INF Australia Environment Policy v6

Table of Contents

1 Introduction 1
2 Purpose 2
3 Scope 2
4 Christian Theological Basis 2
5 Policy 3
5.1 Guiding Principle 3
5.2 In Australia 3
5.3 Through development partners 3
5.4 Monitoring 4
6 Roles and Responsibilities 5
7 Related Documents and Policies 5
8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review 5
9 Definitions (optional) 6
10 Document Control 7
Appendix A INFA Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) for Operations (2026–2030) 8

1 Introduction

This policy describes INF Australia's (INFA) commitment to minimise risks and impacts to the environment and measures to improve environmental outcomes from operations and programs. We consider the environment to be the interconnected system of living things, natural processes and physical surroundings that sustain life on Earth, including access to fresh water, food and fuel. Under this description we acknowledge that climate is a part of this system, and that changing climate and related events are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities in the poorest and most marginalised populations that we work in. This holistic understanding is consistent with recognised definitions of the environment, which encompass ecosystems and their constituent parts—including people and communities—natural and physical resources, the qualities and characteristics of places, heritage values, and the social, economic and cultural dimensions that shape and are shaped by these systems.

Nepal is particularly vulnerable to a range of issues that threaten the environment, and the capacity to adapt to climate change is constrained by poverty, poor infrastructure, and restricted access to water, education and health care. Major threats caused by human destruction of the environment include the impacts of climate change, flooding, salinity, habitat destruction, pollution and urban expansion.

We recognise that the premise of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.[1] We further recognise that climate change threatens this objective and therefore support actions that strengthen resilience, reduce vulnerability and improve the adaptive capacity of communities facing environmental and climate-related risks. Therefore, we have a responsibility to manage, safeguard and enhance natural resources while improving social and economic wellbeing. We support the Sustainable Development Goals and actions to combat and adapt to climate change and its impacts which threaten livelihoods, food and water security in the places we work. Restricted access to a safe and sustainably managed environment can be an indicator of, or cause of, extreme poverty, and in this regard environmental degradation also impacts most heavily on the poor.

It is in this context that we minimise and mitigate our impact on the environment from our Australia-based operations and encourage participatory environmental planning and program management to reduce environmental impacts and improve adaptive capacity and management in the communities where our partners work. We commit to proactive measures that reduce climate risks, strengthen resilience, and ensure our programs do not contribute to environmental harm.

2 Purpose

This policy provides guidance to INFA staff, volunteers and partners on:

- the importance of identifying, assessing and reducing impacts on the environment from operations and programs
- how INFA will work to minimise and mitigate the environmental impact of activities in Australia and through development partners in Nepal
- how INFA will screen for, assess and manage environmental and climate risks, mitigate negative impacts, and monitor outcomes from operations and programs for continual improvement.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all INFA staff, volunteers (including board members) and any contractors or consultants that undertake activities with or on behalf of INFA in the course of their work in Australia or during visits to Nepal.

4 Christian Theological Basis

We believe that God created all things good (Genesis 1:31) and that the environment is not mere property or a resource to be used or exploited but the beloved creation of God, within which relationships are intended to be a blessing for all creatures. We further affirm that we have a responsibility as stewards in God's creation (Genesis 2:15) and that for all to live free from poverty, all people and nations should strive to live within environmental limits and ensure that shared environmental resources are available equitably to all and to future generations, as well as allowing for environmental rest and regeneration (Leviticus 25:2-5).

[1] based on the Brundtland definition from *Our Common Future* (1987), produced by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development

5 Policy

5.1 Guiding Principle

INFA's approach to environmental sustainability, adaptation, climate action and improved environmental outcomes is underpinned by a "do no harm" approach in its initiatives. This approach is grounded in a deep understanding of local systems and relationships, aiming to prevent or minimise unintended negative consequences within INFA's operational and programming context. We will take measures to ensure that our actions do not create or exacerbate environmental degradation, climate vulnerability, or social inequities, and in doing so strive to protect the rights, health, safety and livelihoods of people, including women and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

5.2 In Australia

INFA will minimise the environmental impact of its operations by:

- considering the environmental impact of procurement decisions
- minimising waste in the office and using recycled materials where possible
- consolidating travel, particularly air travel
- replacing travel with online meetings where appropriate
- streamlining printing and distribution of publications
- minimising waste and emissions related to supporter events and exposure visits
- raising awareness of global environmental and climate-related issues among our staff and supporters in Australia and advocating for policies that protect and restore our environment
- actively reducing emissions across all aspects of our work and identifying sustainable and responsible offset options to mitigate unavoidable emissions
- supporting and campaigning for the Sustainable Development Goals for ending poverty, protecting and restoring life on land, and tackling inequalities.

