GREENING THE BLUE

UN environment programme

Guidance Note for the United Nations System to Implement Sustainable Fleet Management

September 2022

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Rationale

Sustainability management helps the UN address and manage risks to the natural environments in which it operates, to the health of UN staff, to the livelihoods of the people its serve and ultimately to the UN's credibility and reputation. At the same time, it brings opportunities to generate benefits such as efficiencies in the use of natural resources and financial efficiencies, accountability, and transparency in how the UN manages the delivery of its mandates. The pressing need to address environmental challenges such as pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity means there is an urgency to the UN system raising its sights and making a dedicated and long-term commitment to ensure that its own activities do not cause further harm.

In December 2018, the UN Secretary-General asked the UN to raise the level of its internal ambitions and to intensify its efforts to combat climate change from within. Specifically, the Secretary-General wished to highlight that the UN is "walking the talk" on environmental sustainability and climate change.

In May 2019, the Chief Executive Board endorsed the UN system's first Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN system, Phase I: Environmental Sustainability in the Area of Management. The strategy, which covers the years 2020 - 2030, builds on existing achievements via the UN-wide Greening the Blue campaign as well as lessons learned in the last 10 years. It is designed to raise the UN System's ambitions on environmental sustainability and ensure greater system-wide coherence.

The strategy includes a vision for sustainability in the UN system:

> *"The United Nations system is a leader in integrating environmental and social sustainability considerations across its work in a systematic and coherent way, practicing the principles that it promotes and leaving a positive legacy".*

With ground transport accounting for approximately 15% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, fleet management is recognized in the strategy as an area with significant scope for improvement. At the time of its writing, only a handful of entities had integrated environmental considerations into their travel policies and opportunities offered by remote meeting technologies were not yet fully exploited.

The UN Sustainability Strategy has concrete commitments on cleaner fleet. These include:

- Developing agency specific fleet management systems
- Reducing age of fleet
- Reducing fuel consumption and introducing measures to improve fuel quality
- Introducing electric vehicles, where feasible

In July 2021, under the leadership of UNEP's SUN facility, four agencies – IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR and WFP – conducted an analysis of their humanitarian fleet data with focus on sustainability. The outcome of this analysis is demonstrated in this UN system wide guidance note for sustainable fleet management.

The recommendations provided are general and applicable to the full UN system; they are not country specific and will need to be operationalized based on the nature of the agency's activities as well as the country of operation. The actions have been selected based on good practices in the humanitarian sector - including the four agencies who participated in the analysis as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations in the Red Cross Movement – and commercial organizations operating in low and middle-income countries.

Objectives

The system wide sustainable fleet management guidance aligns with the structure of the UN Sustainability Strategy:

It centers on 3 pillars:

Measure & report vehicle environmental impacts

Undertake efforts to systematically manage and reduce vehicle environmental impacts

Offset unavoidable vehicle emissions and achieve climate neutrality

The following actions, structured under three key pillars, provide a framework for a global sustainable fleet program for UN agencies and draws from existing initiatives of UNHCR, WFP, IOM and UNFPA.

All organizations of the United Nations system are encouraged to develop or review their internal action plan using this framework.

The October 2007 decision of the Chief Executives Board set the scope of the UN greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory to emissions from facility operations and travel that can be influenced by management-level decisions. Therefore, the guidance note covers emissions under the financial and/ or operational control of the UN, which includes all Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. Additionally, it covers Scope 3 business travel emissions due to the major role of travel in UN operations.

Recommended actions

PILLAR 1: Measure & report vehicle environmental impacts

1.1 Mainstream sustainability in fleet operations

To achieve the targets set out in the UN Sustainability Strategy, it requires that UN agencies see sustainability as the way to operate, not as a nice-to-have. This action focuses on putting in place management enablers to support a shift towards sustainable fleet operations.

