



GOAL



ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Protecting and promoting environmental sustainability is arguably the most urgent of all global imperatives. For a global humanitarian actor such as GOAL, this imperative is even more compelling due to the devastating and disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on the communities with whom we work. According to the UN, the effects of the climate emergency could push more than 130 million into poverty by 2031¹.

Against this backdrop, this Policy and its associated Environmental Policy Implementation Framework² seeks to minimise our organisational impact on the fragile environments in which we work and contribute to a reduction of risks associated with climate change. This Policy also demonstrates GOAL's commitment to respect and positively respond to the local environmental contexts in which we work and our commitment to work in partnership with communities in this important effort. Consequently, this Policy sets out GOAL's commitment in three key areas:

1. Programming in an environmentally sustainable way across our Crisis-to-Resilience framework, aligned with and informed by context, international standards, and best practice, paying particular attention to using technology to foster innovation in humanitarian response so that we can pro-actively address environmental disasters
2. Managing operations and facilities in order to minimise environmental harm and reduce our carbon footprint
3. Working with partners, service providers, and suppliers to implement the highest possible levels of environmentally sustainable practices in their planning and programmes in the given circumstances

To achieve this, GOAL will follow a systematic approach to considering the potential environmental impact of its operations through standard screening and assessment procedures detailed in the follow-up Implementation Environmental Policy Implementation Framework. This accompanying framework provides our staff, suppliers, and partners worldwide with a roadmap, as well as the precise tools and actions, to the extent to which it is feasible in each circumstance, for achieving the objectives of this important commitment

1 <https://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/when-poverty-meets-climate-change-critical-challenge-demands-cross-cutting-solutions> (2021)

2 The accompanying Environmental Policy Implementation Framework outlines in detail a systematic approach to considering the potential environmental hazards through Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programming, Assessments (i.e., diagnostics/screening), and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting procedures.



2. BACKGROUND

Human well-being critically depends on the Earth's natural systems; yet, in recent decades, economic, technological, and social advances have compromised the environment's capacity to replenish itself – as it does naturally – and to be able to provide for its inhabitants as before. Among such environmental degradations, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, further exacerbated by climate change and pollution, have been estimated to undermine efforts to achieve up to 80% of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).³ The effects of climate change are also borne disproportionately by underserved and excluded communities in the global south: according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 2022 report, 'between 2010 and 2020, droughts, floods and storms killed 15 times as many people in highly vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa - which is responsible for 3% of global emissions - than in the wealthiest of countries'.⁴

3 United Nations Environment Programme (2021). Making Peace with Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies. Nairobi. <https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>

4 Price, K. (2022). 'IPCC report: Climate Change could soon outpace humanity's ability to adapt', Feb 28, 2022, <https://www.conservation.org/blog/ipcc-report-climate-change-could-soon-outpace-humanitys-ability-to-adapt>

“WE WORK WITH THE MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES TO HELP THEM RESPOND TO AND OVERCOME HUMANITARIAN CRISES, AND TO ASSIST THOSE FACING POVERTY AND EXCLUSION ACHIEVE GREATER RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING”

(GOAL Strategy 2025)

GOAL recognises that the world’s most vulnerable and excluded communities rely heavily on the environment for their livelihoods and income, making them susceptible to climate change and extreme weather events, such as flooding, drought, erosion, and desertification, to name but a few.

To achieve this mission, GOAL recognises the importance of understanding the context in which it operates. This is important to ensure that we adequately and appropriately develop strategies that also enable us to address relevant environmental challenges and achieve greater resilience.

The main issues within the local context that we consider in relation to the environment include socio-economic forces; resources and risks within the actual physical environment; and the existing laws, policies, and strategies of host governments, local communities, and donor organisations. The tools and actions as identified in the accompanying Implementation Strategy, will ensure that these issues are captured and understood by GOAL’s staff, suppliers, and other relevant partners. We believe that it is through careful consideration of the poverty-environment linkages in planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of the programmes and support systems that we and our partners can effectively contribute to the sustainable development of the countries in which we work.



