



1. What is the environment?

The **environment** is defined by the Australian Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999³ as including:

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

2. Why is the environment important?

The Bible teaches that God created the world to His own satisfaction and in a way that reflects His goodness and desire to provide for all creatures. As a Christian organisation, we confess that, along with all of humankind, we have been responsible for large scale destruction of the environment in an attempt to control and exploit it, rather than caring for and nurturing it.

3. Leprosy and the environment

Leprosy is a disease of poverty, and poverty is known to have a close link to environmental degradation because communities depend on their immediate environment as the resource-base for both survival and development.

4. What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the need of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹

For TLMA, it is important that, in seeking to meet our stakeholders' needs, we do not compromise the ability of future stakeholders to meet their own needs. Our main approach is to identify and implement ways in which:

- a) our projects and practices respond to the environmental needs of the communities in which project beneficiaries live; and
- b) our projects and practices avoid or minimise harm to the environment.

In addition, we recognise our responsibility to be good stewards of the environment in which our organisational structures are based. Issues to be considered include the consumption of energy and other resources within our buildings, the processing of waste, and the impact of our travel².

¹ Gro H. Bruntland, (ed), *Our common future: The World Commission on Environment and Development*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

² Tearfund, *Environmental Sustainability Roots 13*, (Tearfund: 2009).

³ *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00777/Html/Volume_2

5. Statements of commitment

As a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), TLMA complies with the Code of Conduct (revised December 2016) and therefore, adheres to the following indicators which relate to environmental protection and sustainability:

3.3.1 Demonstrate an organisational commitment to environmental sustainability and improved environmental outcomes in our development and humanitarian initiatives.

3.3.2 Demonstrate an organisational commitment to environmental sustainability and improved environmental outcomes in our internal operations.

Additionally, the DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy articulates that this policy ensures aid investments do not cause harm including injury or injustice to the people it is intended to assist, or to the wider communities or environment. The policy requires early identification of environmental and social risks and impacts during the planning stage of investments and their continued management through the life of investments.

As expressed by the policy:

“Negative impacts on the environment resulting from aid investments can harm the people they are intended to help and undermine development outcomes. Protecting and conserving natural resources and maintaining ecosystems is fundamental to sustainable development and integral to the economic prosperity of many developing countries. In addition, environmental degradation can increase the vulnerability of communities to disasters and the impacts of climate change.”

The policy outlines five key safeguarding principles:

- Principle 1: Do no harm
- Principle 2: Identify, assess, and manage environmental and social impacts
- Principle 3: Engage effectively with stakeholders
- Principle 4: Work effectively with partners
- Principle 5: Promote improved environmental and social outcomes

TLMA will therefore commit to:

1. Examining our organisation's current operations and potential operations in order to assess both positive and negative impacts to avoid or mitigate negative impacts and promote positive impacts, e.g. using recycled paper wherever possible, minimising our use of non-renewable energy, ensuring appropriate waste disposal at hospitals, ensuring appropriate disposal of plastics.
2. Working with implementing country partners to assess the environmental impacts during the design phase of new projects (Section C: Project Analysis of PCM 03 – Project Proposal template), taking into consideration the needs and resource base of the communities.
3. Assessing the impact and potential impact of projects on the environment in an ongoing manner through project reviews (PCM 19 – External Review Checklist, especially Section 3: Methodology), monitoring and evaluation and report accordingly including advising DFAT where appropriate.
4. Promoting the exchange of ideas with partners, about the importance of environmental sustainability, and on positive ways to address environmental concerns.
5. Encouraging programs and projects which seek to protect and nurture the environment.

The above commitments align with the United Nation’s, Sustainable Development Goals Initiative 2015-2030 Goal ‘11: Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable’ and ‘12: Responsible Consumption and Production’

6. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed in 5 years.

7. Supporting Documents

- [ACFID Code of Conduct, Quality Principal 3 Sustainable Change](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program](#)

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Summary
4.0	04/07/2017	Nerida Collard	New draft created for next revision
4.1	28/05/2020	Janice Caza	Included DFAT’s Environmental and Social Safeguarding Policy
4.2	16/06/2020	Janice Caza	Reviewed and minor edits from IPC

Document Approval History

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1.0	22/04/2003	TLMA Board
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