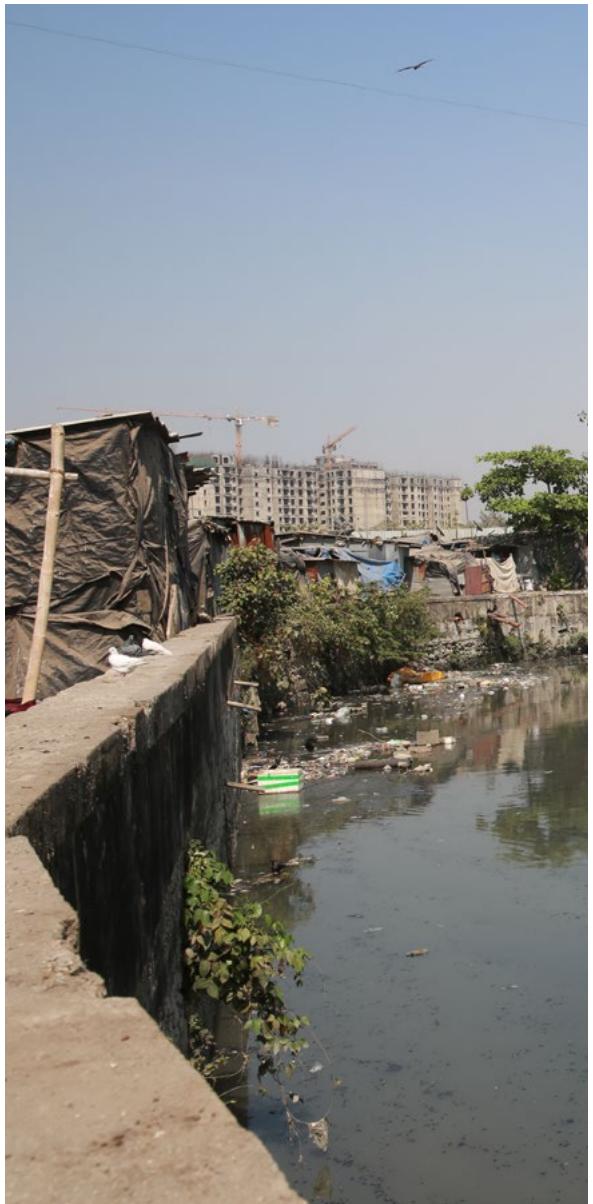
It is becoming increasingly clear that environmental degradation is putting decades of development efforts at risk: **human activities over the last 150 years have altered ecosystems and their capacity to support life, wellbeing and human development.** Therefore, when ecosystem functions (provision of natural resources, natural sanitation, atmospheric regulation, protection against diseases, etc.) are degraded, there is inevitably **a reduction in available life options and increased vulnerability for affected populations.**

It is also clear that, on this shared planet, **disadvantaged populations are the ones most affected by the quality of the natural environment they live in**, as they often depend directly on the goods (natural resources) and services provided by ecosystems for their livelihoods. Additionally, they tend to find themselves more exposed to environmental threats (contaminated water, harmful chemicals, etc.), they are more likely to live on marginal and infertile land and, above all, are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters (floods, droughts, hurricanes, etc.), the frequency and intensity of which are increasing due to the phenomenon of climate change.

Special mention should be made regarding the differential impact that environmental degradation has on children and adolescents, as they are a particularly vulnerable group that represents almost half of the population in some of the countries we work in. **Children and adolescents are, we could say, doubly penalised by environmental pollution and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources**, since they, as heirs of the responsibility to care for the planet, will have to live with the consequences, not only now, but also in the future. For this reason, in addition to always taking into consideration the rights, interests and needs of future generations in current decision-making processes, **it is important to promote the active and relevant participation of children, adolescents and young people in these processes.**

Within this framework, we must be fully aware that **Educo itself, as an organisation, has an impact on the natural environment when working towards the fulfilment of its mission**, both through the implementation of projects and through the actions associated with our day-to-day work.

It is therefore imperative that, as an organisation that aspires to contribute to the creation of fairer societies in which children and adolescents fully enjoy their rights, their wellbeing and their opportunities to develop their capacities, we integrate, in each and every one of the activities we carry out, the necessary



considerations for **adequate environmental management and protection**, with the aim of **ensuring the coherence, comprehensiveness and sustainability of our work**.

Aim

The main aim of this policy is to formalise **the institutional commitment to protecting the environment and promoting the ongoing improvement of our environmental performance**, both in relation to the implementation of projects and in the day-to-day operations of the organisation, through the establishment of four main objectives to be achieved.

