Conflict of Interest

The author has declared no conflict of interest.

The Environmental Impact Toolkit: Futureproofing MSF through measurement & mitigation

MSF Scientific Days – Innovation Day
20 May 2021
Presenting: Sandra Smiley & Carol Devine

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Introduction: Context

Humans are changing the planet, leading to

Increased global temperatures

Air pollution

More frequent & severe weather events

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Introduction: Context

Humans are changing the planet, leading to

Increased global temperatures

Air pollution

More frequent & severe weather events

This has profound negative health consequences, including

Exacerbating infectious disease transmission

Water & food insecurity

Displacement

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Introduction: Context

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Introduction: Context

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Introduction: Context

MSF recognises the humanitarian & health consequences of climate change & environmental degradation

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Introduction: Context

MSF recognises the humanitarian & health consequences of climate change & environmental degradation

& has committed to significantly mitigating its environmental impacts by 2023


Tetiana Gaviuk/MSF

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Introduction: The Environmental Impact (EI) Toolkit

First-of-its-kind initiative within MSF

Allows offices & projects to assess their carbon emissions & waste production, & decide on mitigation measures

Adapted & customised to measure common carbon emissions & waste

Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi./MSF

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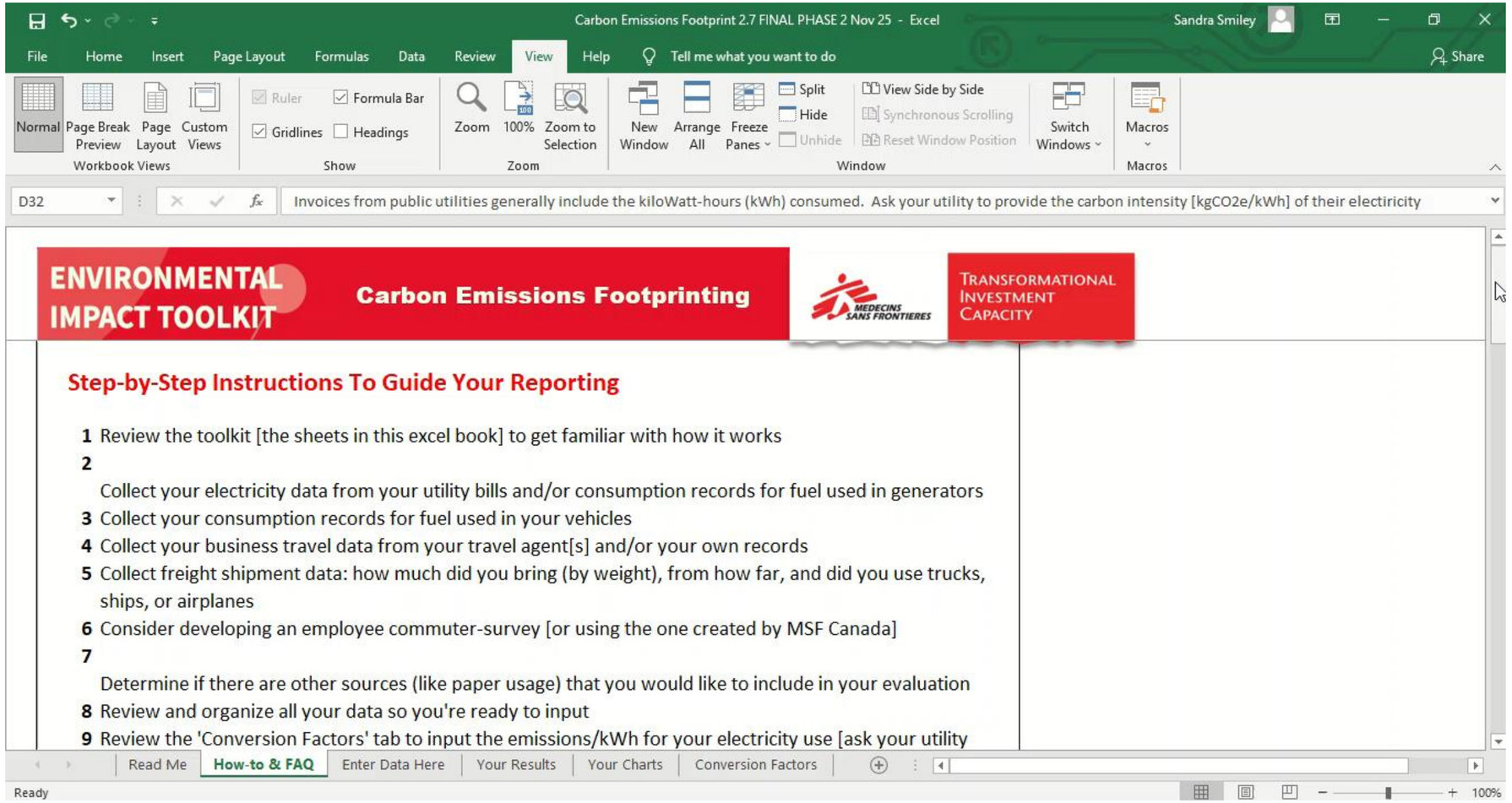
Introduction: The Environmental Impact (EI) Toolkit



