Appendix 5. Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability Policy

(Next review by Nov 2027)

Policy number	5	Current policy version	5
Original policy approved	Jan 2010	Previous review date	Sept 2024
Current policy reviewed by	CC	Current version approved by Committee of Management on	Nov 2026
Responsible person	CEO	Scheduled review date by	Nov 2027

Introduction

Assisi Aid Projects (Assisi) acknowledges the importance of climate action and environmental sustainability in its operations and its responsibility to contribute to improved environmental outcomes.

In the countries where Assisi operates, the natural environment is often the foundation for people's wellbeing and livelihoods. Human activity, such as the rapid and unsustainable exploitation of resources, can lead to environmental destruction, and the disempowerment and impoverishment of communities, with vulnerable people and groups disproportionately affected. Women are often the worst affected, particularly those who face intersectional forms of marginalisation, such as women with disabilities and those who live in rural areas.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to outline Assisi's commitment to climate action and conducting its internal operations and development initiatives in an environmentally protective and sustainable way to promote improved environmental outcomes. Assisi is guided by and will endeavour to meet standards set by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct, environment treaties, laws of the country Assisi is operating in, and donor policies and guidelines.

Scope

This policy applies to all of Assisi's staff, members, Governing Body members (including Committee of Management and subcommittee members), volunteers, interns, representatives, contractors, and visitors to project sites (hereinafter referred to as "personnel").

In addition, Assisi will support in-country partners to understand the principles of this policy, and to practically implement climate action and environmental sustainability practices and/or procedures in their local context.

Definitions

Climate Action	Actions taken to reduce the overall climate risks that communities, economies, and ecosystems are facing across the world by addressing both the causes and the impacts of climate change. Climate action includes activities that support adaptation, environmental restoration and mitigation. These activities may relate to an organisation's operations, programming or policy/advocacy work.
Environmental Sustainability	Making decisions and taking actions that minimise harm to the environment and people through the relationship they share with it, and ensuring the environment is not degraded beyond its capacity to maintain critical ecological processes.
Carbon Footprint	The total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by an individual or organisation's actions.
Climate Change	Climate change refers to any long-term trends or shifts in climate over many decades. These changes may be due to natural variations (such as changes in the Earth's orbit) or caused by human activities changing the composition of the atmosphere.
Climate Justice	Climate justice is a concept that addresses the just division, fair sharing, and equitable distribution of the burdens of climate change and responsibility for its mitigation. A climate justice approach sees climate change as an issue of social and environmental justice. It recognises that vulnerability to climate change can reflect existing structural injustices in society, and that climate action must explicitly address these structural power imbalances.
Adaptation	In human systems, adaptation is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, adaptation is the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects. This includes activities intended to reduce exposure to climate change or minimise potential impacts. Adaptation is best understood as a process rather than an outcome, because the

	climate continues to change and there are many unknown consequences in human and natural systems. For example, actions to protect communities, infrastructure, water sources and agriculture from increases in risks from flood, drought, cyclones, raising temperatures and sea level rise.
Mitigation	A human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases. This includes efforts to limit emission sources (e.g. though limiting the burning of fossil fuels and increasing uptake of renewable energy) and activities to remove emissions from the atmosphere through natural processes of greenhouse gas capture (e.g. rehabilitating forests) or technical solutions (e.g. direct air capture). For example, actions to increase renewable energy, energy efficiency and use of low carbon materials from local sources in construction.
Resilience	The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure. Resilience is a positive attribute when it maintains capacity for adaptation, learning and/or transformation and can be seen as a state to aim for.

Policy

This policy applies to Assisi's operations both in Australian and overseas, and is divided into operational and programmatic commitments.

