5.5 Environmental Sustainability & Climate Policy

Introduction and Context

Care for the environment forms the Fifth Mark of Mission as part of ABM/AID's mission statement, "to protect, care for and renew life on this planet".

ABM and AID acknowledge that a key threat to the environmental sustainability of our planet, and of our work with partners, is *Climate Change*. ABM and AID also acknowledge that human activities, including our own activities, are significant contributors to *Climate Change*. *Climate Change* is exacerbating problems related to pestilence, floods, droughts, cyclones, less predictable weather for farming and fishing, conflict over scarce resources, and rising sea levels in many areas of the world.

Furthermore, the world's poor are being disproportionately impacted by climate change. In the Torres Strait, Pacific Islands, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, for example, partner communities in low-lying islands and coastal areas are experiencing sea level rises, sea water incursion into fresh water sources, coastal flooding, and an increase in the number and intensity of storms, cyclones, and typhoons. In Kenya, Zambia, and elsewhere, partner communities experience more frequent droughts and flooding, leading to food insecurity.

At least three of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals relate directly to the Earth's environment (13—Climate Action, 14—Life Below Water, and 15—Life on Land) but protecting and caring for the environment also cuts across many of the other goals.

Environmental sustainability, as part of community development, involves identifying and managing environmental and natural disaster risks, including the risks posed by *Climate Change*.

The Anglican Communion's "Lungs of the Earth[1]" call to environmental action and advocacy states: "This is more than an environmental emergency. It is a spiritual crisis and a matter of justice. When forests are razed, coral reefs bleach, and ice sheets melt, we are not only witnessing ecological loss — we are failing in our calling as stewards of God's creation.

"The Church is called to participate with Jesus in the restoration of all things (Colossians 1:20).

…Across the globe, Anglican churches are already making a difference through local environmental projects and by actively advocating with governments and corporations on climate and environmental issues….Wherever you are in the Anglican Communion, you have a vital role in this movement for creation care and climate justice. The time for action is now, and it begins with each of us, in our own communities."

The impacts of climate change are particularly felt in the Pacific region, where AID works with several partners. In the Tuakoi Declaration (also known as the Otin Taai +20 Declaration) of May 2023, church leaders across the Pacific called for continuous multi-stakeholder collaboration to tackle climate change and empowering "frontline communities to be social agents of change."[2]

Moreover, the important 2015 Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, states: "The climate is a common good… *Climate Change* is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social,

[1] *Lungs of the Earth,* https://www.anglicancommunion.org/campaign/lungs-of-the-earth/ [accessed 16/07/2026].
[2] AID has endorsed the Tuākoi 'Lei Declaration.

economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day."[3]

Besides *Climate Change*, other forms of damage to the environment – such as the clearing of forests and draining of water catchments – are also major causes of disasters, including landslides, floods, and droughts. Environmental mismanagement can cause or exacerbate many (but not all) kinds of environmental disasters. In addressing natural disasters, AID is guided by its Humanitarian Response Policy and Humanitarian Response Procedures.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify ABM's and AID's environmental values and to facilitate these values being reflected in ABM's and AID's work within our own organisations (including *Advocacy* and Community and Church *Education*), and AID's *Community Development* and *Humanitarian Response* initiatives.

Scope

This policy applies to the work of ABM and AID, both in the field and in ABM and AID's offices and activities. Some policy commitments specify that they also apply to AID's development partners.

Definitions (see "Definitions and Acronyms" at the beginning of this Compendium)

Guiding Principles

a. ABM and AID regard the identification and management of potential impacts on the *Environment* as an integral and essential component of each activity and program that ABM and AID undertake.

b. ABM and AID acknowledge that an activity may impact on the environment in several ways:

   i. A direct impact: a change (physical, chemical or biological) to the environment because of the activity.
   ii. An indirect impact: where the changes in policy or behaviour flowing from the activity are expected to affect the environment in the future or 'downstream'.
   iii. A positive impact: a beneficial environmental outcome, such as better health as a result of a clean water supply.
   iv. A negative impact: an adverse environmental outcome, which may be irreversible and/or have a chain of impact on poverty such as poor health or a reduction in livelihood potential.

c. ABM and AID also acknowledge that all their activities with communities should include a climate change risk assessment and risk management as part of their overall risk management processes.

Policy Commitments

[3] *Laudato Si,* https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html [Accessed 16/07/2026]

Organisational

1 ABM and AID are committed to environmental sustainability, climate action and improved environmental outcomes in our organisations' internal operations (based on ACFID Commitment 3.2.1 and DFAT Accreditation A1.6 and B2.5) by:

a. promoting environmental and climate awareness, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and environmental sustainability initiatives;
b. minimising the carbon footprints of our organisations;
c. complying with all applicable legal and other environmental requirements, including Multilateral Environmental Agreements;
d. developing targets for minimising our carbon footprint, including in the areas of waste minimisation and greenhouse gas emission offsets, particularly of work- and governance-related travel, and regularly measuring progress towards these targets. These will be reported against in ABM and AID's Annual Report;
e. promoting environmental awareness, including awareness of this policy, among our *Responsible People*, *Staff*, *Volunteers*, supporters, suppliers, *Contractors*, and other *Third Parties*;
f. contributing to the environmental awareness of the Australian public. This will include *Education* and *Advocacy* about *Climate Justice*, the impacts of *Climate Change*, and the pursuit of *Climate Action*, and *Environmental Sustainability* issues;
g. appointing an *Environmental Focal Person*, whose role will be to support the implementation of this policy.

