



Environmental Policy for the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)

1. Vision

The UN Secretary-General has requested concrete and immediate action to align the United Nations with the aims and goals of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The Secretary-General's action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management ([A/72/82](#)) was endorsed by the General Assembly in December 2017 (resolution [72/219](#) paragraph 19). In response, senior officials of the Environment Management Group developed the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020-2030, of which phase I was endorsed by the CEB in 2019 ([CEB/2019/1/Add.1](#), hereafter referred to as the UN Environmental Sustainability Strategy).

UNOG is the representative office of the Secretary-General in Switzerland and the largest duty station outside of UNHQ. In 2023, it serviced 8478 meetings and provided administrative and common support services to more than 40 UN entities in Europe and their field offices around the world. UNOG's main environmental impacts arise from the running of the historic Palais des Nations, which is both a conference centre and the office buildings for UNOG and all the other entities hosted here.

UNOG must strive to bring all its operations and management processes in line with the 2030 Agenda and the UN Environmental Sustainability Strategy through systematic integration of environmental considerations into UNOG's operations and management processes.

2. Commitment

This policy statement underlines UNOG's commitment, inclusive of all its personnel and operations under its management, to international best practices in the field of environmental sustainability. UNOG shall minimize its negative impact on the environment and contribute positively to protecting the environment to the greatest extent feasible. UNOG is committed to achieving the following:

- Following the guiding principles of the UN Secretariat's Environmental Policy ([ST/SGB/2019/7](#)), including the prevention of pollution to water, land and air.
- Aligning UNOG's practices with the aims and goals of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) as well as the 1.5-degree global warming goal of the [Paris Agreement](#).
- Mainstreaming environmental sustainability considerations into the six management functions outlined in the [UN Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#): Procurement, Human resources, Travel, Facilities, Events and Information and Communications Technology.
- Introducing an environmental management system (EMS), covering all UNOG's activities, based on the principles of the [ISO 14001 standard](#). By implementing and maintaining the

EMS, UNOG is committed to the continual improvement of UNOG's environmental performance.

- Introducing an Energy Management System, in parallel with the EMS, based on the principles of the ISO 50001 standard, to systematically reduce its energy consumption.
- Setting greenhouse gas reduction targets, in line with the targets of the [UN Secretariat Climate Action Plan](#).
- Aligning with local compliance obligations, and wherever feasible, and resources allow, following recognised environmental best practices and standards.
- Engaging in local environmental initiatives in Geneva, including close collaboration with other UN entities based in Geneva.
- Communicating the progress made on the EMS implementation to internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis.
- Reviewing this policy at least every five years.

3. Scope

This policy and its key implementation tool – the Environmental Management System (EMS) – relate to all activities that UNOG directly controls as a service provider to UN entities based in international Geneva and elsewhere. The scope will include:

- Office of the Director-General
- Division of Administration (Responsible for facilities and asset management, Ariana Park, transportation, logistics and travel, information and communications management, procurement, catering, and human resource management)
- Division of Conference Management (Responsible for conference, meeting and event management, language services, as well as document production and printing)
- UN Information Service
- Department of Safety & Security
- Library & Archives
- Joint Medical Services
- Strategic Heritage Plan

Within these, UNOG will identify and address the environmental impacts over which it has direct control. As a service provider, UNOG will put in place action plans that seek to reduce, as far as possible, the negative environmental impacts of its services. In its leadership role, UNOG encourages its clients to use services responsibly, acknowledging their responsibility in using them.

UNOG recognizes that all UN entities that are permanently or temporarily located at the Palais and/or using facilities in the Palais will be impacted by this policy and its implementation. As such, UNOG will consult with them through the Client Board on the establishment of its EMS.

4. Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

An Environmental Steering Group, made up of senior staff that represent UNOG's key activity areas as a service provider, will oversee the implementation of this policy and the EMS by:

- Setting appropriate objectives and targets.
- Approving action plans to meet all objectives and targets.
- Monitoring progress against targets.
- Assigning human and financial resources to EMS implementation, as appropriate.

The key responsibilities for the implementation of this policy and the functioning of the EMS are the following:

Director-General: Guides the strategic direction for environmental management at UNOG.

Director of the Division of Administration (DoA): Chairs the Environmental Steering Group and acts as senior sponsor of the EMS, promoting the integration of environmental sustainability across UNOG's key activity areas.

Environmental Steering Group: Chaired by the Director of DoA. Reviews EMS implementation and delegates responsibilities. Approves EMS documentation and reviews performance against targets and objectives. If required, the group will be supported by technical working groups. Central Support Services serves as the Secretariat of the Steering Group.

Central Support Services (CSS):

Environmental Affairs Officers: Coordinate the elaboration and implementation of the EMS. Serve as the Secretariat to the Environmental Steering Group. Assist business owners with drafting actions plans and implementing environmental initiatives. Propose communication plan and implement when approved.

Facilities Management Section: Responsible for managing energy, waste, water and Ariana Park. Works in close collaboration with environmental affairs officers to advance environmental sustainability in their operations.

Business Owners: In charge of drafting and implementing action plans for UNOG's significant environmental aspects. Supports CSS by gathering and monitoring data for annual reporting under the UN-wide [Greening the Blue](#) initiative. Report to Environmental Steering Group and attend its meetings if necessary.

Personnel at all levels: Align activities with EMS implementation and positively contribute to the environmental performance of UNOG.