Through this policy, GOAL also aims to increase its engagement in key international platforms to influence Policy in relation to the environment, particularly in terms of how it relates to enabling vulnerable populations affected by climate change and environmental degradation to move beyond crises and toward resilience. One of the principal international platforms on this issue where GOAL is also engaged is the United Nations Climate Change Conference, otherwise known as the Conference of Parties or COP, which has been held annually since the first UN Climate Agreement in 1992. The key issues addressed at this event include negotiations on loss and damage to support vulnerable populations in lower-income countries and investment in adapting to the impact of climate change. Other issues are early warning and response, climate financing, building resilience, and forming partnerships for change and innovation. In 2022, GOAL participated as part of the Irish delegation led by Minister for Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport Eamon Ryan at the COP27 Conference held in Egypt. The subsequent event, COP28, will be held in Dubai in 2023. GOAL's active involvement in this event provides an opportunity to bring attention to critical global challenges posed by climate change and their impact on humanitarian crises in areas such as health, food security, and migration. By participating in COP28, GOAL aims to raise awareness and address these pressing issues caused by climate change.

In addition, the UN Oceans Conference is an important platform for GOAL to advocate for policies, share innovations, and build partnerships to help increase the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities. GOAL has participated in the past two Oceans Conferences in 2017 and 2022 and presented its programming in the Blue Economy at both events. At the 2022 Conference in Lisbon, GOAL developed a position paper with Trinity College Dublin on the Blue Economy and its relationship to food security and the resilience of coastal communities, and it further co-organised a side event titled "Scaling Up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions". This event was co-hosted by GOAL, the Irish Marine Institute, UNITAR, and UNCTAD.

Other international platforms in which GOAL is engaged relate to climate change adaptation and environment include the USAID-funded Market Systems Symposium where GOAL presented its report and proposals on market system resilience and risk management; the UN Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; and International NGO collaborations including InterAction and Voice among others. GOAL itself hosts an annual “Crisis to Resilience” webinar series together with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and the University College London. Our 2022, the “Inclusive Early Warning and Response” webinar was attended by over 200 participants, mainly professionals from a range of organisations including donor agencies, internal and local NGOs, government agencies, private sector, and academic institutions.

The present Policy will enable GOAL to further increase its influence and to focus its external engagement in environmental initiatives, innovations, and partnerships to support crisis-affected populations in moving from crisis to resilience.



3. POLICY PURPOSE

In guiding GOAL to fulfil its responsibilities to protect the environment, this Policy outlines our environmental objectives, standards, and approach to minimising any negative environmental impacts and promoting and ensuring that GOAL's humanitarian interventions are carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner, protecting the rights of the world's most vulnerable and excluded communities in the long term while safeguarding the rights of future generations.

4. POLICY OBJECTIVES

This Policy sets out to achieve the following key objectives:

- a) Clarify GOAL's commitment to ensuring an environmentally sustainable approach in all aspects of our operations, from programme conceptualisation and planning to implementation, evaluation, and reporting
- b) Create awareness among staff, suppliers, and partners about the possible negative impacts of environmental harm on the communities with whom we work
- c) Avoid and/or minimise, wherever possible, the potential environmental harm caused by programmes and operations carried out by GOAL, its suppliers, and partners
- d) Promote the use of environmental impact assessments, diagnostics, screening, compliance procedures, monitoring, and evaluation measures, along with reporting these initiatives in line with the requirements of donors and other partners, to the extent to which this is feasible in the given circumstances



5. POLICY SCOPE

The Policy sets out GOAL's commitment in three key areas:

- a) Programming in an environmentally sustainable way across the Crisis-to-Resilience framework of GOAL's 2025 Strategy and aligned with international environmental standards
- b) Managing operations and facilities in order to minimise environmental harm and reduce carbon footprint
- c) Working with service providers, partners and suppliers to implement the highest-level of environmentally sustainable approaches in their planning and programmes

This Policy applies across all GOAL offices, operations, programmes, supply chains, and partners, and it is to be adhered to by all GOAL's employees, including procurement teams and budget holders who manage expenditures. This Policy acknowledges that since the humanitarian imperative is paramount and the speed of purchase and distribution is essential in saving lives, GOAL might be obliged to purchase the essential goods and services from the most readily available source(s). Consequently, and only in exceptional circumstances where it has not been possible to plan ahead to tackle the humanitarian needs at hand, the principles and international standards set out in this Policy will apply to the extent to which it is feasible in the given circumstances

