

مركز شاهد لحقوق المواطن والتنمية المجتمعية
Environmental Sustainability Policy



April 2024

Policy Owner: Programs Manager

1. PURPOSE

1.1 Witness Center (The Organization) recognizes the importance of environmental sustainability and climate change and is committed to reducing potential negative impacts on the environment while achieving the Organization's mission and strategic objectives.

1.2 This Policy is not intended to be an exhaustive statement of The Organization's processes regarding environmental issues but is intended to guide The Organization's approach through the principles and commitments set out below.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **Disclosure** refers to how The Organization will publicly report on its progress in implementing the commitments under this policy.
- **Due Diligence** is a process to identify potential social, environmental, and economic gaps in an organization's activities that may have adverse impacts, aiming to address the highest-risk issues.
- **Implementing Partner** means an organization engaged by The Organization to work with us in furthering our fundamental goals.
- **Personnel** means a person who carries out work in any capacity for The Organization, including paid employees, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants, work experience students, or volunteers.
- **Supplier** means an organization or sole trader engaged by The Organization to supply goods and/or services in exchange for payment, including goods in kind, which is not a recognized Implementing Partner.
- **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)** means the universal commitment to end poverty, protect the environment, and ensure prosperity for all, adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, framed by 17 global goals.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Everything The Organization does is built on our values of Integrity, Collaboration, Empowerment, and Action. To remain strong and for our actions to be ethical, we must continue to look to our values in our everyday work.

3.2 The Organization recognizes that climate change, pollution, and environmental degradation present major threats to societal well-being and development. These threats risk undermining progress in various sectors, with marginalized groups being the most adversely affected.

3.3 The Organization understands that its activities, including operations and programs, have an impact on the environment by contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, resource consumption, and waste production.

3.4 Therefore, The Organization acknowledges the importance of considering environmental risks and opportunities that might affect the future of our work and the global community.

3.5 This policy sets out The Organization's commitments to improving environmental sustainability and climate change action within our operations, programming, and advocacy. It is aligned with evidence-based strategies and the broader commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 The Organization seeks to take a 'do no harm' approach to its activities and make positive contributions to people and the environment wherever it works.

4.2 This policy addresses Environmental Sustainability in the context of The Organization's role, guided by the following principles:

4.2.1 **Stewardship** - Demonstrate environmental stewardship by recognizing the impact of our work on the environment and committing to actions that minimize negative ecological and climate impacts.

4.2.2 **Human rights-based approach** - Acknowledge that the rights to life and health cannot be realized without basic rights to safe water, air, and land.

4.2.3 **Sustainability** - Recognize the interconnected nature of environmental sustainability and climate change with other matters affecting vulnerable populations, aligning our response with the Sustainable Development Goals.

4.2.4 **Culture** - Create and embed a culture that recognizes, supports, and builds staff and partner understanding of the importance of environmental sustainability.

4.2.5 **Equity** - Ensure our work does not create or contribute to situations where one group of people bears a greater environmental burden due to our actions.

5. COMMITMENTS UNDER THIS POLICY

5.1 At an organizational level, The Organization is committed to:

5.1.1 Identifying negative environmental risks early and minimizing and mitigating those risks wherever practicable.

5.1.2 Reducing waste, resource, and energy usage and consumption.

5.1.3 Considering environmental sustainability in procurement, preferring sustainable options where practicable.

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5.1.4 Strengthening environmental criteria within our ethical screening, risk assessment, Due Diligence, and supply chain management.

5.1.5 Promoting best-practice procedures and a culture of sustainability among Personnel, including training and encouraging sustainable practices in the office and remote work environments.

5.1.6 Establishing targets and supporting actions to reduce carbon emissions across operations and programming activities, embedding these within strategic planning.

5.1.7 Maintaining and promoting compliance with regulatory, sector, and institutional donor environmental sustainability obligations.

5.1.8 Publishing Disclosures on our actions and progress on environmental sustainability.

Operations

5.2 The Organization is committed to reducing the environmental impact of travel, energy use, and waste management within our offices.

Programs

5.3 Through its programs, The Organization is committed to:

5.3.1 Integrating environmental sustainability within capacity-building efforts with partners as relevant to their projects.

5.3.2 Ensuring project risk management and design processes are informed by best practices and donor requirements where practical.

5.3.3 Partnering with and learning from organizations advancing climate change action at global, national, and local levels.

Advocacy

5.4 The Organization is committed to:

5.4.1 Advocating for greater action on environmental sustainability and climate change within our sphere of influence.

5.4.2 Empowering the voices of vulnerable communities in our advocacy on environmental sustainability.

6. LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

6.1 This Policy is informed by the principles set out in:

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6.1.1 The Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goals 1, 3, 4, 10, 12, and 13.

6.1.2 Relevant national and international environmental and social safeguards policies.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES & ACCOUNTABILITIES

7.1 General Manager

7.1.1 The GM is responsible for ensuring this Policy is upheld and will inform the Board of any concerns relating to Environmental Sustainability.

7.1.2 The GM will ensure progress on Environmental Sustainability is reported to the Board.

7.1.3 The GM will hold relevant managers accountable to this Policy.

7.2 Managers

7.2.1 Managers will promote this Policy to all Personnel.

7.2.2 They will ensure procedures, practices, plans, and operations align with this Policy.

7.2.3 Divisions are encouraged to implement procedures and action plans to fulfill the commitments of this Policy.

7.2.4 They are responsible for monitoring and responding to Environmental Sustainability risks or concerns, recording them.

7.3 Policy Owner

7.3.1 The Policy Owner will ensure compliance with obligations and contemporary practice, suggest updates to this Policy as required.

7.3.2 They will address any issues arising and serve as a point of contact for Personnel.

7.3.3 They will assist the GM in preparing reports.

7.3.4 They will inform the GM of any significant risks regarding environmental sustainability.

7.4 All Personnel

7.4.1 Personnel will adhere to the principles and commitments of this Policy and related procedures.

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7.4.2 They are responsible for identifying and responding to environmental sustainability risks, reporting any matters of contention to their manager.

7.4.3 Personnel may raise concerns via established channels.

7.5 All associated stakeholders

All associated stakeholders must understand and abide by the principles and relevant commitments under this Policy, advising The Organization of any issues that may arise.

8. MONITORING

8.1 A report on the implementation of this Policy will be submitted to the Board at least annually. The Policy Owner is responsible for compiling this report.

8.2 This Policy will be reviewed annually. The Policy Owner is responsible for this review.

References

- This policy has been adapted from the Environmental Sustainability Policy of The Fred Hollows Foundation, recognizing the importance of environmental sustainability and climate change.
- International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) Guide for Environmentally Sustainable Practices.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy.
- The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Governance Standards and External Conduct Standards.
- The Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct.

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6/4/2024

