



Environmental Policy

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Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have stated that the scientific case for urgent action on climate change is now clearer than ever.¹ This action has been quantified as being emission reductions to avoid a global temperature increase of 1.5 degrees, as outlined in the Paris climate agreement.² To meet this commitment, governments worldwide are starting to enact policies which work towards a net zero carbon emissions environment (for example Switzerland has committed to 50% emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050)³ and some progress has been made on policies to address other critical environmental concerns such as biodiversity loss. As an international organisation, FSD's work aims to help people in areas across the globe who are already affected by war and environmental damage. These people are often the first to be impacted by the effects of climate change and environmental degradation. As such, alongside the work of governments and other NGOs, FSD has a direct requirement to work sustainably and with minimised environmental impacts.

This policy includes a statement outlining FSD's commitment to environmentalism and sets out principles for staff and other stakeholders to follow. Detailed standards are also outlined which will minimise the environmental impact of operations, transport, and procurement. Finally, this policy will set out the way in which FSD communicates environmental issues and commits to genuine action going forward.

¹ International Report of the Scoping Meeting for the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report Synthesis Report (Singapore 21 – 23 October 2019), IPCC Secretariat, February 2021: <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/12/P52-INF.-12-SYR.pdf>

² UN Paris Climate Agreement 2015: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

³ Swiss Government press release on climate change dated 28 Jan 2021: <https://www.ad-min.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases>

Key Terms

Code of Conduct: A set of standards of behaviour that staff of an organisation are obliged to adhere to.

CO²e – Carbon dioxide equivalence, usually calculated in tonnes. This is a common measure of the environmental impact of an activity.

Organisational Carbon footprint – The amount of CO²e generated on an organisational basis.

Carbon budget – the amount of CO²e planned to be expended within a specified time.

Climate Change – Long term increase in global temperature over a sustained period, in the context of this policy

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -The key principles at the heart of the UN's 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Environmental Remediation – the reduction of contaminants in the air, water, or soils in an area.

Resource efficient construction – construction methods which rely on high levels of planning and use materials in a sustainable way.

Phytoremediation – the use of vegetation to remediate areas through degrading, removing, or locking away contaminants in the soil.

Sustainability – meeting current needs without compromising future resource availability.

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) – non-traditional forms of construction, typically involving more energy efficient, less polluting technologies such as prefabrication.

HQ – FSD Headquarters in Geneva

Field HQ – Country office HQ locations

Electric Vehicles (EV) – Vehicles which rely on electrical charging rather than internal combustion of fossil fuels.

Policy Statement

The Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) is a private, independent, non-profit international mine action organisation, dedicated to reducing the threat of mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and the risks posed by environmental hazards worldwide. As an international NGO, FSD is deeply committed to the principles of environmental protection, particularly as they are understood through the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This sustainable environmentalism will guide FSD's work, both when directly combating environmental hazards and in all its other activities. FSD will seek to work in a sustainable, environmentally conscious way that limits climate impacts and endeavours to preserve both global and local environments for the future.

Policy Scope

The principles set forth in this policy apply in all FSD workplaces and for all FSD activities.

This policy applies to, and is mandatory for, FSD's policy adherents who are defined as all FSD Board members, management staff, international and national staff, (full and part-time) in all FSD structures and programmes. The policy scope also covers volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, all persons acting voluntarily on behalf of FSD, any current or potential suppliers of any sort of goods, services, or works, and all other people not included in the above-mentioned categories who have signed a contract with FSD.

FSD includes all components of the FSD Group: Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD) in Geneva, Switzerland; Crosstech S.A., a Geneva-based commercial subsidiary of FSD as well as the Association FSD France, based in Archamps, France. This also extends to any representative office of FSD in its global programmes and all locally registered FSD branch, charity or legal organisation bearing the FSD name.

FSD's partner organisations and suppliers are expected to have similar commitments that meet minimum environmental standards.

Policy implementation

Specific high-level direction is given for all staff, who must comply with these principles and develop local policies where required. They are designed to act as minimum standards applicable across all programmes and HQs which will mitigate the environmental impacts and institutional carbon footprint of FSD. However, the standards laid out here do not supersede local legislation in cases where it is more exacting than this policy in environmental terms. If there are cases where local policies violate international standards there is the potential to advocate for their change, if this does not breach FSD's principles of impartiality and neutrality.⁴

FSD personnel work in remote and underdeveloped regions which often present limitations when making sustainable decisions. All reasonable effort should be made to comply with this policy but there may be situations where, due to availability or safety concerns, compromises must be made to ensure project goals are achieved within donor timelines. In such cases, PMs must be able to justify deviations from this policy. Where possible, these nonconformities should be used as the basis for longer term change by FSD or other stakeholders⁵.