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Methods: Objectives

- To help systematise efforts to reduce MSF's environmental footprint: "what you measure, you can manage"
- To allow MSF to establish a baseline level of carbon emissions & waste production & facilitate target-setting for mitigation
- To future-proof the organisation, making it a more responsive & responsible humanitarian actor

Methods: Implementation

- **Toolkit developed & piloted in five countries in 2019**

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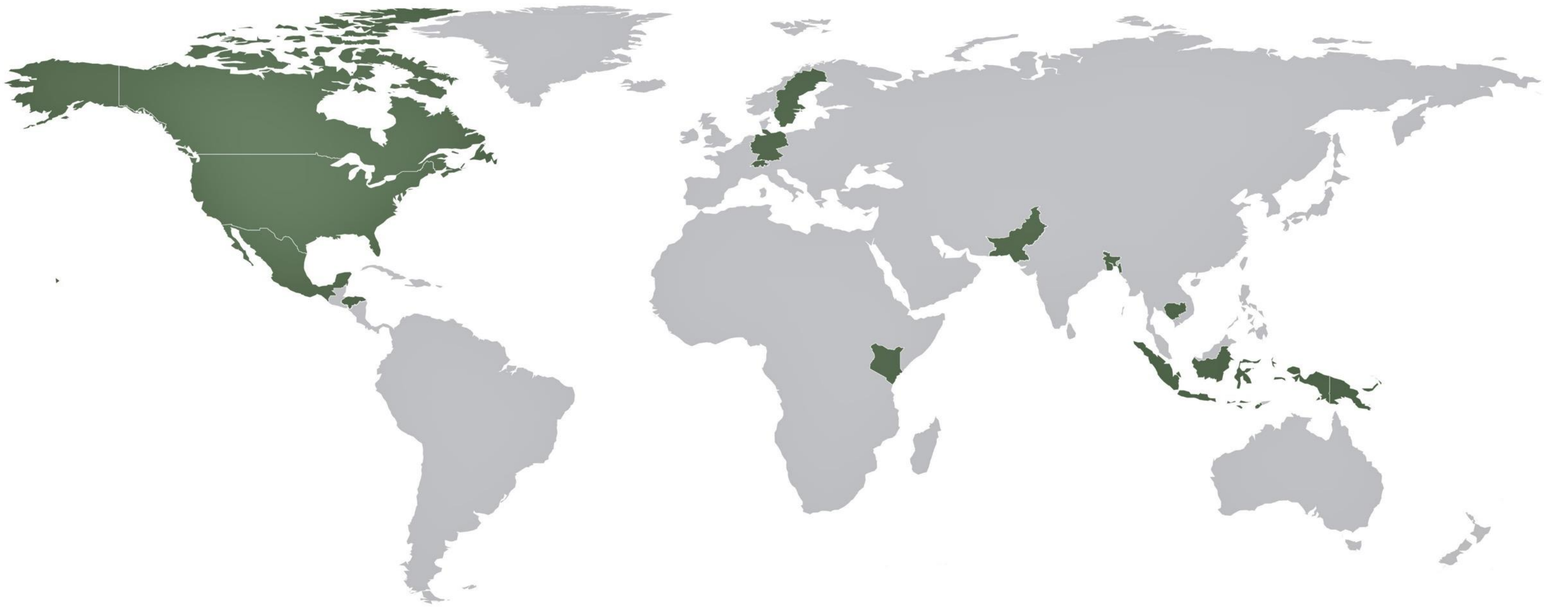
Methods: Implementation