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE POLICY

This Policy sits within GOAL's broader Environmental Social and Corporate Governance commitment and as such is a whole of organisation responsibility with all GOAL staff and Directors playing their role in upholding the principles within and the achievement of its objectives. All staff will be familiarised with the Policy, and their role in upholding it through inductions and a formal Environmental Policy Implementation Framework. All Managers will be clear on their role in implementing the Policy. The CFO will be assigned to coordinate monitoring, evaluating, and progress reporting from the responsible functions and in ensuring regular feedback on progress to staff and stakeholders. GOAL's Boards of Directors will be appraised of key developments on a regular basis through the relevant Advisory Board/s.

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES ^{5,6}

GOAL is committed to reducing its reliance on finite/scarcce resources and to minimising the environmental impact of its operations, including all supply chains. Whilst not exhaustive, the following serves as guiding principles for GOAL and its relevant partners to endeavour and adhere to in any given circumstance:

7.1. Green House Gas Emission Mitigation

- 7.1.1. Assess, through audits and regular reviews, the feasibility of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions associated with operations, and actively take steps where possible
- 7.1.2. Plan staff travel in such a way as to reduce carbon emissions wherever practicable, including making every effort to reduce unnecessary air travel
- 7.1.3. Monitor and improve transport logistics to ensure the efficient distribution and delivery of products and services

5 GOAL's principles are underpinned by thought leadership from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). The details on these requirements and other donor environmental recommendations are discussed in the accompanying Environmental Policy Implementation Framework.

6 ECHO (2022) Guidance on the operationalization of the minimum environmental requirements and recommendations for EU-funded humanitarian aid operations - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

7.2. Waste Management

- 7.2.1. Follow the Waste Hierarchy, favouring waste minimisation first, then reuse, and then recycling to decrease as much as possible the amount of waste sent to landfill, incineration, or any other form of appropriate disposal
- 7.2.2. Monitor operations, including procurement, and ensure waste minimisation and high product and process efficiency; and
- 7.2.3. Ensure that waste is collected and transferred in treatment and/or appropriate disposal facilities and effective controls of waste are adopted in respect of ground, air, and water pollution

7.3. Water and Wastewater Management

- 7.3.1. Develop a better understanding of the impact exerted by GOAL, its partners and suppliers on water use and develop management processes where appropriate
- 7.3.2. Preserve water sources and avoid over-extraction and ensure wastewater does not pose a health or environmental hazard

7.4. Energy

- 7.4.1. Assess and identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption and, where practicable, use energy from renewable resources

7.5 . Sustainable Supply Chain and Material Efficiency

- 7.5.1. Avoid, where practicable, reliance on materials that are heavily dependent on finite resources
- 7.5.2. Ensure that the use of recycled and readily recyclable materials is strongly encouraged and that all facilities will have recyclable waste management as appropriate
- 7.5.3. Promote the use of green and blue infrastructures, low carbon technologies and processes where practicable and feasible
- 7.5.4. Ensure that plastic packaging use is minimised, while preferring to use low carbon footprint materials, such as recycled and readily recyclable plastics
- 7.5.5. Manage natural resources effectively and ensure sustainable supply chains

7.6. Biodiversity, Natural Habitat and Land Preservation

- 7.6.1. Wherever possible, seek to minimise the impact of operations on fauna, flora, and land to ensure the conservation of biodiversity and habitats
- 7.6.2. Avoid uncontrolled deforestation and favour the use of sustainably harvested and verified timber that is, as a minimum, legal in origin and certified to a credible standard, and provide evidence of due diligence
- 7.6.3. Support low intensity, regenerative, and sustainable agriculture
- 7.6.4. Rely and/or upgrade existing infrastructure, facilities and housing stock where feasible

7.7. Localisation of Resources

- 7.7.1. Promote local traditional ecological knowledge and favour the use of locally supplied resources
- 7.7.2. Encourage local actors to take ownership and drive efforts across policy and programmes