INFA's Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) will set measurable targets for reducing emissions, waste and resource use to minimise environmental impacts from Australian operations.

5.3 Through development partners

A large proportion of Nepali people rely on their immediate environment to subsist and survive, so access to a clean, sustainably managed environment will directly affect their health and livelihoods. Nepal is one of the countries most at risk from climate change and many Nepali people, particularly the poor, are at risk from both natural and climate disasters. Integrating climate action into all levels of operations and programs is critical for sustainable development outcomes, to identify, mitigate and adapt to risks.

Good development practice builds awareness and resilience in a community, and we will continue to support partners using locally led and participatory development practices to strengthen environmental stewardship and climate adaptation in communities. Through our development partners, we aim to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and build environmentally sustainable and adaptable practices and strengthen the climate resilience of Nepali communities. Through a "do no harm" approach, we will take measures to ensure partner programs avoid actions that may unintentionally create or increase environmental degradation, climate vulnerability or social inequality.

Programming activities supporting this policy include:

- Empowering people, including program designers, managers and facilitators, the knowledge to consider their environment and confidence to protect and enhance it. Giving people directly affected by climate change the opportunity to inform design and influence the decisions that will affect them.
- Supporting advocacy that helps people to understand and access their rights, including a healthy, safe and sustainable environment
- Helping groups to identify climate risks and sustainable adaptation options to climate change, including drought, floods and extreme weather events
- Supporting Water, Sanitation and Hygiene systems and maintenance training
- Strengthening disaster preparedness capacity through training
- Supporting sustainable food and fuel production, including nature-based solutions
- Applying a structured environmental and climate risk assessment procedure throughout the program cycle, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to ensure activities do not cause harm to water, land, air, biodiversity, cultural heritage or community wellbeing
- Supporting partners to strengthen their environmental sustainability and climate action capacity through training, guidance documents, and ongoing accompaniment
- Complying with relevant environmental laws and regulations of the country
- Active support of national and international initiatives and campaigns that promote sustainable environmental management and climate justice.

5.4 Monitoring

INFA will use the following methods to monitor environmental risks, impacts and sustainability progress:

- Identify, assess, record and regularly update environmental and climate risks in relevant strategies and documents
- Develop data-driven environmental action plans to reduce emissions and environmental impacts in Australian operations
- Conduct internal environmental compliance checks
- Review six-monthly project reports from partners in Nepal to assess progress on agreed environmental sustainability activities
- Visit projects and undertake periodic evaluations that assess environmental sustainability as a component of evaluation
- Support partners' capacity for environmentally sustainable management to assess risks and monitor the impacts of projects and ensure they remain in line with multilateral agreements to which Australia is a party
- Report to the INFA Board on cross-cutting issues, including environmental sustainability and climate action in operations and programs (at least annually).

6 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
INFA Board	• Approve and oversee implementation of the policy Ensure compliance with DFAT, ACFID, and legal obligations
CEO	• Ensure all staff, volunteers, contractors, and partners are aware of and comply with the policy • Provide overall leadership and accountability for reporting on the outcomes of the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan • Ensure adequate resources for training and partner capacity strengthening
All Staff, Contractors, Consultants, Volunteers	• Uphold this policy and support the minimisation of environmental impacts arising from INFA's operations (Section 5.2) • Raise awareness of global climate and environmental issues among supporters in Australia • Support advocacy measures that protect and restore our environment in alignment with biblical principles of creation care • Engage with partners to strengthen climate resilience and environmental stewardship through program support
Partner Organisations	• Participate in climate and environmental risk assessments and monitoring processes • Identify, assess, manage and monitor environmental and climate risks associated with supported programs, and report significant risks or incidents to INFA

7 Related Documents and Policies

- ACFID Code of Conduct
- ACFID Quality Assurance Framework
- Development Policy
- DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy
- DFAT Accreditation Indicator A1.6
- Environmental Action Plan
- Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015
- Quality Standards

8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every five years, or earlier in response to relevant legislative, regulatory, contractual, sectoral or organisational changes.

