

# Green practices for Health and Social Care Facilities



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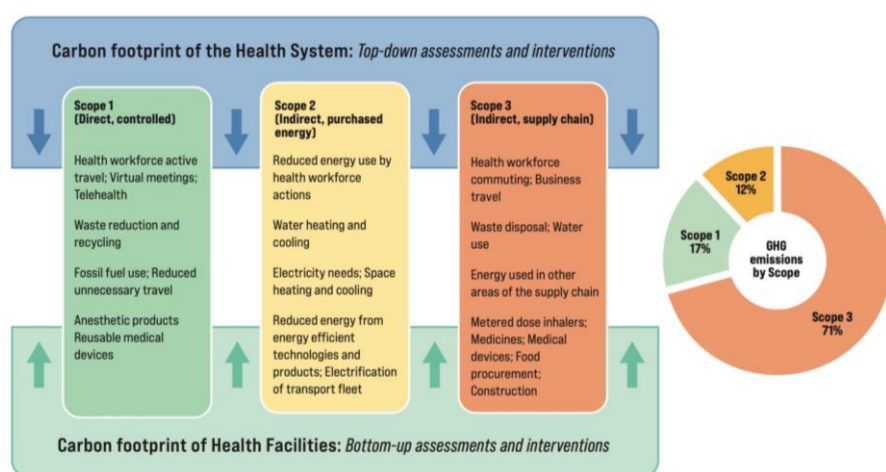
## What it means?

Climate resilient and low carbon Health and Social Care (HSC) facilities are those capable of anticipating, responding to, coping with, recovering from, and adapting to climate-related shocks and stress, while minimizing Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and other negative environmental impacts to deliver quality care and protect the health and well-being of present and future generations (WHO 2023).

### Health and Social Care facilities include:

- Primary health care units
- Secondary and tertiary hospitals
- Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- Social care facilities

## Direct and indirect sources of greenhouse emissions



Source: WHO (2023). Operational framework for building climate resilient and low carbon health systems

## Successful practices

According to Hospital Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH 2016) many HSC organisations have adopted green practices and the successful examples include all stakeholders.

### These practices include:

- Health workforce training and involvement
- Energy efficiency
- Water, sanitation, hygiene, and health care waste management
- Infrastructure, technologies, products and processes
- Climate change crises management

## Challenges

- Limited budgets
- Staff training
- Clients' (patients and family members/carers) expectations
- Link with local authorities
- Appropriate waste management

## How to decarbonise healthcare facilities?

### 1. Estimate carbon footprint on your organisation and take action to reduce it.

It is often difficult for organisations to estimate the emission of pollutants that contribute to the greenhouse effect; however, certain interventions can already be implemented to create environmental, health, economic and/or social co-benefits.

### 2. Selecting indicators for measuring the climate resilience and the carbon footprint of HSC organisation.

Useful criteria for selecting indicators:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Understandable
- Applicable and acceptable to stakeholders and potential users
- Representative of the issues and areas of concern
- Consistent and
- Comparable over time and space



Examples of indicators



Organisation

- % of HSCW having received training on low carbon sustainability in the past two years
- Number of health facilities with GHG emissions assessed
- Number of competency building initiatives integrating climate change and decarbonization at early stages of professional health training

- % of healthcare facilities using green and sustainable energy solutions
- % of healthcare facilities using green organisational practices in waste management

## What are the benefits?

### HSC organisations that adopt green practices succeed in:

- Becoming sustainable by reducing its carbon footprint
- Providing quality care
- Have positive results in public health indicators, such as mortality and disease burden

## References

HCWH (2016). Reducing Healthcare's Climate Footprint. Opportunities for European Hospitals and Health Systems. [Health Care Climate Challenge | GGH](#). Mirow, J., Venne, J. & Brand, A. Green health: how to decarbonise global healthcare systems. *Sustain Earth Reviews* 7, 28 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42055-024-00098-3>. Or Z & Seppanen A-V (2024). The role of the health sector in tackling climate change: A narrative review *Health Policy*, 143, 105053. WHO (2023). Operational framework for building climate resilient and low carbon health systems.



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