Coverage

This policy has a **global geographical scope** and is to be applied to the following actors:

- **Board of Trustees**
- **The whole Educo staff** (employees, volunteers and interns), both at head office and in the country offices
- **Local partner organisations**, during the development of activities included in a project implemented in collaboration with Educo.



Principles

Through this policy, we express our firm commitment to protecting the environment, in relation to both project implementation and our daily activities, following three basic principles:

- **Comply with applicable environmental legislation**, both in each of the territories we operate in and internationally, as well as the other commitments in this area which we have voluntarily subscribed to.
- **Coherently integrate this policy in the decision-making processes and in the actions** carried out by the organisation, promoting the ongoing improvement of our environmental performance.
- **Share this Environmental Policy** with our Board of Trustees, staff team, partner organisations, suppliers, and any other interested party as well as society in general.

In addition, we hope that the implementation of this policy will lead to ongoing reflection about environmental issues within our organisation and help to improve the quality and impact of our work.



Responsibilities

Elaboration Global Environment Commission
of the document

Reviewing Global Environment Commission
of the document

Approval Board of Trustees
of the document

Implementation The whole Educo staff, with specific key actors:
of the document

- Global Executive Committee (GEC).
- Country Office Management Committees.
- Individuals with responsibilities in areas of particular relevance or potential environmental impact, such as, for example, purchase or logistics.
- All other individuals responsible for projects, who must ensure that the application of this policy has been considered in the development of the project.

Monitoring of the implementation of the document Global Environment Commission



Definitions

Environment A series of natural, social and cultural values existing in a given place and at a given time, which influence the present and future life and the development of living beings. It is not only the space in which life takes place, but also includes all living beings, objects, water, soil, air and the relationships between them, as well as intangible elements such as culture.

Environmental impact The effect of human activity on the environment.

Mitigation Series of intervention measures aimed at minimising or offsetting negative environmental impacts that may be caused by human activity.

Resilience The capacity of communities, people and ecosystems to cope flexibly with and (in ecology) overcome environmentally adverse situations.

Greenhouse effect A phenomenon caused by certain gases in the atmosphere, which absorb and re-emit part of the sun's radiation, preventing it from escaping from the Earth's atmosphere and thus contributing to the planet's average temperature being suitable for life. Within a certain range, the greenhouse effect is a natural and necessary phenomenon.



Greenhouse gases Gases present in the atmosphere that absorb and re-emit part of the sun's radiation (greenhouse effect). At normal levels, these gases are therefore necessary for maintaining a life-sustaining temperature. But the concentration of these gases is increasing due to emissions generated by various human activities, such as burning fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal). There are six greenhouse gases currently regulated internationally under the Kyoto Protocol: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6).

Global warming Increase in the average global temperature due to an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which in turn is caused by emissions from human activity.

Climate change It is the series of large and rapid disruptions to the climate caused by global warming (see definition above).

Carbon footprint Indicator that makes it possible to numerically assess the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with a product, service or activity throughout its life cycle, from its production to its management as waste. It is expressed in kilograms or equivalent tonnes of CO_2 .

Emissions offsetting A voluntary mechanism whereby individuals or organisations compensate for greenhouse gas emissions produced by investing a certain amount of money in measures or projects aimed at removing from the atmosphere an amount of gases equivalent to that emitted, projects aimed at improving energy efficiency, replacing the use of fossil fuels with renewable energy, etc.



Energy efficiency A series of practices that aim to reduce energy consumption, while securing the supply and maintaining the same energy services, without reducing comfort and quality of life. It covers both aspects of the use of the best available technologies and the implementation of responsible consumption processes and habits.

Related documents

- [**2020-2030 Global Impact Framework**](#)
- [**2021-2025 Global Programmatic Framework**](#)
- [**Global Organisational Development Plans**](#)
- [**Ethical Code**](#)
- [**Quality Management Policy**](#)
- [**Child Safeguarding Policy**](#)
- [**Global Purchasing Procedure**](#)
- [**ChildFund Alliance Environmental Sustainability Standards**](#)



Justification

Based on the international context

There is consensus among organisations and other actors in the field of international cooperation that **efficient and equitable management of the environment is crucial to achieve a sustainable improvement in the living conditions of vulnerable populations.**

This is evidenced by **many international conventions** related to this issue (agreements reached at the Earth Summits of 1992, 2002 and 2012; United Nations Framework **Convention on Climate Change of 1992**; etc.), as well as by the fact that the international agenda in terms of international cooperation and development is guided by the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which, in themselves, establish the imperative need to balance and combine the three dimensions of sustainable development: the social dimension, the environmental dimension and the economic dimension.