9 Definitions

Term	Definition
Adaptive capacity	The ability of people, communities, organisations or systems to adjust to actual or expected environmental and climate-related changes, reduce potential harm, take advantage of beneficial opportunities, and respond effectively to consequences.
Climate action	Measures taken to address climate change and its impacts by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening resilience, supporting adaptation, or responding to climate-related loss and damage.
Climate adaptation	Adjustments to human or natural systems in response to actual or expected climate conditions and their effects, intended to reduce harm or make use of beneficial opportunities.
Climate change	Long-term changes in climate patterns, including temperature, rainfall and the frequency or severity of extreme weather events, arising from natural processes and human activity.
Climate resilience	The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions and systems to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, recover from and adapt to climate-related hazards and impacts.
Climate risk	The potential for adverse consequences arising from the interaction of climate-related hazards with the exposure and vulnerability of people, assets, livelihoods, ecosystems or services.
Development partner	An organisation with which INFA works to plan, fund, implement, monitor or evaluate development or humanitarian programs.
Do no harm	An approach that seeks to identify, prevent and minimise unintended negative environmental or social consequences arising from an organisation's decisions, operations or programs.
Environment	The interconnected system of living things, ecosystems, natural processes, physical surroundings, natural resources, people and communities, and the social, economic and cultural conditions that shape and are shaped by them.
Environmental impact	Any positive or negative change to the environment resulting wholly or partly from INFA's operations, decisions, funded activities or programs.
Environmental risk	The possibility that an activity, event or condition may cause harm to the environment, people, livelihoods, cultural heritage or community wellbeing.
Environmental stewardship	The responsible care, protection and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources for present and future generations.
Environmental sustainability	The responsible use, protection and restoration of the natural environment in a way that maintains ecological systems and resources for present and future generations.
Mitigation	Measures taken to avoid, prevent, reduce or remedy negative environmental impacts. In the climate context, it also refers to measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or increase their removal from the atmosphere.
Sustainable development	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

10 Document Control

Date	Version	Summary of Changes	Sections Changed	Authorised By
April 2012	v1	created		INFA Board
June 2015	v2	Reformat	2.1, 2.2	INFA Board
December 2018	v3	Additions	1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3	INFA Board
February 2021	v4	Implementation actions added or modified	2.1, 2.2, 2.3	INFA Board
October 2024	5	Edits throughout	All	INFA Board
October 2026	6	Updates and edits throughout	All	INFA Board

Appendix A INFA Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) for Operations (2026–2030)

This document sets out INFA's action plan to minimise environmental impacts and improve environmental outcomes across INFA's internal operations to support commitments in INFA's Environment Policy (2026).

Action	Target	Monitoring	Responsibility
Sustainable procurement **Prioritise purchase of recycled, low-impact, and ethically sourced products**	Procurement decisions must include an environmental impact check by Dec 2026 80% of office consumables purchased must meet sustainability criteria by June 2027	Procurement log reviewed annually	Program Officer
Office and event waste minimisation **Implement:** • **Waste-sorting system** • **Reduced printing** • **Increased recycling**	Establish a waste-reduction target following the Q4 2026 baseline audit.	Annual waste audit (separation, use and appropriate disposal of recyclable components)	All staff
Reduction of organisational travel emissions **Consolidate domestic and international travel**	All international travel must include a travel justification and emissions estimate Offset 100% of air travel emissions by June 2028	CEO travel approval Offset reporting in financial reports	CEO, staff, board and volunteers CEO and Finance Manager
Climate and Environmental Awareness **Build internal environmental stewardship through staff engagement** **Raise awareness among supporters**	Annual staff training / updates on environmental stewardship and climate action Publish at least two pieces per year (newsletter, social media, events) that include a relevant environmental or climate-related connection to the impact of partner projects.	Staff calendar Communications calendar	CEO / Environmental Consultant Communications
Environmental Compliance and Reporting **Internal compliance review**	Conduct annual compliance review	Report progress to the board	CEO