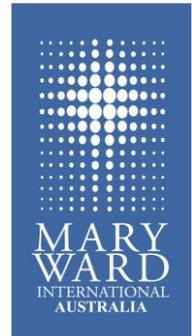MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.   Introduction

Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) is committed to promoting sustainable environmental management.

In all countries the natural environment is the foundation of people's wellbeing and livelihoods, particularly those living in vulnerable communities. Degradation of natural resources can adversely affect people's health, their ability to access essential food and water supplies and their opportunities for sustainable economic development. Climate change impacts and an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters are additional and significant challenges for already disadvantaged groups. Some of these impacts are created or exacerbated by environmental degradation.

This Environmental Management policy will enhance MWIA's ability to deliver effective outcomes and manage environmental risks associated with its work. Implementing this policy will ensure that its work does not cause harm to the people it is intended to assist, or to their wider communities or environment.

2.   Purpose of Policy

This policy:
- outlines the MWIA's approach to managing its environmental impact
- identifies principles to guide how MWIA approaches environmental safeguards
- details guidelines for early identification of environmental risks and impacts of project investments, and their continued management through the project lifecycle
- details guidelines for managing environmental safeguards, including when working with partners, so that MWIA:
    - meets its legal and policy obligations
    - manages environmental risks
    - ensures resources are not used in a manner that harms the environment
    - implements suitable environmental management practices
    - continually improves environmental performance in its work.

3.   Scope

This policy applies to all people engaged under the auspices of MWIA, including board directors, committee members, employees, volunteers and contractors (collectively hereafter referred to as 'personnel').

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	A person under the age of 18.
Displacement	Displacement refers to both physical and economic impacts occurring because of induced land acquisition or restrictions on access to land or other resources imposed by a project investment on individuals, families or communities. Displacement can include both physical and economic displacement.
Ecologically sustainable development	Using, conserving and enhancing a community's resources so that ecological processes are maintained and the present and future quality of life can be increased.
Environment	Defined as: • ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities • natural and physical resources • qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas • heritage values of places, and • the social, economic and cultural aspects of the above.
Environmental impact assessment (EIA)	The process of identifying, predicting, evaluating a project investment's positive and negative environmental impacts as well as identifying ways of avoiding, mitigating or at last resort offsetting negative impacts.
Environmental management plan (EMP)	A plan that is an output of the EIA that details measures to avoid, mitigate or offset negative impacts of the proposed action.
Impact	A change to the environment, including people and communities, whether negative or positive, or wholly or partly resulting from a project investment's actions. An investment can have direct and indirect impacts on the environment. Impacts may be cumulative (over time) or combined (more than one impact in one place).
Project investment	Any project, program or activity supported by MWIA.
Significant environmental impact	An impact which is important, notable, or of consequence, having regard to its context or intensity. Whether or not an action is likely to have a significant environmental impact depends upon the sensitivity, value, and quality of the environment that is impacted, and upon the intensity, duration, magnitude and geographic extent of the impacts.
Vulnerable or disadvantaged	Refers to those who may be more likely to be adversely affected by a project investment's impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of the benefits.

5 Policy Statement

5.1 Environmental Management – Statement

Protecting the Earth's natural resources and maintaining its ecosystems are fundamental to sustainable communities. Conversely, environmental degradation often increases the vulnerability of communities through displacement, loss of connection, risk of ecological disaster and climate change impact.

MWIA acknowledges its responsibility to ensure its work is conducted in a way that minimises harm to the environment and the unintended consequences on people and communities. This

responsibility is underpinned by MWIA's commitment to apply five key principles to guide the management of its environmental impact across all its operations.

5.2 Environmental Management – Commitment

MWIA's commitment to environmental management is informed by the following[1]:

Principle 1 Do No Harm: MWIA seeks to protect the rights, health, safety, and livelihoods of people including, children, women, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups whilst maintaining the health, diversity and productivity of the environment.

Principle 2 Identify, Assess and Manage Environmental Impacts: MWIA seeks to identify potential environmental risks and impacts early, to ensure they are adequately assessed and managed.

Principle 3 Engage Effectively With Stakeholders: MWIA seeks to be transparent about environmental risks and impacts in a way that is timely, accessible, and culturally and socially suitable for the affected people.

Principle 4 Work Effectively With Partners: MWIA seeks to work with overseas partners, comply with partner country safeguard laws and policies and where possible build partners' capacity to develop and implement environmental governance systems.

Principle 5 Promote Improved Environmental Outcomes: Where possible, MWIA seeks to promote improved environmental outcomes by integrating ecologically sustainable development into all work.

6. Responsibilities

Environmental management is a shared responsibility, and MWIA is committed to ensuring that all persons to whom this policy applies are aware of their obligations under this policy.