- Toolkit developed & piloted in five countries in 2019
- In 2020, rolled out in nine more sites & updated



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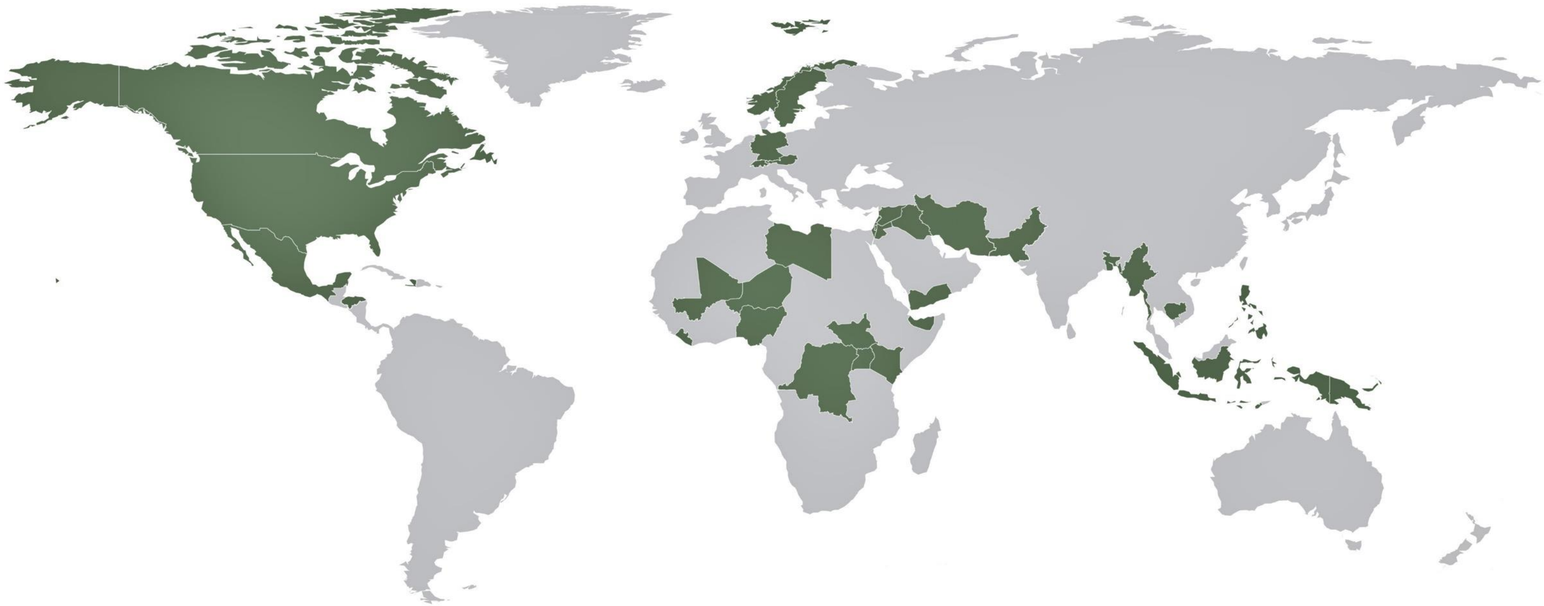
Methods: Implementation

- Toolkit developed & piloted in five countries in 2019
- In 2020, rolled out in nine more sites & updated
- In 2021, 22 new uses, ~20 more anticipated