"Remain prisoners of the past, or strive to become harbingers of a sustainable future?"[1]

[1] Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system, Joint Inspection Report (2020)

Action 1.1 | Mainstream sustainability in fleet operations by

a. Strengthening the policy framework through the establishment of a green fleet policy or incorporation of embedding sustainability considerations/components into an existing fleet management policy
b. Including sustainable fleet management into the existing accountability framework of the organization
c. Determining and providing sufficient financial and human resources for the implementation of sustainable fleet management program
d. Integrating sustainability in relevant job descriptions (e.g. fleet managers, drivers, program managers)
e. Embedding sustainability in ongoing fleet management training programs

1.2 Improve the environmental impact monitoring with regards to vehicles

A commitment to tracking and reporting on the environmental impact areas is a key aspect of the UN Sustainability Strategy and is an essential part of making sure UN entities allocate resources correctly.

"Based on better data, emissions reductions can both be tracked more precisely and supported by a targeted environmental management approach"[2]

It is important to make a distinction between monitoring and reporting. Monitoring and reporting retrieve data similarly but what they do with the information is different. Monitoring is a continuing function that uses the systematic collection of data on project/programme implementation to provide management with indications of the extent of progress against plans and targets. It is recommended to:

- Monitor indicators monthly per country and globally to observe trends, anomalies, and country management teams to take action to reduce environmental impact
- Report annually per agency on indicators embedded in the UN environmental inventory process and Greening the Blue reporting to draw attention to the impacts of the UN system across UN staff and management and the wider public

While conducting the fleet environmental analysis in 2021, it was noted that the UN environmental inventory process had a limited scope, in that it only concentrated on GHG emissions, not local air pollutants. The current indicators are not sufficient to meet all the requirements of the Sustainability Strategy. For a more complete reporting against the various commitments and indicators in the strategy, it is recommended to expand monitoring of sustainable fleet indicators to include both leading and lagging indicators.

Action 1.2 | Improve the environmental impact monitoring with regards to vehicles by

a. Adopting in-vehicle monitoring systems and telematics to accurately capture the kilometres driven and utilization to demonstrate that fleet optimisation, including fleet sizing and vehicle profiling, can reduce emission levels
b. Capturing actual fuel consumption data in a standardized and consistent manner across all operations
c. Expanding monitoring of sustainable fleet indicators to include both leading and lagging indicators. For example, % of drivers who received eco-driving training is a leading indicator and CO2 emissions from idling as a percentage of total emissions is a lagging indicator. See Annex 1 for more examples

[2] Greening the Blue Report, Sustainable UN (2020)

d. In anticipation of reporting on scope 3 emissions, focusing not only on vehicles owned by the agency, but all vehicles used for the operations of the agency (this includes rented vehicles, vehicles used by implementing partners etc.)
e. Measuring the CO2 emissions as well as the particulate matter (PM2.5), sulphur oxide (SOx), nitrogen oxide (NOx), and other (non-GHG) emissions from burning fossil fuels
f. In anticipation of reporting on scope 3 emissions, including the emissions resulting from the production and transport of owned vehicles to the country of operation
g. Implementing systematic waste monitoring

1.3 Consider setting science-based targets to reduce environmental impacts

As per the UN Sustainability Strategy, by 2025 all United Nations entities should have implemented an environmental management system at agency level, including an environmental policy and targets. This action is focused on setting targets for emissions from vehicle fleets.

Action 1.3 | Consider setting science-based targets to reduce environmental impacts by

a. Establishing baselines for all agreed fleet environmental indicators mentioned in the UN Sustainability Strategy (see Annex 2).
b. Determining the scope of vehicle emission reductions that the agency can make from fleet management
c. Proposing fully quantified long-term targets for vehicle emission reductions based on different action scenarios, for example "reduce GHG emissions attributed to fleet by 30% by 2025 through the transition to better vehicle emission control technology"
d. Developing a plan to manage the reduction - e.g., in what order & when

PILLAR 2: Undertake efforts to systematically manage and reduce vehicle environmental impacts

2.1 Avoid or reduce the need for travel

As outlined in the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2020, official business travel policies have generally been developed with cost savings as a primary consideration, irrespective of considerations for environmental sustainability, personal health, well-being, and inconvenience for the staff member (e.g., more stopovers, longer distances travelled for economic reasons).

