



International Programs Environment Policy

Policy Statement

Transform Aid International (TAI) is committed to protecting the environment when implementing programs to alleviate poverty. All programs and projects will consider the environmental impacts and implement appropriate strategies that promote positive impacts and reduce negative impacts on the environment. TAI also seeks to build resilience, through disaster risk reduction and the adoption of practices appropriate to address the impact of climate change.

Scope

The Policy applies to all community development and disaster management programs and projects supported by TAI.

Purpose

As part of its core values, TAI has committed to promoting “economic, social and ecological sustainability in all programs”.ⁱ TAI acknowledges the importance of the environment to sustainable development as people’s lives, wellbeing and their future are dependent on their surrounding environment. The environment supports life and is integral to the provision of food, water, shelter and livelihoods. Environmental degradation and climate change threaten livelihoods, food security, health and access to safe water. They also increase the intensity of disasters and vulnerability of communities.

Agriculture, as one of the major sources of food security and income in many developing countries, is also one of the most sensitive sectors to environmental degradation and climate change.ⁱⁱ Because of the high reliance of the poor on agricultural produce, the poor are very vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation and climate change.

TAI acknowledges that all development work has an impact on the environment. Awareness of environmental management can contribute greatly to improving health, resilience to environmental risks, economic development and livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor.ⁱⁱⁱ The impact of TAI’s programs and projects on the environment will be considered to mitigate any adverse impact. TAI aims to build the awareness and capacity of communities to address the impacts of climate change. TAI also seeks to build resilience, through disaster risk reduction and the adoption of practices appropriate to changing climatic conditions. TAI will promote good environmental practices to safeguard the environment.

Guiding Principles

TAI's approach to environmental sustainable development is underpinned by the following principles:

Rights-based and community-led approach

- Empower community members, especially the vulnerable and minority groups, and other stakeholders to actively and effectively participate in and contribute to environmental management including but not limited to the risk identification, assessment and management.
- Recognise and respect the rights of community in environmental management.
- Value and include the local culture and indigenous knowledge of communities as well as knowledge of different people groups such as children, youths, people of different genders and disadvantaged groups in environmental management.
- Build the capacity of community and stakeholders to identify the environmental impacts, develop and implement strategies to protect the environment.
- Be transparent about the project activities, the risks and impacts in a way that is timely, accessible, and culturally and socially suitable for the community people.

Abiding by relevant environmental law and policy

- Comply with the relevant international environmental protocols and policies including "DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program" to maintain and promote the health, diversity and productivity of the environment.
- Comply with relevant national environmental laws, standards and/or policies that apply in the country where the program/project is being implemented.
- Seek opportunities to work effectively in partnership with local government bodies, multilateral, bilateral, NGOs and private sectors in abiding by the relevant environmental laws, standards and/or policies.

Work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

A number of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) seek to ensure environmental sustainability globally. The management of environmental factors through this Policy will prioritise, but is not limited to, achieving the following SDGs:

- SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, especially target 2.4^{iv};



- SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, especially targets 6.3, 6.4 and 6.6^v;
- SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, especially targets 12.2, 12.5 and 12.8^{vi};
- SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, especially targets 13.1 and 13.3^{vii};
- SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, especially target 14.2^{viii};
- SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss, especially target 15.1 to 15.5 and 15.9^{ix}.

Promoting good environmental practice and outcomes

- Screen the environmental impact and take adequate measures to mitigate negative impacts on environment throughout program/project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Build the awareness and capacity of community and local partners in environmental sustainability development.
- Promote activities that have positive impact on the environment.
- Conduct environmental assessment if program/project activities will have potential adverse impacts on the environment, and develop plan to monitor and respond to the identified adverse impacts. Withdraw any project activities that have significant adverse impacts that cannot be managed by the project.
- Build resilience, through disaster risk reduction and adoption of practices appropriate to changing climatic conditions.
- Build effective partnership across all levels of environmental management initiatives.

Take into account the interaction of social inclusion, culture and the environment

- Environmental management and disaster risk reduction should be integrated across all development sectors to ensure a consistent approach and better outcomes for people and environment.
- Recognise the important role that women, men, girls and boys as well as people with disability and marginalised groups play in achieving environmental sustainable development.
- Recognise and respect the local culture in achieving environmental sustainable development.

