

Policy on Biodiversity Protection, Climate Awareness, and Environmental Responsibility

Africa-Asia Impact (AAI) is committed to environmental responsibility, climate awareness, biodiversity protection, nature conservation, responsible carbon management, and sustainable use of natural resources across all operations and partnerships. We recognize that environmental degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss disproportionately affect the poorest communities, especially women, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, and people living in fragile ecosystems in Bangladesh and Tanzania.

AAI works through a climate justice and rights-based approach, ensuring that the people most affected by climate change have access to knowledge, protection, participation, and decision-making power. Environmental sustainability and protection are integrated into all stages of our project cycle, from design to implementation, monitoring, and long-term resilience building.

This policy complements AAI's other internal policies, including Gender Equality, Good Governance and Anti-Corruption, Child Protection, Disability Inclusion and PSHEA.

1. Principles

AAI is committed to:

- **Environmental protection:** safeguarding soil, water, air, forests, ecosystems and natural resources
- **Biodiversity protection and restoration:** protecting species, habitats and ecological processes, enhancing biodiversity through community-led conservation, regenerative practices and indigenous knowledge
- **Climate justice:** addressing unequal climate impacts and empowering vulnerable groups
- **Climate rights:** supporting communities' rights to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment
- **Emission reduction:** actively reducing greenhouse gas emissions within AAI's activities, operations, travel and procurement
- **Carbon sequestration:** promoting nature-based carbon capture through reforestation, soil regeneration, agroecology and watershed restoration

- **Preventing climate displacement:** strengthening adaptation and resilience to reduce the risk of forced migration and climate-induced displacement
 - **Do-No-Harm:** ensuring AAI activities do not cause environmental damage
 - **Sustainability:** promoting long-term ecological balance and regenerative approaches
 - **Local knowledge:** valuing and integrating indigenous knowledge in environmental decisions
 - **Participation:** involving communities, women, youth and local leaders in environmental planning and implementation
 - **Transparency and accountability:** clear documentation of environmental risks, mitigation and monitoring
 - **Mainstreaming:** integrating climate and environmental considerations across all programming
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2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- all AAI staff, volunteers, and board members
 - partner organizations and their staff
 - community leaders, committees and youth structures
 - contractors, suppliers and consultants
 - all AAI-funded activities and interventions
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3. Environmental Risks and Climate Vulnerabilities

AAI recognizes key climate and environmental risks in our focus countries and locations.

Tanzania (Maasai Steppe, Kilindi, semi-arid regions)

- droughts and climate variability
- water scarcity and land degradation
- deforestation and biodiversity loss
- rangeland degradation and erosion
- increased climate pressure on pastoralist systems
- heightened risk of climate-induced displacement

Bangladesh (Dinajpur, northern regions, ethnic minority areas)

- heatwaves and temperature extremes
- flooding, riverbank erosion and waterlogging (Himalaya meltwater, monsoon)
- soil depletion and pesticide dependence

- declining biodiversity and habitat loss
- marginalization of ethnic minority women in climate governance
- increasing climate-related migration pressures

These realities guide AAI's focus on climate adaptation, resilience, and prevention of climate displacement.

4. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)

AAI commits to:

- conducting Environmental Impact Assessments where required
 - analyzing environmental risks during project design
 - screening for impacts on water, soil, biodiversity, forests, grazing lands and ecosystems
 - screening for climate risks including displacement potential
 - integrating emission reduction and carbon sequestration strategies into project design
 - documenting all environmental safeguards in proposals, budgets and result frameworks
 - monitoring environmental indicators throughout the project cycle
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5. Nature-Based Solutions and Regenerative Approaches

AAI implements nature-based and regenerative solutions, including:

- sand dams and water harvesting structures
- watershed restoration and soil regeneration
- reforestation, afforestation, and native species planting
- regenerative grazing practices
- drought-resistant vegetation and sustainable fodder systems
- regenerative agriculture and agroecology
- climate-smart livelihoods (beekeeping, tree nurseries, medicinal plants, small enterprises)
- community-led natural resource governance

To strengthen carbon balance and biodiversity, AAI promotes:

- carbon sequestration in soils, forests, and vegetation
- protection of local habitats, forests, wetlands, and ecological corridors
- support for pollinators, wildlife and natural regeneration
- prevention of harmful extraction, overgrazing and unsustainable land use

These approaches reduce emissions, increase carbon storage, and strengthen ecosystem resilience.

6. Climate Justice and Community Empowerment

AAI's climate work is rooted in justice. We commit to:

- prioritizing vulnerable groups (women, youth, ethnic minorities)
- strengthening community capacity for climate adaptation
- supporting local leadership and indigenous knowledge systems
- addressing harmful gender norms that limit participation
- ensuring equitable access to land, water and natural resources
- promoting fair and transparent benefit-sharing
- reducing climate displacement risk by strengthening local adaptation capacities
- supporting climate rights advocacy where safe and appropriate

Climate justice requires addressing the root causes of vulnerability, not only treating short-term symptoms.

7. Environmentally Responsible Project Implementation

All AAI projects must:

- integrate environmental and climate considerations at all stages
- avoid activities that degrade ecosystems or harm biodiversity
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to project operations
- minimize pollution, plastic waste, and harmful chemical use
- promote responsible water use and resource efficiency
- prioritize low-emission procurement and local sourcing
- incorporate climate awareness into training and community engagement

Projects must document:

- environmental risks and mitigation
 - emission reduction strategies
 - carbon sequestration opportunities
 - sustainability measures
 - monitoring indicators
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8. Procurement and Supply Chain Responsibilities

AAI and partners must:

- prioritize environmentally sustainable procurement
 - select suppliers that minimize emissions, waste, and harmful extraction
 - avoid products linked to deforestation or environmental harm
 - prioritize local, recycled, and low-carbon materials
 - enforce responsible waste management
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9. Staff, Partner and Community Capacity Building

AAI will:

- provide climate change and environmental safeguarding training
 - train partners in emission reduction and biodiversity protection
 - strengthen community knowledge on climate resilience
 - support environmental committees and youth leadership
 - promote environmental stewardship across all demographics
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10. Reporting Environmental Concerns

AAI encourages staff and communities to report:

- environmental harm
- biodiversity loss
- pollution or contamination
- misuse of natural resources
- illegal extraction, logging, or overgrazing
- harmful or unsafe project practices
- activities that may increase climate displacement

Reports may be submitted to:

- AAI's confidential reporting email (confidential@africa-asia.dk)
- AAI focal persons
- partner focal points
- community committees

Whistleblowers are protected, and retaliation is strictly prohibited.

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

AAI will:

- conduct environmental and climate monitoring during field visits
- include climate and environmental indicators in M&E frameworks

- conduct random environmental spot checks
 - document environmental outcomes and lessons learned
 - adjust activities where risks emerge
 - ensure compliance with donor environmental safeguards
 - review this policy at least every three years
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12. Consequences for Non-Compliance

Violations of this policy may result in:

- termination of employment or collaboration
- cancellation of contracts
- reporting to donors or relevant authorities
- exclusion from future AAI involvement

Environmental safeguarding is mandatory for all AAI staff, partners, and suppliers.