8. IMPLEMENTING GOAL'S ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES IN ITS OPERATIONS

GOAL Logistics & Procurement has a number of process manuals and measurement systems in place that will monitor the implementation of the Environmental Policy, which includes the followings:

a. Procurement Manual

The Procurement Manual sets out the principles and procedures on how to conduct procurement activities globally in GOAL. The manual will include specific references to environmental considerations highlighted in this policy. The vendor selection process will take into account the environmental preferences and obligations consistent with this policy. Contracts will be monitored to ensure that vendors adhere to the agreed environmental considerations

b. Fleet Management for Operations

Our Logistics operations will continue with its monitoring of fleet efficiency in relation to fuel usage, fleet availability and utilisation, and fleet age and condition, and it will report on all these items from an environmental and effectiveness perspective

c. Asset Tracking

The Asset Tracking Manual is updated to include the environmental monitoring of all assets owned by GOAL. This will include the evaluation of the environmental impact of all fixed assets within their stored location. Where assets are held by GOAL that have a negative environmental impact, these will be reported within the Asset Tracking process

d. Asset Disposal Procedures

Asset disposal and end-of-life management processes included in the Asset Manual include specific environmental considerations, and all asset disposals will be completed in compliance with these procedures

e. GOAL Corporate Travel Policy and Administration

The GOAL Air Travel Policy will include the requirement to add the carbon cost of commercial flight travel when booked and will require the approver to approve the travel including the environmental impact

f. All Facilities Related Actions

All facilities under GOAL ownership or lease will require environmental consideration in terms of the use of energy, water consumption, and waste management. An environmental assessment must be done in all facilities in line with the Sub-section 9.2 below using the location environmental assessment. An action plan will be put in place in all facilities to comply with this Policy including energy supply and usage, waste management, kitchen and canteen recycling, etc.

9. IMPLEMENTING GOAL'S ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES IN PROGRAMMING

GOAL carries out a range of activities in undertaking its mission while also taking positive actions in greening the humanitarian response, finding nature-based solutions, and promoting sustainable development. The following key steps⁷ are to be followed in programming to the extent it is feasible in the given circumstances:

9.1. Country Environmental Fact Sheet (P1- Programme Tool 1)

GOAL is committed to underpinning its strategies, programmes, and projects with sound and comprehensive analysis of environmental risk, which will be undertaken annually as a foundational component of project design. As an initial step, a short questionnaire that will allow programme managers to collate information on key country-level environmental and demographic facts will be prepared and distributed among stakeholders for feedback and usage. This tool will also specify the key drivers of environmental risk and degradation at the country-level while additionally serving as a guide in programming by pointing to key environmental priorities. The completed tool is based primarily on a desk review of easily-accessible information. This fact sheet will only have to be produced once for a GOAL country (with periodic updating), and it will form the basis for the Programme Tool 2. Completed at the country-level as part of the corresponding strategy planning process, the fact sheet will identify high-priority environmental risks drawn from the environmental component of the crisis risk analysis as well as the key drivers of environmental risk and degradation

⁷ For additional information and access tools above mentioned can be found in the Environmental Policy Implementation Framework.

9.2. Location Environmental Assessment (P2-Programme Tool 2)

- 9.2.1 The data to be entered into this tool is from the sub-country level (e.g., area, province, or district) and should be completed for all of GOAL's regions of operation. The Location Environmental Assessment should be completed within six months of a new field location opening or expanding
- 9.2.2 This step should be completed in partnership with the respective local communities to develop and/or strengthen their competencies and capabilities to appreciate and effectively evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development or humanitarian projects, and to guide them in selecting, implementing, and managing effective environmentally-friendly programming. This step will also ensure that the experiential and traditional knowledge of the local communities regarding the environment, its changes, and environmentally sensitive and/or regenerative practices are incorporated into, and strengthen the effectiveness of, GOAL's programming

9.3 Environment Examination for Programmes (P3-Programme Tool 3)

- 9.3.1 Together with its partners, GOAL will seek to identify all possible impacts on the environment that could result from the proposed activities, including common and cultural heritages and the direct/indirect effects of the intended programme on the environment
- 9.3.2 This tool allows managers to determine the specific information about the environmental impact of projects. It can be used either for the existing projects or, ideally, at the project planning stage to ensure that environmental harm is mitigated. It will further assist in the determination of whether there are serious environmental concerns that necessitate a full Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out by an external contractor. Programme Tool 3 must be conducted for all programme planning; except for emergencies, where it is recommended, but not required

