

ENVIRONMENT POLICY

A CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS JANUARY 22, 2016

The use of natural resources and energy in unsustainable ways causes climate change and environmental degradation. Its effects hinder development and the right of all people to live a life in dignity. This policy allows Diakonia to meet its environmental commitments without compromising its mission to change unfair political, economic, social and cultural structures that generate poverty, inequality, oppression and violence.

Diakonia's environmental management system allows us to follow up on this policy¹.

Supporting sustainable development and advocating for climate justice

The degradation of ecosystems is affecting peoples' lives and livelihoods. We are trying to influence this development in a positive direction by supporting partners with a focus on sustainable development, including wise use of land and natural resources.

Climate change is a global threat to human survival and is worst felt in developing countries. This is a reality we seek to change by advocating for climate justice and by promoting resilience and adaptation capacities.

Diakonia's work shall depart from an understanding of each environmental context where we work. Tools are utilized to assess our environmental impact. Furthermore, Diakonia continuously seeks to increase staff members' and partners' knowledge about environmental issues, climate change and its consequences.

Minimizing the environmental impact from travel and vehicle use

Diakonia is an international organisation with operations in around 30 countries. Our work requires travels within and between countries at times. When travelling, transport means with less impact on the environment shall be prioritized. Travels should be prioritized in line with the needs of operations and the security context. CO₂ emissions from flights shall be reported.

Videoconference equipment, Skype or similar communication facilities shall always be considered as an alternative to travel. Cars shall only be used when it is motivated by limited public transport facilities, carpooling, or security reasons. If Diakonia has to purchase cars the most environmental friendly alternative shall, as far as practically possible, be selected.

Diakonia does not offset carbon emissions, as we believe that the effectiveness of offsetting schemes remains uncertain².

Ensuring environmental friendly offices

As a global organization, Diakonia needs to have offices in many countries. Country offices shall continuously find new ways to reduce energy, water and paper consumption. Office equipment and waste shall as far as possible be recycled. Products and services shall always be purchased with environmental consideration. Vegetarian food shall be the first hand option at meetings and representations since livestock production is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases.

Managing our environmental impact

In order to follow up and improve on our environmental commitments, Diakonia has a system to monitor and report on its environmental impact annually. Based on reporting and lessons learned, this policy will be revised regularly.

¹ The global implementation plan for monitoring and follow up on this policy is to be found in the separate document *Global System for Environmental Management 2016-2020*.

² For more information see *Position paper on climate compensation*.