Programmatic

2 AID is committed to promoting environmental sustainability, climate action and improved environmental outcomes in our development and humanitarian initiatives, (based on ACFID Commitments 3.2, and 4.2 including indicators 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, and DFAT Accreditation A1.6, B2.3 and B2.5) by:

a. establishing an Environmental and Climate Action Strategy, aligning with our broader AID Program Strategy;
b. providing incentives to AID's partners that will increase rather than reduce people's ability to adapt to *Climate Change* and disaster risks, such as funding water and energy conservation mechanisms;
c. ensuring that environmental and climate change risks to and impacts on projects and people are identified, assessed, and managed at all stages of the project cycle. (based on ACFID Indicator 3.2.2, and Commitment 4.2, and DFAT Accreditation B2.3). Such risk assessments will aim to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on people in *Vulnerable positions* caused by the risks of a changing climate or disasters (for example by not supporting infrastructure vulnerable to flooding, or livelihoods that are inappropriate for changing climatic conditions). Risk assessments will also adhere to the principle of "Do no harm", in line with DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (2018);
d. requiring AID's *Partners* to consider the impacts of *Climate Change* as part of their *Contextual Analysis* during *Design* and *Planning* stages of their *Programs* and *Projects*;

e. supporting the *Sustainable Development Goals*, including the following goals related to environmental sustainability:

   i. Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;

   ii. Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

   iii. Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;

   iv. Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

   v. Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage water resources, soils, forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

   ABM and AID will support the Sustainable Development Goals in our own activities and will encourage partners to take the Sustainable Development Goals into account when planning and engaging in *Development Initiatives*;

f. requiring our partners to comply with their own government environmental laws, standards and/or policies and encouraging partners to develop their own Environmental Sustainability (including Environmental Stewardship) policy;

g. supporting the provision of *Environmental Sustainability*, including *Climate Change*, and *Disaster Risk Reduction* training for partners;

h. undertaking periodic assessments of AID's implementing partners' environmental management practice, including the degree to which this policy is being implemented and the impacts of this policy, our projects and practices. These findings will be made widely accessible.

Responsibilities for Implementing this Policy

The ABM and AID boards will:

- Oversee the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure ABM and AID exercise and promote environmental stewardship in the operations of the organisations, and that AID promotes this in all its program work;
- Champion the *Sustainable Development Goals*, particularly those related to *Environmental Sustainability* and addressing *Climate Change;*
- Monitor progress towards targets for waste minimisation and carbon emission reduction within the ABM and AID organisations through receipt of a regular report.
- Receive reports on AID's Development and Humanitarian initiatives.

ABM's and AID's Policy Committee will

- Ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years.
- Ensure that training in this policy is provided to governance body members.

ABM and AID Staff and Volunteers will:

- Be aware of and comply with, where relevant to their role at ABM or AID, the key commitments of this policy

- Exercise environmental stewardship in the course of their work for ABM and/or AID

ABM and AID Senior Management will:

- appoint an *Environment Focal Person*.

AID's Head of Programs will

- Ensure all AID's Development and Humanitarian initiatives comply with this policy.
- Ensure all AID staff and other relevant staff are trained in this policy.

AID's Program Manager – Effectiveness and Emergencies will

- Ensure that this policy is implemented through inclusion in AID's Project Cycle Management templates and its Partner Toolkits.

AID's Program Managers will

- Ensure that this policy is implemented, through discussions and visits with Partners and through reviewing partner reports.

The Environmental Focal Person will

- Organise training in this policy and in *Environmental Sustainability* to *ABM and AID Workplace participants* including staff, boards and governance committees;
- report annually to the ABM and AID boards on progress towards targets on waste minimisation and emission reduction at ABM and AID;
- Lead regular assessments of ABM's and AID's *Environmental Sustainability* practices, and of those of AID's partners, and report these widely, including to the ABM and AID boards.

ABM Education Missioner will

- engage in environmental advocacy and education with the Australian public and ABM's and AID's supporters (see also ABM-AID Advocacy Policy)

Related standards, policies, procedures and resources

United Nations

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially 2, 7, 13, 14 and 15.
United Nations Framework Convention on *Climate Change* (UNFCCC) (1992)
Kyoto Protocol (1997)
Paris Agreement (2015)

ACFID Code of Conduct

Quality Principle 3, and Commitments 3.2 and 4.2
ACFID's Climate Action Framework
ACFID's Guidance for the Development of a Climate Policy (2026)

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (2018)
DFAT's *Climate Change* Action Strategy (2019)
Australia's International Development Policy 2023

DFAT's Good Practice Note: Integrating *Climate Change* into Australia's Development Assistance for Implementing Partners (Jan 2026)
DFAT Accreditation Guidelines, especially A1.6, B2.3 and B2.5.

ABM & AID
ABM-AID Advocacy Policy (See Policy Compendium 4.4)
AID's Environmental Risk Screening Procedure
ABM and AID's *Climate Change* Position Statement (Reviewed 2024)

Anglican Communion
Lungs of the Earth (November, 2025)

Other Church Organisations
Tuākoi 'Lei Declaration (Pacific Conference of Churches, Suva, 2024)

Laudato Si (Papal Encyclical, Holy See, 2015)

Policy History	
Name of Policy	**Date Adopted**
ComDev Environment Policy	2004
Environment Policy	2006
Environment Policy	March 2010
Environment Policy	March 2016
Environmental Sustainability Policy	September 2020
Environmental Sustainability Policy	April 2021
Environmental Sustainability Policy	October 2023
Environmental Sustainability and *Climate Change* Policy	To be adopted October 2026