<u>Climate action and environmental sustainability at an operational level</u>

Assisi is committed to considering environmental impacts and usage of resources in day-to-day operations. Where possible Assisi will:

- Comply with Australian, local, and international environmental regulations and legislation.
- Assess any proposed activity to identify potential direct and indirect impacts on the environment and implement actions to minimise these impacts.
- Reduce our emissions by minimising air and road travel.
- Reduce the amount of office materials used, such as reducing printing and going paperless where possible.
- Where possible Assisi will reuse materials, purchase refurbished and/or second-hand products, and products made from recycled materials.
- Separate and reduce waste.
- Limit unnecessary use of electricity and water to reduce energy consumption. Assisi's membership and office space in the Ross House Association commits Assisi to a

reduced environmental impact and improving energy efficiency.
- Ensure all project agreements and project cycle management tools include environmental protection requirements.
- Ensure all Assisi equipment is used with regard to the equipment's environmental impact.
- Not accept a donation where the source of the donation is questionable, unethical, or immoral, including involvement in activities that are locally or globally environmentally unsustainable.
- Bring awareness to climate action and environmental sustainability in our communications, such as sharing participant stories and marking World Environment Day.

Climate action and environmental sustainability at a programmatic level

Assisi is committed to promoting and supporting environmental sustainability, climate action and improved environmental outcomes in development initiatives, with the overarching principle of 'do no harm.'

Assisi delivers development programs through local partners and therefore recognises the importance of collaborating with local partners to support their capacity in implementing programs that are environmentally sustainable and manage climate impacts. Where relevant and in line with Assisi's mission, this includes incorporating the following into project delivery:

- All project designs and reviews will consider environmental issues and climate impacts through an assessment of the possible and/or actual risks of a project on the environment. These assessments take into account local knowledge and opportunities for adaptation, mitigation and resilience.
- Project designs and reviews consider and include ways that the project could improve and promote sustainable activities, such as sustainable agriculture and forest management practices.
- Regular monitoring of projects considers if the project is effectively addressing environmental concerns. For example, all outcomes and activity reports ask how environmental / climate change risks have been managed
- Promoting community management of natural resources.
- Consideration of disaster risk reduction, through measures such as considering monsoon season when planning program activities, contingency travel arrangements, and contingency budgets.
- Supporting partners to strengthen their capacity to advocate for environmental protections in their communities. This includes supporting partners to develop environmental sustainability policies and promote environmentally sustainable practices during projects.
- Staff model behaviours that respect and protect the environment.

Staff engagement, training and learning

Assisi provides training opportunities for all staff on climate action and environmental sustainability. This is undertaken upon induction to the organisation and refresher training is provided to all relevant personnel.

When this Policy is reviewed and approved by the Committee of Management, the Policy is circulated to all personnel to ensure an understanding of the changes made and Assisi's commitment to climate action and environmental sustainability.

The Policy is also published and accessible on the Assisi website.

Responsibilities

As outlined in the Good Practice Manual, there are roles and responsibilities that apply to all policies.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Reviewing risk assessments as part of project design to ensure environmental risks are considered. Alongside the CEO, the Committee of Management and/or Sub-Committees are responsible for also responsible for reviewing risk assessments as part of project design.
- Undertaking due diligence processes before deciding to accept a fundraising opportunity. This process will include, but is not limited to, obtaining assurances that the company complies with ethical, environmental, and humanitarian requirements.
- Informing the Committee of Management about climate risks and climate action.

Related Documents

DFAT – Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy
https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/environmental-social-safeguard-policy.pdf

DFAT – Aid Risk Management, Environment and social safeguards
https://www.dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/aid-risk-management/Pages/environmental-and-social-safeguards

DFAT – Good Practice Note: Integrating Climate Change into Australia's Development Assistance for Implementing Partners https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/climate-change-integration-guidance-for-implementing-partners.pdf

ACFID – Code of Conduct Commitment 3.2. https://acfid.asn.au/good-practice-toolkit/quality-principle-3/commitment-3-2/

ACFID – Guidance for the development of a Climate Action Policy https://acfid.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Guidance-for-the-development-of-a-Climate-Action-Policy-_with-DFAT-info_26-March.pdf

Ross House Association – Greening Ross House Your Tenancy Guide

Assisi – Program Manual