Core Principles

FSD has used the UN sustainable development goals⁶ as a guide for much of this policy, and has generated the following as capstone principles:

- 1. Advance environmental sustainability.**
- 2. Employ responsible consumption and procurement policies.**
- 3. Reduce carbon dioxide emissions and take action to limit FSD's carbon footprint.**
- 4. Protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.**
- 5. Commit to genuine action at all levels.**

⁴ <https://www.fsd.ch/who-we-are/our-values>

⁵ An example of this could be the justification that waste is not recycled by a remote field location due to a lack of local facilities and the costs (both in financial and carbon footprint terms) of exporting the waste for treatment are prohibitive. Such an example would be useful in advocating for the establishment of a recycling capability in the region in the longer term.

⁶ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Policy commitments

In this section, the policy will develop each principle and detail specific commitments for FSD staff to implement. These commitments are categorised into functional areas focused on operational tasks, transport, procurement, communications, and finally Environmental accreditation.

1. Environmental management of operational tasks

The management of operational tasks covers elements of all FSD's environmental principles but especially focuses on 1 and 4, themselves linked to SDGs 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 15 (Life on land).⁷ All operations are to be undertaken in accordance with Local FSD SOPs which must themselves be compliant with IMAS 07.13 Environmental Management⁸ and/or the international conventions which are relevant to the tasks undertaken (such as the Stockholm convention on pesticide destruction).⁹ Staff must consider the environmental impact of demining operations as a specific output and should take steps to remediate land as part of the Land Release process when conducting Humanitarian Mine Action clearance tasks.¹⁰

1.1 Environmental management of construction projects

When undertaking construction or renovation projects, FSD staff must, as part of the Design, Resource, build cycle, use resource efficient techniques.¹¹ In doing so, before authorising the building of new facilities, the renovation and/or repurposing of old structures must be considered. In undertaking builds, consideration of the following factors (as laid out by the European Commission)¹² should be applied to new projects:

- **Reduce the resource intensity of materials used.** Source local, sustainable materials such as wood and clay where appropriate and suitable. Cement in concrete is a key contributor to global carbon emissions so its use should be minimised or new “eco concretes” should be considered as alternatives.¹³
- **Use and re use resources more efficiently.** Reuse old materials where there is scope to do so and consider more efficient Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) involving prefabrication.

⁷ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁸ See <https://www.mineactionstandards.org/en/standards/>

⁹ <http://www.pops.int/TheConvention/Overview/tabid/3351/Default.aspx>

¹⁰ IMAS 07.11 Land Release at <https://www.mineactionstandards.org/en/standards/>

¹¹ For further guidance on materials and design, several online guides are available, including www.building-green.com

¹² See https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/38si10_en.pdf

- **Build smarter to save energy.** Buildings should be planned to be as energy efficient as possible, using modern cladding and insulation to prevent heat loss or build incorporating local techniques to minimise the requirement for air conditioning.

However, note that throughout the construction process a holistic assessment should be made which looks at all activities and intelligently identifies methods and materials that have the least environmental impact. For example, using modern SIPS insulation panels rather than local chipboard is a sustainable, environmentally friendly choice, but if the panels incur a large carbon footprint in being shipped to site, using a local alternative may be preferable.

2. Transport

Transport plays a critical role in addressing principle 3, the reduction of Carbon emissions (linked to SDG 13 – Climate Action).¹⁴ As an international entity, FSD relies on air transport to deploy qualified personnel to field locations. From a carbon budgeting perspective, this is suboptimal, as air travel is a major contributor to CO² emissions. However, there are steps which FSD can take to reduce these impacts, not only in air travel, but across all FSD's transport requirements. The following protocols are to be followed by all personnel:

- **Remote working.** Where it is not essential for personnel to work from field locations (such as in the collation of reports or conducting support functions), personnel should be given the option to work from home, thus negating climate impacts. This policy is applicable at all levels and in all locations and includes the requirement for international staff to frequently travel to and from home locations by air or local staff to commute into work using busses or cars. This policy is enforced at the discretion of PMs and HQ staff, but a culture of needless presenteeism should be avoided in favour of remote working where possible.
- **Transport to worksites.** Where feasible on long term field deployments (such as to demining worksites), personnel should be accommodated as close to worksites as possible to avoid the need for repeated local commutes.
- **Air travel.** Air travel should be booked to minimise the number of flights required for all personnel. Direct flights should be booked where possible and alternatives with reduced carbon footprints such as rail travel should be employed for shorter journeys which are not time sensitive. All flights will be carbon offset by NGO travel Ltd.
- **Ground transportation.** Due to the nature of FSD's work, it is often essential to deploy petrol or diesel powered vehicles in the field. However, the climate impacts of this can be minimised by reducing non-essential journeys or using alternative modes of transport (walking/cycling) for shorter trips. In HQ and field HQ locations, managers should encourage personnel to set up carpooling arrangements to commute to work.
- **Freight.** Bulk freight should be transported using the most carbon friendly method possible.

¹⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

- **Electric Vehicles (EV).** To meet global net zero emissions target EV's need to account for 50% of all vehicle sales by 2030.¹⁵ In many field locations the infrastructure is not available to make EVs a feasible method of transport, however EV's may be a practical option in more developed HQ locations and should be used in preference to petrol/diesel vehicles where it is practical to do so.

3. Procurement

FSD's has a robust and detailed procurement process already established.¹⁶ However there are significant environmental implications concerning the way in which services and equipment are procured. In line with principle 2 (informed by SDG 12), committing to the use of responsible consumption and production,¹⁷ FSD undertakes to uphold the following protocols:

- **Sustainable suppliers.** FSD will actively seek to employ suppliers who have demonstrable environmental credentials (such as the ISO 14001 certification) and/or local suppliers using sustainable materials.
- **Tender process criteria.** For all competitive tenders run by field and HQ locations, weighting must be given to the environmental credentials of potential suppliers. This must be a representative metric which the supplier must detail on tender documentation. Example metrics will be context specific but could include suppliers having a published environmental policy, or their ability to supply recycled materials.
- **Intelligent procurement.** If sustainable (recycled or made with lower energy) supplies are available and affordable within the programme budget they must be procured over non-sustainable options. PMs must use intelligent procurement plans to minimise environmental impacts. This should involve procuring higher quality, more expensive materials and equipment which can be repaired rather than lower quality disposable items.
- **Field supplies and equipment.** Where practical old equipment (such as detectors) must be repaired and/or refurbished to maximise its lifespan. If old equipment can be safely repurposed to fulfil other operational tasks without compromising overall operational performance, it should be.
- **Paperless office policy.** Wherever possible, offices run by FSD should use as little paper as possible and use digital methods of working (including the use of digital signatures etc).

¹⁵ Dr Faith Birol, "Net zero by 2050 plan for energy sector is coming", International Energy Agency, 13 Jan 2021, <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/net-zero-by-2050-plan-for-energy-sector-is-coming>

¹⁶ See, for example, FSD's Procurement Manual, Version 5, dated 01 January 2021.

¹⁷ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

- **Office supplies.** Where office supplies are needed, recycled or reusable materials should be procured. This policy covers the use of all types of paper, reusable ink and toner cartridges for printers and stationery items. Other supplies for office support functions (such as toiletries, kitchen supplies etc) must be made from recycled materials where these are available and within budget. Where possible, refillable products should be purchased which minimise the use of packaging materials.
- **Disposal.** Following the Reduce-reuse-recycle philosophy, FSD staff must seek to repair, refurbish, or repurpose equipment and supplies before they are disposed of. At the highest level (and subject to donor instructions) FSD must look to retain equipment from closed programmes and refurbish it for use in new ones. If items are no longer safely useable, they must be recycled where this is possible.

4. Communications

FSD has a part to play in encouraging change in the wider HMA and local stakeholder communities. As well as the normal operational promotion of projects and programmes which have specific environmental goals (such as the phytoremediation of pesticides), all FSD staff have a part to play in influencing behaviour. At all levels, managers and staff must:

- Promote these environmental principles to all staff and local stakeholders.
- Highlight instances of good or bad environmental practice to HQs for internal and/or external distribution. Cases of bad practice should be referred to the relevant managers or (in the case of outside stakeholders) the local authorities. Good practice and environmental interest stories should be passed to the communications team for further promotion and awareness.
- Regularly provide the communications team with environmentally focused interest stories to promote FSD as a sustainably focused organisation.

5. Environmental accreditation

As part of its commitment to genuine action at all levels, FSD will work towards gaining the internationally recognised ISO 14001 certification for its environmental policies and working practices.

References

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IMAS 07.13 Environmental Management

IMAS 07.11 Land Release

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