

## 5. ENVIRONMENT

ChildFund Australia recognises that the lives, wellbeing and futures of children and communities are strongly related to the quality of their surrounding environment. In fact, our understanding of the environment includes people and communities and their interaction with their surroundings.

Environmental degradation increases deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability. It undermines sustainable development when it threatens livelihoods, food security, health and access to safe water. Our understanding of the causes of child poverty leads us to work in program sectors such as water and sanitation and agriculture. These sectors have the greatest potential for negative impact, but with comprehensive planning, they can also have the greatest positive impact on the environment.

ChildFund Australia prioritizes “building human, capital, **natural** and social assets” (Our Program Approach, Chapter one of the Program Handbook). Our work with communities to create lasting and meaningful change will therefore involve consideration of the immediate and long-term impact of our work on the environment.

Development that is genuinely sustainable must meet the needs of people in ways that maintain or increase the productivity and diversity of resources and ecosystems within an appropriate cultural framework. Balancing protecting the environment with the priority on increasing short-term production is a challenge. ChildFund’s response to this challenge will always involve raising awareness of the harm that can be done to the natural environment, and to human beings, by unsustainable agricultural and industrial practices.

### Policy Statement

ChildFund Australia is committed to maximising positive impacts and reducing negative impacts on the environment through programs and projects we support.

### Key Actions

ChildFund Australia Country Office senior management will:

- aim to ensure that all program and projects maximise positive impacts and mitigate negative impacts on the environment;
- design programs and projects to comply with relevant international and local environmental protocols and policies, including ‘Environment Management Guide for Australia’s Aid Program 2012, AusAID’s Environment Management System’, and local government policies and guidelines;
- provide staff with training on environment friendly development practices;
- allocate adequate time, budget and human resources to enable thorough environmental assessments and plans to be developed and, when required, implemented.

ChildFund Australia Country Office program staff will:

- incorporate environmental sustainability considerations into all program and project design, implementation and evaluation;

- conduct a cross-cutting issues analysis and policy reflection, as called for in the Project Proposal format;
- answer the 5 environment screening questions found on page 19 of 'Environment Management Guide for Australia's Aid Program 2012, AusAID's Environment Management System' when designing projects and programs. *These questions are available in ChildFund Australia's Environment Policy Guidance Notes;*
- conduct an environmental analysis if the answer to any of the screening questions was yes;
- conduct an environment impact assessment and, if required, an environment management plan if the environmental analysis identifies significant negative impact on the environment;
- identify and apply methods of achieving project objectives that minimise negative impact and/or promote positive impact on the environment;
- monitor and respond to known or expected environmental impacts;
- encourage community participation in all stages of environmental management to promote their understanding of environmental sustainability;
- provide training to communities to increase awareness about possible direct, indirect, negative and positive environmental impacts and support them to interact with their environment in a sustainable way;
- provide partners with skills and knowledge in implementing environmentally friendly activities;
- recognise the importance of indigenous knowledge and resource management practices in fostering sustainable development;
- commemorate World Environment Day on 5 June each year.

### **Outcome Indicators**

ChildFund Australia is committed to measuring the difference that the programs and projects it supports make to the environment.

When monitoring and evaluating programs, it is important to refer to the complete list of Child Fund Australia *Output* and *Outcome* indicators, listed in Chapter Three of this handbook.

### **Guidance Notes**

Consult the International Program Team for support documents, such as templates, resources and checklists, to assist with the implementation of this policy.