This action fully seizes the opportunities arising from the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic for serious digitalization and resource footprint reduction, especially in the realm of fleet.

Action 2.1 | Avoid or reduce the need for travel by

a. Fostering remote/flexible working mechanisms to reduce field missions
b. Establishing a travel hierarchy, redefining the purpose of field missions and their frequency and which kilometers can be avoided altogether through remote working
c. Promoting the use of public transport, cycling and walking in low security risk operating environments, where it is safe to do so

d. Showing the vehicle emissions on the field mission authorization to raise awareness among passengers of the environmental impact of transport
e. Introducing carbon budgets per division / unit. A carbon budget is an amount of carbon dioxide that a division/unit has agreed is the largest it will produce in a particular period of time
f. Prohibit the private use of agency vehicles

2.2 Shift to more environmentally friendly vehicles

Over decades, the Toyota Landcruiser has become an icon of humanitarian operations. Today however, the road conditions in developing countries have improved and continues to do so and generally, international humanitarian organizations are operating in more urban contexts. Next to that, recent years have seen several low and middle-income countries implementing cleaner fuel standards, which allows for the use of vehicles with better emission control technologies.

Some UN agencies are already taking action, for example by introducing smaller and more fuel-efficient vehicles (such as the Renault Duster) as well as hybrid and electric vehicles in their standard vehicle models.

While some agencies will continue to operate in areas of conflict or where the road structure is limited, this action targets the trip efficiency by shifting to more environmentally friendly vehicles where feasible.

The implementation of this action will have a positive impact on two fleet environmental indicators mentioned in the UN Sustainability Strategy: % reduction in fuel use from ground transport and % of electric vehicles.

Action 2.2 | Shift to more environmentally friendly vehicles where feasible by

a. Enforcing the use of smaller and more fuel-efficient vehicles in locations where the road transport infrastructure permits (for example, in capital cities)
b. Shifting to vehicles with (better) vehicle emission control technologies that match the fuel quality of the operating country
c. Encouraging the use of hybrid and electric vehicles where possible, even if the source of energy is not renewable
d. Establishing a phase out plan for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles in locations where it is possible to do so

2.3 Improve vehicle and fuel efficiency

Initiatives to introduce efficiencies into fleet management of UN agencies, especially in the field, have shown that savings of 10–15 per cent in fuel consumption per kilometer driven can be achieved and should be upscaled. This action is focused on the efficiency of the existing fleet.

Action 2.3 | Improve vehicle and fuel efficiency by

a. Facilitating right profiling exercises in country operations with large fleets
b. Monitoring fuel use and fuel consumption to be able to implement realistic vehicle fuel reduction targets with each operating country
c. Measuring and improving the adherence to vehicle service schedules
d. Measuring and improving the adherence to the fleet disposal policy, if such a policy exists
e. Using a method to identify underutilized light vehicles and timely responsibly dispose of them
f. Establishing internal carpools to increase utilization

g. Improving journey management practices within the agency to optimize vehicle sharing
h. Mandating ride and vehicle sharing among UN agencies for passenger transport
i. Embedding sustainability in driver, dispatcher, and fleet management training programs wherever possible, for example through eco-driving

2.4 Minimize workshop waste generated by UN-operated vehicles

Workshop waste includes those materials that are generated through the maintenance and repair of vehicles. This can be 'hard waste' such as metal, plastic and glass components or spare parts, and 'soft waste' which may include lubricants, fluids, and gases.

Managing workshop waste needs to shift from "nice to have" to "duty of care". This includes subcontractor management of third-party garages and recycling companies (if available). Priority should be given to the management of hazardous waste that can harm human health and the environment.