Environment and TAI's Theology of Development

The scriptures begin with the assertion that God created the world and it was good. This shows how much God values all of creation including humankind, who must see themselves as part of an independent whole.

TAI's vision of a world without poverty where people enjoy the fullness of life God intended cannot be realised without a properly functioning, healthy environment. TAI understands development as the process by which people are able to realise right relationships with God, one another and the earth. Restoring right relationships with the earth will involve right executing humankind's duty to manage and be responsible for God's creation.^x

Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are: -

- To ensure all programs and projects align with the guiding principles stated above.
- To ensure that all programs and projects consider environmental sustainable development in the design, implementation and evaluation.
- To ensure all programs and projects screen the environmental impacts and climate change, develop appropriate strategies to promote the positive impacts and reduce negative impacts on the environment.
- To ensure that all programs and projects are in compliance with legislation, guidance and standards relating to "DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program", and with relevant international and local government policies.
- To ensure that TAI's partners are aware of and comply with TAI compliance standards relevant to environmental sustainable development.
- To support TAI's International Programs staff to assess and build the capacity of partners to implement environmentally sustainable development activities, in accordance with the guiding principles outlined above.
- To support TAI's partners to enhance resilience of communities and environment particularly when dealing with possible adverse effects of disasters and climate change.



Responsibilities

The Director of International Programs is responsible for the strategic and operational management of this Policy.

All TAI International Programs staff are responsible for ensuring partner and program/project compliance to this Policy throughout all stages of the project cycle. International Program Coordinators are responsible for the ongoing monitoring of each partner and each program/project.

This Policy will be available on TAI's intranet. This Policy will be reviewed triennially, or sooner as required.

Definitions

Environment:

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999 defines "environment" as including:

- a. ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities;
- b. natural and physical resources;
- c. qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas;
- d. heritage values of places;
- e. social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in (a), (b), (c) or (d).

Ecological sustainability: The capacity of ecosystems to maintain their essential functions and processes, and retain their biodiversity in full measure over the long term.^{xi}

Related Policies and Procedures

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Gender in TAI International Programs Policy
- Human Rights in TAI International Programs Policy
- Partnership and Participation Policy
- TAI Environmental Risk Management Guidelines and Table



- TAI Proposal Assessment Tool
- TAI Annual Proposal Assessment Tool
- TAI Disaster Management Framework
- Policy Development Policy
- Policy Development Procedure

External References

- ACFID Code of Conduct Program Principles B.1.6 – Environmental Sustainability
<https://acfid.asn.au/content/b16-environmental-sustainability>
- ACFID From Policy to Action: Australian Aid and the Sustainable Development Goals
https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/From-Policy-to-Action.pdf
- Australia’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
<https://www.environment.gov.au/epbc>
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) Environment Protection Policy for the Aid Program (November 2014)
<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/environment-protection-policy-aid-program.aspx>
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/environmental-social-safeguard-policy>
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

Endnotes:

ⁱ Transform Aid Vision, Mission and Values (2011)

<https://www.baptistworldaid.org.au/about/who-we-are/>

ⁱⁱ See What Climate Changes Means for the World's Poor

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/12/151201-datapoints-climate-change-poverty-agriculture/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Guidance note: Mainstreaming Poverty- Environment Linkages into National Development Planning

<https://www.unpei.org/sites/default/files/publications/eng.pdf>

^{iv} <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

SDG Target 2.4

By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

^v SDG Target 6.3

By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.

SDG Target 6.4

By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

SDG Target 6.6

By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

^{vi} SDG Target 12.2

By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

SDG Target 12.5

By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

SDG Target 12.8

By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

^{vii} SDG Target 13.1

Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

SDG Target 13.3

Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

^{viii} SDG Target 14.2

By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

^{ix} SDG Target 15.1

By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.



SDG Target 15.2

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

SDG Target 15.3

By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

SDG Target 15.4

By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

SDG Target 15.5

Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

SDG Target 15.9

By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.

× Transform Aid Theology of Development

<https://www.baptistworldaid.org.au/assets/Uploads/A-Theology-of-Development-FINAL.pdf>

^{xi} <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/ecological-sustainability.html>