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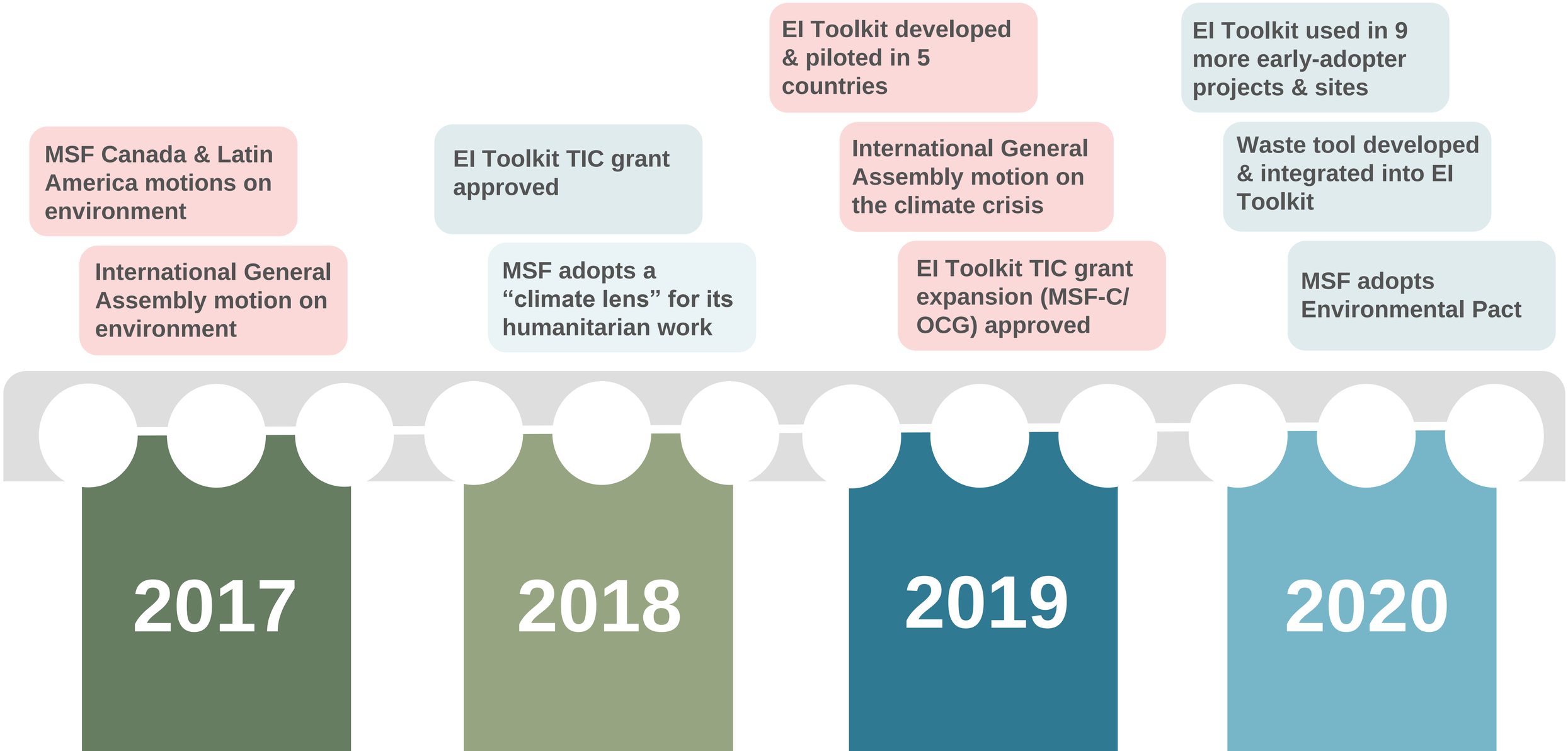
Methods: Timeline