Thus, **fifteen of the seventeen SDGs are directly linked to environmental aspects and/or include targets that are directly linked to environmental aspects**, as shown in the analysis in Annex 1.

Based on what is stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child

In the case of Educo, we cannot overlook the fact that our mission is to work with children and their communities to promote more just and equitable societies which guarantee their rights and wellbeing. **A healthy environment is a basic prerequisite for the enjoyment of many children's rights**, and although there is no explicit mention of the right to a healthy environment in the 1989 international convention, many of its articles have strong environmental components and implications and should be interpreted from this perspective, as can be seen from the information in Annex II.

In fact, in 2016, the **Committee on the Rights of the Child organised a global conference on the relationship between children's rights and the environment**, which gave rise to an international discussion about the environmental rights of children and adolescents and the obligations of States to fulfil these rights. This process culminated in the launch by the Committee on the Rights of the Child of a proposed **General Comment on Children's Rights and the Environment, with a focus on Climate Change** (General Comment No. 26¹), which is currently under consultation and is expected to be officially adopted in 2023.

Similarly, the **United Nations Human Rights Council recognised in 2021, through resolution A/HRC/48/L.23, the right to a safe, clean, healthy and**

sustainable environment as a human right that is key for the enjoyment of all of them, and that "while the human rights impacts of damage to the environment affect individuals and communities around the world, the consequences are felt most strongly by those sectors of the population already in situations of vulnerability, including indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities and women and girls".

It is therefore undeniable that environmental protection must become a fundamental institutional commitment to ensure **coherence with our ideals and with the rights-based approach that we advocate**.

Based on the internal organisational context

Environmental degradation and climate change affect the living conditions and development of children and adolescents, and compromise the fulfilment of children's rights and the enjoyment of their wellbeing, not only in the present but also in the future, as has already been shown through various studies developed internationally by prestigious organisations².

On the other hand, the report **Bienestar de la niñez: sus miradas y sus voces** (*Child wellbeing: their views and their voices*), through which Educo carried out an extensive consultation process with children and adolescents in Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua in 2020, reveals the **crucial importance they place on access to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment**.

¹ <https://childrightsenvironment.org/es/>

² See, for example:

- Save the Children International (2021). *Born into the Climate Climate Crisis: Why we must act now to secure children's rights*.
- World Vision (2021). *Climate Change, Hunger and Children's Futures*.

In fact, children consider nature to be one of the five central aspects of their wellbeing (along with family, health and nutrition, play and social interaction, and education) and fundamental to living a good life.

Based on all this, the Educo **2020-2030 Global Impact Framework** establishes three social impact outcomes that can be found at the heart of our social theory of change, the third of which states: **SIO 3 Children and adolescents drive change in their social and natural environment**. Hence, one of the objectives we will be working towards in the coming years is for children and adolescents to be socially recognised as agents of change, with the capacity to exercise their citizenship in an organised manner, influence decision-making and generate changes and improvements in their immediate sphere (including the environmental aspect) that result in the reinforcement of their rights and wellbeing.

Similarly, our **2021-2025 Global Programmatic Framework** is structured around three programmatic areas that also contemplate a series of associated outcomes. In the case of **Programmatic Area 3: Empowerment and agency for social change, the third of the aforementioned outcomes is Children, adolescents and young people foster learning and action for ecological transition**, defining in this way a clear commitment and strategic focus on the participation, action and advocacy of children and adolescents and young people in environmental issues.

It also features in the **2021-2023 Global Organisational Development Plan**, in **goal 3.7. Reduce the environmental footprint of our actions in order to contribute to the ecological transition**, which urges us to take clear

and urgent responsibility to promote initiatives, both at a programmatic and organisational level, that effectively address environmental issues.

Finally, but equally important, is the fact that we cannot overlook **the environmental obligations linked to being part of certain networks and platforms**, such as ChildFund Alliance or the international Accountable Now network.



Objectives and lines of action

The objectives of the policy are presented below. They are accompanied by a series of **lines of action formulated as proposals** to follow in order to achieve them. Progress towards these objectives will be monitored using the indicator system included in Annex III.

Objective 1: Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the main environmental threats we face is **climate change** and its consequences. Its main cause is **the increase in greenhouse gas emissions due to human activity**, which causes an increase in the temperature of the earth's surface.