9.4 People Survive Crises

In our Crisis-to-Resilience Strategy 2025, GOAL has committed to a strategic shift toward anticipating crises in our humanitarian programming. This shift will include the minimisation of the environmental impact of our humanitarian response by implementing the principles laid out in Section 7 above, with particular respect to the GHG emission mitigation, waste management, sustainable supply chain, and material efficiency. Anticipatory action will provide GOAL with longer lead times to respond to crises which we will use to transport staff and supplies

by road or rail instead of air, develop pre-agreements with suppliers to procure reduced-waste options for relief, and mitigate the environmental impacts of harmful events where possible

9.5 People Have Resilient Health

GOAL will explore various options to reduce the environmental footprint of its interventions in health systems and services in adherence to the guiding principles outlined above, including the assessment of replacing conventional sources with renewable energy to power key facilities, water waste reduction in WASH programming, and low-emission transport of medical supplies

9.6 People Have Food and Nutrition Security

GOAL's work to develop sustainable food and nutrition security will be guided by the principles outlined above in particular relation to sustainable supply chain and material efficiency, biodiversity, natural habitat, and land preservation. Our focus on the sustainable production of nutritious food will be based on the exploration and assessment of climate-smart agricultural inputs and practices, as well as natural resource management to protect and regenerate the ecosystems, which are integral to the lives, livelihoods, and resilience of our partner communities





10. IMPLEMENTING GOAL'S ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES THROUGH PARTNERS AND SUPPLIERS

Informed by the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Guide to Buying Responsibly⁸, as well as by the compliance requirements of relevant partners, GOAL acknowledges the impact that our purchasing practices can have on the environment. As a result, we commit to the standards below to support our suppliers in overcoming the challenges that the so-known business-as-usual poses to the environment and the rights of those living in the regions where GOAL operates and its supply chains:

- 10.1. Complying with the GOAL Environmental Policy , and with the letter and the spirit of the environmental laws of the countries in which they operate
- 10.2. Recognising that where suppliers may not be able to achieve all the environmental standards immediately, GOAL will work with them towards conformance within a reasonable timeframe
- 10.3. Providing material and practical support to suppliers to enable them to meet their commitments and make respective improvements within reasonable and agreed time frames, all the while adhering to the environmental standards set by GOAL
- 10.4. Working continuously to implement and improve the environmental policies and practices of GOAL wherever necessary

⁸ Ethical Trade: Buying responsibly; <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/buying-responsibly>

11. CONCLUSION

This Policy articulates how GOAL considers both environmental degradation and climate change mitigation and adaptation with the purpose of ensuring, as far as possible, that our activities do the least amount of harm to the environments in which we work and sets out the processes (tools) and procedures to ensure that GOAL, its partners and suppliers play an important role within the global humanitarian and development sector in protecting our environment. It represents a critical ambition for the GOAL family and seeks to ensure GOAL's positive legacy for future generations.

12. RELATED AND REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

1. GOAL Strategy 2025 (2022)
2. ECHO & EuropeAid. (2022) Please see document "[ECHO Minimum Environmental Requirements and recommendations](#)"
3. USAID (2022) Please see at the following link directing to USAID Portal <https://www.usaid.gov/environmental-procedures>. This Hub provides key resources for USAID staff and implementing partners, including:
 - [Information on the requirements of the environmental procedures](#) Note: USAID fulfills the requirements of 22 CFR 216 through the Agency's environmental procedures.
 - [Environmental compliance document templates](#)
 - [USAID's public database of environmental review documentation](#)
 - [Sectoral environmental and social good practice guides](#) à Note: The Guidelines are advisory only. They are not official USAID regulatory guidance or policy.
 - [Training materials and curricula](#).
4. FCDO (2021) [Supply Partner Handbook \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) Refer to Section 4 - Environmental Issues
5. UNHCR (2019) [UNHCR Partnership Handbook May 2019](#) Refer to Section 7.7 Energy and Environment, 7.7.1 Programming for Environment
6. [GOAL Whistleblowing Policy, 2018](#)
7. [GOAL Risk Management Policy, 2020](#)
8. [GOAL Code of Conduct, 2021](#)
9. [IT Acceptable Use Policy, 2022](#)
10. [IT Security Policy, 2022](#)



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