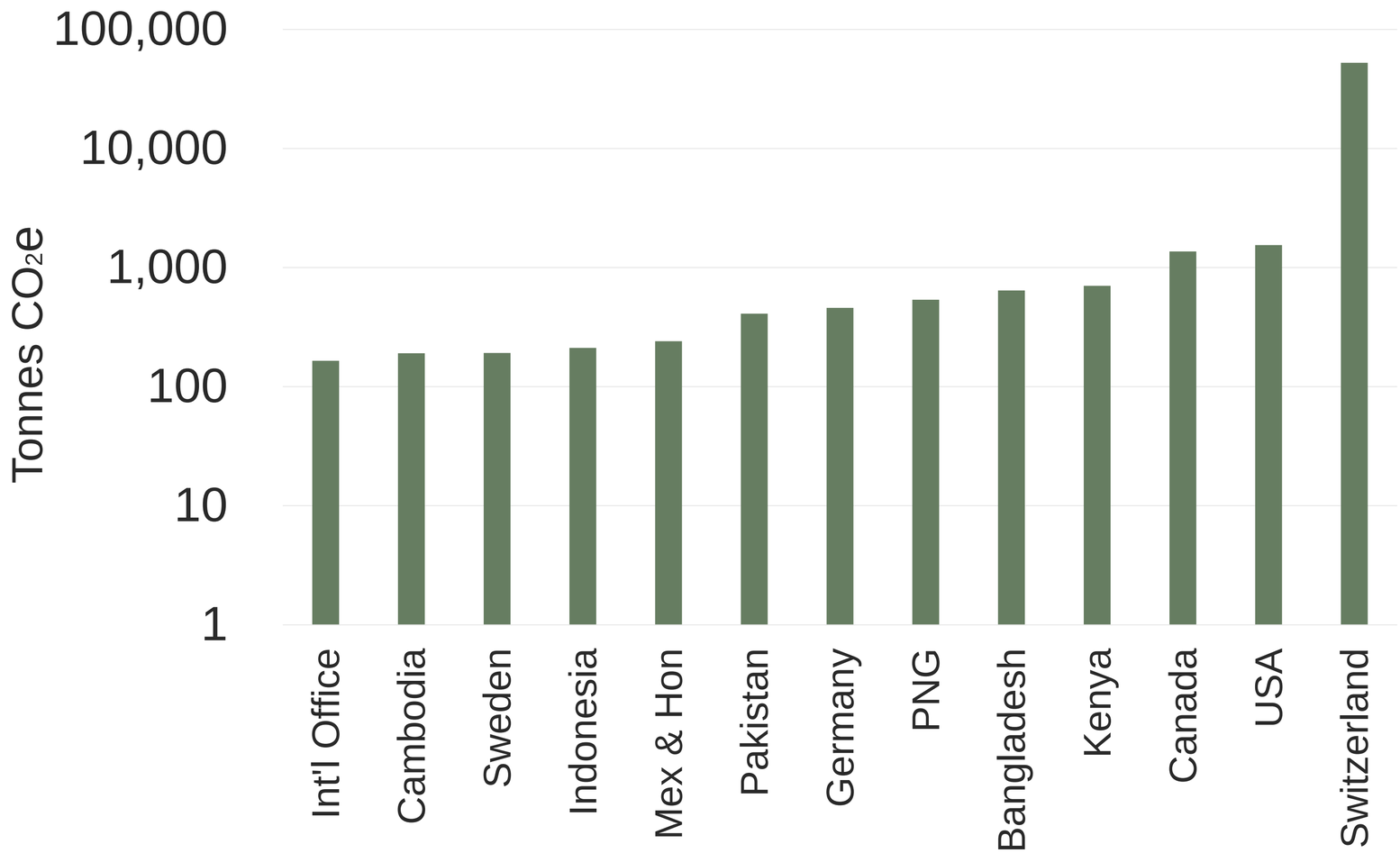


Methods: Data collection & analysis

- Data & testimonies on emissions-producing activities & user feedback collected
- Guidance on mitigation measures offered by Climate Smart MSF experts
- Emissions & their sources, & mitigation measures, compared across MSF sites