Action 2.4 | Minimize workshop waste generation from UN-operated vehicles by

a. Implementing a standard operating procedure per type of garage waste with the different options of recycling as well as identifying different ways to reduce waste
b. Mapping and establishing partnerships with local organizations to recycle specific vehicle waste (used oil, oil filters, batteries etc.)
c. Regular inspection of garages used for maintenance and repair of UN- operated vehicles by a professional inspection company including waste management practices

PILLAR 3: Offset unavoidable vehicle emissions and achieve climate neutrality

3.1 Continue to offset vehicle emissions

Offsetting is the process whereby entities take responsibility and compensate for their remaining emissions by purchasing UN-certified carbon credits from projects that are achieving the removal of, or reductions in, greenhouse gas emissions of an equivalent amount.

Activities to offset greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts from United Nations facilities and operations have been underway since 2007. Certified Emission Reductions are offsets issued by projects that are part of the UN's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The quality of a project is verified and guaranteed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2019, 97% of the UN System's reported greenhouse gas emissions were offset. This action builds on efforts conducted to-date.

Action 3.1 | Continue to offset vehicle emissions by

a. Maintaining the climate neutrality status for the organization by offsetting unavoidable fleet related GHG emissions through the UNFCCC platform

3.2 Communicate progress, both internally and externally

As agencies complete several actions in their sustainable fleet programs, it is vital to share the news and achievements – both internally and externally, through platforms such as Greening the Blue. Not only does it show the leadership of the agency, but it also provides an opportunity for other agencies in the UN system to learn from good practices and accelerate their efforts to achieve their sustainability targets.

Action 3.2 | Communicate progress, both internally and externally by

a. Developing a strategic communications campaign to inform all staff and managers of the environmental impacts of fleet operations and the actions their office can take to reduce environmental impacts
b. Ensuring consistent dissemination of sustainable fleet information and education to United Nations staff
c. Using the Greening the Blue platform to celebrate successes and lessons learned with other UN agencies

Limitations of the recommended actions

In high-risk countries, the recommended action to shift to small, more fuel-efficient vehicles might not fit with security measures. For example, in certain countries, while the road conditions may allow for the use of sedans, the country operation will likely use armoured vehicles for the protection of passengers.

Furthermore, Covid-19 social distancing constraints might limit the recommended action to roll-out a vehicle and ridesharing programme among UN agencies

Lastly the recommended action to shift to vehicles with better vehicle emission control technologies is dependent on vehicle manufacturers making these technologies available to humanitarian organisations. UN agencies will need to sit together with vehicle suppliers, advocate and challenge them to provide the same technologies already being provided to developed countries for years.

Conclusion

The current context provides an opportunity for the United Nations organizations to reimagine the system by making their fleet policies, practices, and operations environmentally sustainable. To seize this opportunity, the guidance document has outlined nine key actions spread across three pillars.

While the Sustainability and Fleet divisions of UN agencies will be responsible for rolling-out a sustainable fleet program, they cannot shoulder the burden of the program alone. To achieve a significant reduction in vehicle emissions, on par with the ambition of the UN Sustainability Strategy, it demands that

1. UN management – including Country Representatives, Regional and HQ Directors – show active and visible leadership through bold decision-making: adopting low and zero emission vehicles, phasing out traditional diesel off-road vehicles, integrating sustainability in relevant job descriptions and more.

2. UN personnel - who traditionally rely on transport to do their life saving work – show personal leadership and ask themselves questions such as "Are my journeys necessary?", "Could I combine my trips with others?" and "Could I be transported in a lower emitting vehicle?"

Covid-19 challenged UN agencies to think creatively and accelerated the shift towards remote working. In some cases, the inability to travel was detrimental to project outcomes. It would be most unfortunate if the organizations did not utilize this opportunity and instead lapsed back into the old ways and "business as usual". An increase in travel post Covid-19 is inevitable, but there needs to be a new business as usual. Therein lies the challenge before the entities: remain chained to the past, or play a pioneering role in ushering in a sustainable future for all?

