

Title:	Environmental Policy
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Environmental Policy

1. Introduction

This is a general policy statement summarising the basis of our concern, key principles and areas of activity. This will be accompanied by a detailed and time-bound action plan, to be reviewed annually, covering the next stage of policy implementation.

2. The basis of our concern

There are three important reasons why Tearfund should care for the environment and keep its consumption of environmental resources to a minimum. Firstly, Christians have a biblical mandate and responsibility to care for all of God's creation. As a Christian organisation, Tearfund believes that to fulfil our vision statement in a way that is consistent with biblical teaching we must care for the environment in all areas of our work. This is vital to demonstrate integrity and right living to others. Secondly, as a development organisation, we also know that while all people rely on environmental resources for life, poor people have a particularly direct dependence on environmental resources and are the most vulnerable to environmental hazards. Care for the environment is therefore vital if people are to permanently escape extreme poverty. Lastly, as a charity dependent largely on public donations for our work, a goal must be to maximise the use of these donations for the direct benefit of the poor. Avoiding unnecessary expenditure on Tearfund's own consumption of any resource for which we must pay – be it energy, water or paper for example - can make an important contribution to this goal.

Global environment and poverty trends are sobering. Environmental resource depletion is increasing at an alarming rate and poor communities face a growing environmental hazard, particularly from escalating climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing disaster risk through changes in the magnitude and frequency of floods and droughts, water stress and food insecurity, driven largely by rich nations. Tearfund acknowledges that we are part of that rich world and must take responsibility for our corporate contribution to environmental degradation while having the humility to learn from our partners and poor people.

It is equally clear that there is a pressing need to enable governments and citizens of poor countries to manage their own environmental resources more effectively. Many lack the information and financial resources to do so, while the demands of short-term survival often override longer-term environmental considerations, simply storing up problems for the future. Tearfund, with our access to information and financial resources, is in a strong position to assist our partners and their beneficiaries.

Tearfund is therefore committed to reducing our corporate impact on the environment to the greatest extent feasible, and to encouraging our supporters to do the same. Tearfund is also committed to enabling our partners to minimise any adverse impact of their activities on the environment and, where at all possible, to enhancing local environmental resources and the access of poor people to them.

3. Principles

A number of principles will guide our action on the environment. Key principles are:

Christian Stewardship: God created the world and everything in it. The Earth exists to glorify God. As Christians it is our responsibility to care for His creation, using resources wisely and ensuring their continuation.

Equity: Jesus commands us to love our neighbours. Applied to the use of natural resources this implies we must seek to use no more than our fair share compared with others in our generation and to ensure that the Earth's resources are maintained for future generations (inter-generational equity)

Established Environmental Principles: Many other operating principles are recognised in the area of environmental management, which are consistent with the biblical principles above. Tearfund will particularly seek to abide by the following:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (UN definition)

Sustainable resource management requires that both resources and demands are managed and brought into balance, with the objective wherever possible of keeping resource use within the limits of renewable supplies.

The precautionary principle says that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to anticipate, prevent or minimise causes of environmental damage, or limit its adverse effects.

Polluter pays (Common But Differentiated Responsibility) is accepted in UK law that the perpetrator or beneficiary of an activity that pollutes or depletes the environment must bear the cost and not pass it on to others.

The three Rs (waste hierarchy) are to **R**educe the amount of resource used in the first place; **R**euse as much as possible after first use; **R**ecycle as much as possible of what remains, for another use.

CEC stands for reducing energy **C**onsumption; Increasing energy **E**fficiency; Using **C**lean energy.

4. Key areas

Tearfund commits itself to working in the following areas:

Staff Training and Education: Tearfund is committed to encouraging and assisting all its staff to understand and act on issues of creation-care both in their role at Tearfund and voluntarily in their non-work lives. We will do this through a variety of means including by ensuring that environment policy is addressed in staff induction and by regular actions through staff prayers, Tearnets and team environmental champions.

Partners and DMT: Tearfund recognises that the poor are usually the first to be affected by environmental degradation and climate change and that a degraded environment is a major contributing factor to the experience of poverty for many people. For any development project to be truly sustainable, the surrounding environment must be treated responsibly and any renewable environmental resources upon which the project relies must be sustained. Tearfund will work with partners to work towards projects we support being environmentally sustainable and climate resilient. DMT's Quality Standard states that we are committed to protecting the environment through sustainable resource management.

Supporters: Tearfund supporters' lifestyles and purchasing decisions, like those of our staff, have an impact on the environment and poor communities. We are committed to raising awareness among our supporters of environment related issues and lifestyle and encouraging them to change their lifestyle, act and pray in response. We will communicate both our biblical understanding of a responsibility to God for all he has entrusted to us through creation and the links between poverty, wealth and environmental degradation.

Policy makers: With our ongoing high profile advocacy work on environmental sustainability, Tearfund is committed to ensuring that what we call for supporters and policy makers to do at least what we are also doing ourselves. Tearfund presses for stronger policy and practice on environment and sustainable development issues at local, national, regional and international levels, including our current focus on pressing for increased international action on climate change.

Travel: Tearfund is committed to reducing travel where possible and encouraging staff to make use of the least polluting means of transport where travel is unavoidable. Tearfund will reduce the number of flights made by staff, consultants, and representatives such as figureheads and media. This will be supported through greater collaboration between teams including reviewing how multiple objectives can be achieved through one single trip instead of several. We also commit to encourage working practices that reduce the need for so many flights. Tearfund implements a "green" Transport Plan whose effectiveness will be monitored in relation to increasing the use of cycles and public transport and reducing the use of private cars and air travel.

Office Practice: Tearfund is committed to conserving energy wherever possible within its buildings. We will place a particular emphasis on heating, cooling, lighting, ventilation, water use and office equipment.

Waste Management: Tearfund is committed to reducing, re-using and recycling waste as far as is practically possible. This will include the recycling of scrap paper, cans, plastic and CDs and avoiding the purchase of non-recyclable and non-biodegradable materials.

Paper Management: An environmental resource routinely used by all staff is paper. Tearfund's paper purchasing policy will take environmental factors into account and

balance environmental cost against budget in order to inform its final purchasing decisions. Paper consumption will be monitored and ongoing measures taken to minimise the quantity used. We will use recycled paper where feasible, and paper from sustainably managed forests sources where not.

Purchasing & Trading: Tearfund's corporate purchasing decisions have environmental implications and can influence others. Tearfund's purchasing activities will take environmental factors into account, and positive environmental action will be encouraged by suppliers in the UK & Ireland and our Trading Partners around the world. While taking cost issues into account, preference will be given to suppliers who take good environmental practice seriously.

Policy management and monitoring: Tearfund is committed to developing and monitoring the implementation of this policy. The ongoing development and monitoring of the policy will be the responsibility of a cross-departmental Environment Task Force (ETF). This will be chaired by a staff member acting in the role of Environmental Policy Coordinator (EPC). The EPC will report, for these purposes, to the ES CPA Steering Group