Results

Emissions levels varied significantly across the 14 sites



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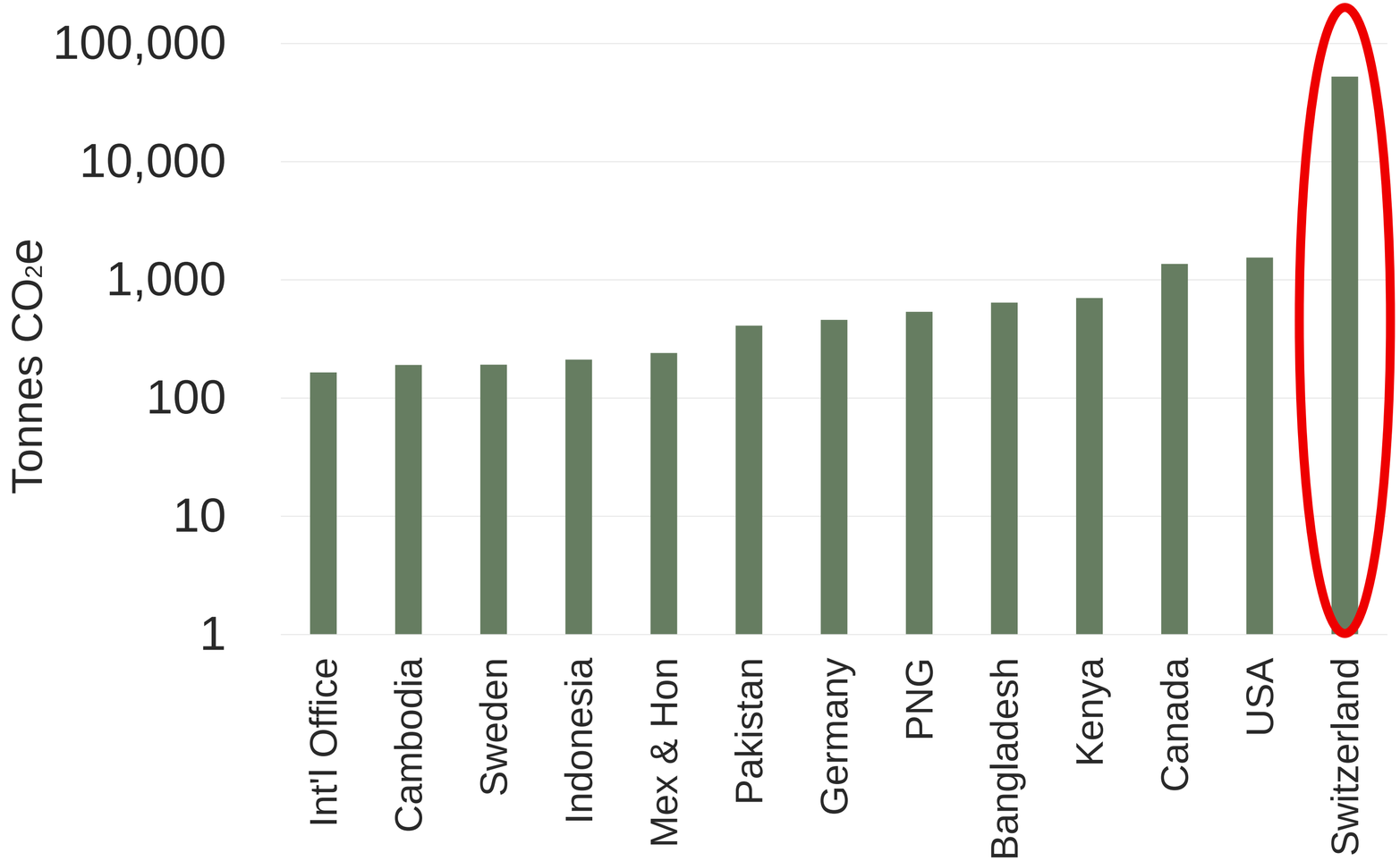