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
Measure & report vehicle environmental impacts	**Undertake efforts to systematically manage and reduce vehicle environmental impacts**	**Offset unavoidable vehicle emissions and achieve climate neutrality**
1.1 Mainstream sustainability in fleet operations 1.2 Improve the environmental impact monitoring with regards to vehicles 1.3 Consider setting science-based targets to reduce environmental impacts	2.1 Avoid or reduce the need for travel 2.2 Shift to more environmentally friendly vehicles where feasible 2.3 Improve vehicle and fuel efficiency 2.4 Minimize workshop waste generated by UN-operated vehicles	3.1. Continue to offset vehicle emission 3.2. Communicate progress, both internally and externally

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Annexes

Annex 1: Expanding sustainable fleet performance indicators

Leading and lagging indicators are two types of measurements used when assessing performance in an organization. A leading indicator is a predictive measurement, for example, the percentage of people wearing safety belts in a vehicle is a leading safety indicator. A lagging indicator is an output measurement, for example, the number of road traffic crashes is a lagging safety indicator.

Most organizations have already adopted indicators such as CO2 emissions per kilometer driven and average fuel consumption. Additional examples of lagging indicators include:

- Kilometers driven per vehicle type
- Kilometers driven per euro emission standard
- Kilometers driven through vehicle sharing with other UN agencies
- Passenger kilometers per liter of fuel
- CO2 emissions from idling as a percentage of total emissions

Leading indicators are proactive, preventive, and predictive measures that monitor and provide current information about the effective performance, activities, and processes of a sustainable fleet management program. Leading indicators thus help sustainability and fleet professionals to look ahead and take action to meet the targets set out in the UN Sustainability Strategy.

Examples of leading indicators include:

- Average sustainable fleet training hours per staff member
- % of drivers who received eco-driving training
- % of vehicles fitted with vehicle tracking systems
- % of operating offices with fleet emission reduction targets
- % of petrol vehicles as a total of vehicles
- % of vehicles beyond disposal policy
- % of vehicles included in carpool

Annex 2: Concrete commitments to cleaner fleet in UN strategy

Impact	Objective	Aspects	Commitment	Steps toward goal	Indicators of achievement 2030 and targets
GHG emissions	Reduce absolute GHG emissions by 2030 to limit increase in global temperature to 1.5 °C, in line with recommendations of the 2018 IPCC report.	Ground travel	Minimize/optimize fuel consumption derived from ground travel of UN staff, operations and programs	Define UN wide guidance for fleet management including common Goals such as reducing average fleet age; introducing electric vehicles where feasible and measures to improving fuel quality. Develop agency specific fleet management systems	**% reduction in fuel use from ground transport**
Air pollution	Ensure UN premises and fleet do not contribute to/exacerbate local air quality issues, in both urban and remote community settings	Fossil fuels	Minimise to the extent possible the particulate, SOx, NOx, and other (non-GHG) emissions from burning fossil fuels in generators and vehicles	1. Analyse at UN entities and UN wide level the extent to which the UN contribute to or try to limit air pollution 2. Define UN wide guidance for fleet management including common Goals such as reducing average fleet age; introducing electric vehicles where feasible and measures to improving fuel quality. 3. Establish a UN-wide baseline for electric vehicles 4. Develop agency specific fleet management systems	**% of electric vehicles** **% fuel in use that meets international quality standards**
		Ozone Depletion	Ensure UN premises do not contribute to depletion of the Ozone Layer	1. Eliminate all Ozone depleting refrigerants from cooling systems and vehicles 2. Eliminate refrigerants with low ODP (ozone depleting potential) and GWP (global warming potential) in all air conditioning equipment	**% of UN entities still using ozone depleting substances**