The following specific responsibilities exist in the application of this policy:

Role	Responsibilities
MWIA Board	- Approves the Environmental Management Policy. - Instructs and oversees the implementation of the policy.
Executive Officer	- Recommends the Environmental Management Policy be approved by the MWIA Board. - Works with key management personnel to operationalise the policy and ensures all requirements are followed. - Responsible for individual staff management to ensure the implementation of the policy. - Notes feedback and opportunities for improvement within the Environmental Management Policy.
Key Management Personnel (Managers, Supervisors)	- The MWIA Projects and Partnerships Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy in relation MWIA projects. - Notes feedback and opportunities for improvement within the Environmental Management Policy.

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[1] Adapted from the DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy

Committee Members, Contractors, Employees, and Volunteers	• Are familiar with the content of this policy and MWIA's commitment to environmental management in its operational activities. • Champion good practice and maintain an organisational culture that monitors and supports environmental management. • Internal reporting of actual, suspected or potential environmental management risks by staff is both required and expected.

7. Procedure

7.1 Environmental Management – Project investments

7.1.1 Identify, assess and manage environmental impacts

Assess and document how:

- the environment of beneficiaries will be affected, including children, women, Indigenous peoples and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
- to avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimise, mitigate or as a last resort, offset or compensate for negative environmental impacts.

Where a medium or high risk of environmental impact is identified, prepare an environmental impact assessment and an environmental management plan to show how:

- the identified environmental risks and impacts will be removed or mitigated and managed.
- the identified environmental risks and impacts will be monitored and reported on monthly as part of project investment delivery.

7.1.2 Engage Project Stakeholders

Where a medium or high environmental risk is identified, planning and implementation is required to engage with affected parties and other stakeholders early in the project's lifecycle by:

- being transparent about the project investment, its risks and impacts in a way that is timely, accessible, and culturally and socially suitable for the affected people.
- ensuring consultation includes affected parties, is inclusive, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, or intimidation to enable and engage meaningful participation by stakeholders.
- providing accessible and culturally appropriate grievance redress mechanisms and ensuring that grievances are handled promptly, transparently and without retribution or cost to the party that raised the concern.

Stakeholder consultation and engagement is required to continue throughout project investment implementation.

7.1.3 Work Effectively With Project Partners

Where a project is delivered in partnership, MWIA is required to work with the partner to:

- comply with partner country environmental safeguard laws and policies.
- manage environmental impacts in a way that is consistent with this policy.
- where possible and practicable, deliver ecologically sustainable outcomes.

- work with the partner to use local country systems and to avoid duplication or unnecessary project investment assessment, planning and implementation requirements.
- where applicable, consider the partner's environment policy and its alignment to this policy.
- where the partner does not have an environment policy, work with the partner to develop and implement an environmental management plan for the project investment.

7.2   Environmental Management - Office

MWIA's commitment to environmental protection within the office is operationalised by:

- Creating a culture where sustainable environmental management is considered an integral element of MWIA operations.
- Considering environmental impacts of all purchases made and where possible purchasing fair-trade and recyclable options.
- Supporting staff to recycle and working in an energy efficient manner.
- Including an overview of MWIA's commitment to minimising its environmental impact in the induction of all new staff.
- Regularly monitoring environmental performance and reporting to the MWIA Board.

7.3   Environmental Monitoring and Reporting

- Instances of environmental management risk should be reported in line with the responsibilities outlined in Section 6 of this policy.
- MWIA's office environmental management is monitored and reported by the MWIA Executive Officer, who is required to report annually to the MWIA Board.
- MWIA's project-based environmental risk management is monitored and reported by the MWIA Executive Officer, who is required to report annually to the MWIA Board.
- Where applicable, feedback and observations for improvement in policy, procedure and practice should be made as part of monitoring and reporting to the MWIA Board.

8.   Related Policies, Legislation and Documents

MWIA ACFID Compliance Requirements

Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct, Good Practice Toolkit, Quality Principle 4, Sustainable Change, specifically: [Commitment 3.3 We promote environmental stewardship and sustainability.](#)

- **Compliance indicator 3.3.1:** Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to environmental sustainability and improved environmental outcomes in their development and humanitarian initiatives.
- **Compliance indicator 3.3.2:** Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to environmental sustainability and improved environmental outcomes in their organisation's internal operations.

9.   Policy Governance

Approval: Chair, Mary Ward International Australia Board
Support: MWIA Executive Officer
Review: This policy will be reviewed in November (every three years or earlier if required)

Responsible Person	Date Created	Scheduled Review date
MWIA Board Chair	November 2022	November 2025
Contact	**Version**	**Status**
Hannah George (Executive Officer)	1.0	Final
Authorisation name	**Authorisation signature**	**Date of authorisation**
Dr Leoni Degenhardt AM (Chair)	*LDegenhardt*	7 December 2022