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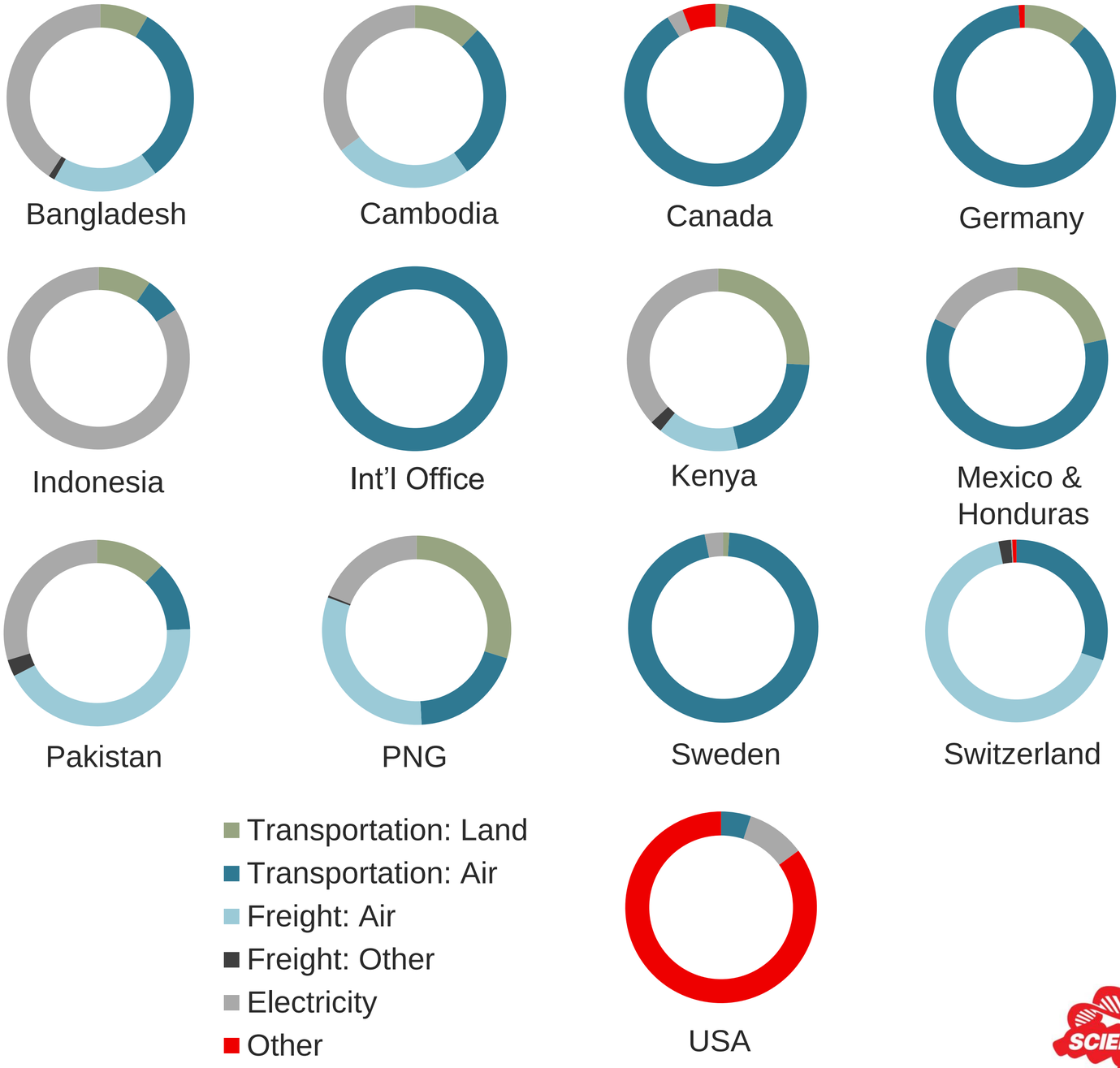
Results

Sources of emissions varied considerably across sites

Air freight & air travel (personnel flights) were identified as major sources of emissions



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Results

Commonalities in mitigation opportunities were identified, including:

- **limiting non-essential travel**
- **finding lower-carbon substitutes to air freight & diesel use**
- **scaling up solar energy, connecting to grid power & monitoring electricity use**

Pierre Crozes./MSF

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Results

“Of our strategic pillars in 2021, environmental footprint will be one of them. 18 months ago, this wouldn’t have happened, but the board is behind us too, behind & in front keeping us accountable.”

Katja Carson, MSF Germany, on the passage of MSF Germany’s motion urging all of MSF to measure its footprint using the EI Toolkit.

Tool users indicated that:

- **Leadership/management & human/financial resources is key to transition to sustainable tech (eg. solar)**
- **Automated/systematised internal processes could save time & make measuring emissions & waste production easier**

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Results

Brought about discussions & action on shifting to more sustainable processes, eg.

- **Bangladesh: connecting to grid power, metering**
- **Canada: set target to reduce non-essential flights**

Practice changes like limiting paper use & digitise processes

Minzayar Oo./MSF

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Discussion & Conclusions

- **Measurement crucial to reduction of MSF's carbon emissions & waste: "what you measure, you can manage"**
- **There is considerable scope to make MSF more efficient & environmentally responsible by reducing its carbon footprint**
- **Priority interventions include rationalising the use of emergency air freight, reducing non-essential travel & clean energy transition**
- **Courageous leadership & behavioural change will be important to making environmentally responsible practices "business as usual"**

Discussion & Conclusions: Limitations

- Conversion factors were used to estimate CO_2e – approximations
- Some data acquisition challenges
- EI Toolkit requires project/office commitment for use
- Initial tool is to spur internal action, & not for external reporting or institutional benchmarking

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Discussion & Conclusions: Next steps

Building off the knowledge created through the Toolkit:

- **Review & automate tool to aid in setting science-based targets**
- **Facilitate proof-of-concept & scale-up of energy transition pilots**
- **Work with leaders to rationalise air freight & make supply chain more sustainable**


MSF France

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Acknowledgements

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