Proposed lines of action:

- Identification, measurement and monitoring of our greenhouse gas emissions globally.
 - Development of an emissions inventory and collection of greenhouse gas emission data from identified sources, which will be the base to calculate our carbon footprint annually using internationally recognised standards³.
- Promoting measures to control and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, through, for example:

- Control of electricity consumption by improving the energy efficiency of offices and premises: energy-saving lighting, use of electronic equipment with maximum energy efficiency, disconnecting devices to prevent them from remaining on standby mode.
- Optimisation of air-conditioning equipment: maintaining good thermal insulation of offices and premises, setting of heating and air-conditioning temperatures adequate to the time of year.
- Renewal of obsolete equipment.
- Implementation of maintenance plans for the vehicle fleet to ensure good performance and durability. When purchasing new vehicles, prioritisation of the most energy-efficient ones.
- Promotion of remote working methodologies based on information and communication technologies to optimise work travel.
- Promotion of the use of public transport when possible.
- Promotion of the use of archives and digital media to reduce the consumption and transport of paper and other materials.
- Assessment of the possibility of implementing emission offsetting measures.

³ The current standard used is the *Greenhouse Gas Protocol* (www.ghgprotocol.org).

Objective 2: Reduce other environmental impacts derived from office activities.

In addition to greenhouse gas emissions, there are **other types of environmental impacts generated by the day-to-day activities that take place in the organisation's offices and premises.**

Proposed lines of action:

- Waste reduction by avoiding the use of single-use materials, as well as dispensable containers and packaging.
- Reduction of paper consumption.
- Reuse of materials such as office paper, furniture and electronic devices.
- Separation and recycling of waste such as printer toners, paper and cardboard, plastics and packaging, obsolete electronic waste and materials requiring special treatment.
- Encouragement of the use of direct connection to the network or rechargeable batteries for the operation of electronic equipment.
- Reduction of water consumption through measures such as installing aerators on taps or reducing the flushing capacity of toilet cisterns.
- Promotion of the use of recycled and ecologic stationery such as recycled paper and cleaning products that do not contain chemical contaminants.
- Noise control in the offices.

Objective 3: Incorporation of environmental protection as a cross-cutting aspect of management.

At Educo we will work **to influence the stakeholders we interact with, with the aim of promoting respect for and protection of the environment.**

Proposed lines of action:

- Application of environmental criteria in the selection of suppliers, both for products and services.
- Application of environmental criteria in the management of our infrastructures.
- Support and participation in platforms, awareness-raising and mobilisation campaigns, etc. related to protecting the environment and/or fighting against climate change, especially those initiatives led by children, adolescents and/or young people or in which they are involved.
- Awareness-raising of the staff on all relevant issues in environmental protection.

Objective 4: Mainstreaming of the environmental approach in the projects we promote.

As is widely recognised and demanded in the field of international development cooperation, the integration of the environmental variable in a cross-cutting manner in all the actions carried out is essential for guaranteeing the effectiveness and quality of aid and therefore achieving a sustainable impact. Therefore, at Educo we work **to develop and apply the necessary methodologies for achieving effective mainstreaming of this aspect in the projects** we implement.

Proposed lines of action:

- Assessment, for each project, of the possible environmental impacts caused by its implementation, and establishment of prevention and mitigation schemes.
- Inclusion of strategies for an efficient and sustainable use of natural resources in the projects.
- Inclusion of strategies to minimise waste production as well as to maximise reuse and recycling.





Implementation

The **Global Environment Commission**, already established and operational, is the body **responsible for monitoring and coordinating the implementation** of this policy, which will always be carried out in a way that is adapted and responds to the specific situation and needs of each territory, both at head office and country office level.

However, **the ongoing improvement of the organisation's environmental performance is a shared task**, and there are also certain actors who are considered key to making it effective, such as:

- Global Executive Committee (GEC).
- Country Office Management Committees.
- Individuals with responsibilities in areas of particular relevance or potential environmental impact, such as, for example, purchase or logistics.
- All other individuals responsible for projects, who must ensure that the application of this policy has been considered in the development of the project.

These key individuals must provide **maximum support and collaboration in the implementation of this policy**, supporting the activities to be developed and the assignment of the necessary resources in each workplace.

In terms of dissemination, **this policy will be shared with the Board of Trustees and all staff** following the reviews of the document, which are carried out every five years. Similarly, **the policy will be part of the recruitment training package** for new staff members.

Annexes

ANNEX I

Environmental Dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)	
Objective 1	End poverty in all its forms worldwide
Goal 1.5	By 2030, build the resilience of poor and vulnerable people and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental disruptions and disasters
Objective 2	
Goal 2.4	By 2030, ensure the sustainability of food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, contribute to the maintenance of ecosystems, strengthen resilience to climate change, extreme weather events, droughts, floods and other disasters, and progressively improve land and soil quality
Objective 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
Goal 3.9	By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution
Objective 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
Objective 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Objective 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Objective 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 8.4	Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead
Goal 8.9	By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
Objective 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 9.2	Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
Goal 9.4	By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities
Objective 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 11.3	By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
Goal 11.4	Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
Goal 11.5	By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
Goal 11.6	By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
Goal 11.7	By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Goal 11.a	Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
Goal 11.b	By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
Goal 11.c	Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials
Objective 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Objective 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Objective 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Objective 15	Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Objective 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 16.b	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development
Objective 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
Goal 17.7	Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed
Goal 17.14	Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

ANNEX II

Environmental Dimensions of Fulfilling Children's Rights	
Article 6	The right to survival and development, one of the four guiding principles of the convention and established through Article 6, can only be consistently implemented through the rest of provisions in the text, and is affected, of course, by the degree of realisation of the rights to health; to food; to safe drinking water and sanitation; to adequate housing; to education or to rest and play (Articles 24, 27, 29 and 31).
Article 24	The health of children and adolescents depends to a large extent on the environmental conditions existing in their surroundings, so that Article 24, which governs the right to health, expressly obliges states to consider the dangers and risks arising from environmental pollution when combating disease and malnutrition.
Articles 24 and 27	The rights of children and adolescents to safe drinking water and environmental sanitation, as well as to adequate food, are derived from articles 24 and 27. We must preserve the capacity of ecosystems to provide safe drinking water, as well as to sustainably produce food free of any harmful substances, adequate to meet the growth and development needs of children and adolescents. By promoting the sustainable management of water resources, protecting soil fertility and working to mitigate the effects of climate change, we will help ensure the long-term availability of food and clean water for future generations.
Article 27(3)	<p>The right of children and adolescents to adequate housing is derived from Article 27(3). This implies, for example, that it has a drinking water supply, sanitation facilities, waste disposal facilities, etc. However, in many of the territories we work in, the situation is not this, with high levels of indoor pollution due to the use of materials such as asbestos or paints with a high lead content in construction. On the other hand, there is often very poor indoor air quality as a result of smoke generated by open fires, faulty heaters or cookers, etc., aggravated by a lack of ventilation.</p> <p>The suitability of housing is also determined by its location, and should not be located in polluted areas that threaten children's health (e.g. near uncontrolled landfills or industrial plants) or in areas with a high risk of natural disasters (floods, landslides, etc.).</p>
Article 29(1)	Through Article 29(1), States Parties agree that the education of children and adolescents should be aimed at, among other things, instilling respect for the natural environment, thus becoming a central objective of education.
Article 31	Finally, it is important to highlight the right of children and adolescents to rest and leisure, play and recreational activities appropriate to their age (Article 31), since this is only possible if the environment is healthy and safe.

ANNEX III

System of Indicators

OBJECTIVE 1: Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions

INDICATOR 1.1 The institutional carbon footprint is calculated annually using the ICRC project tool.

[NOTE: In this way, the reliability of the calculation will be progressively increased, to the point where the 2026 carbon footprint can serve as a baseline scenario for setting reliable numerical emission reduction targets (X% reduction), to be applied in the policy next implementation cycle].

INDICATOR 1.2 By March 2027, both head office and all country offices have launched at least two specific initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions

OBJECTIVE 2: Reduce other environmental impacts derived from office activities

INDICATOR 1.2 By March 2027, both head office and all country offices have launched at least two specific initiatives aimed at reducing the remaining environmental impacts from office activities.

OBJECTIVE 3: Incorporation of environmental protection as a cross-cutting aspect of management

INDICATOR 3.1 By March 2027, both head office and all country offices have incorporated environmental criteria in all their purchasing procedures.

INDICATOR 3.2 By March 2027, at least 1/3 of the 15 entities (head office plus the 14 country offices) have supported external campaigns related to the subject or have carried out environmental awareness-raising activities aimed at Educo staff.

OBJECTIVE 4: Mainstreaming of the environmental approach in the projects we promote

INDICATOR 4.1 There is an institutional toolbox for mainstreaming the environmental approach that is applied throughout the project cycle.





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