aldenvironment

Sustainability Guidelines

& Implementation Plan

'Caring for our home and taking responsibility for our common future'

Our efforts in making sustainability a core mission

September 2020 Amsterdam

1. Introduction

Aidenvironment is a not-for profit research, advisory and implementing consultancy. We create sustainability impact in agricultural and forest landscapes across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Aidenvironment has three offices: our founding office in the Netherlands (Europe office), in Uganda (Africa office), and Indonesia (Asia office).

We have three areas of expertise:

1.1. Land & Water Management

Our aim is to improve the quality of landscapes and create productive and healthy environments. We shape partnerships with public and private actors and locally based organizations to make landscapes more sustainable. This includes a) Addressing land and water related sustainability risks in large and small-scale agricultural production; b) Implementing landscape restauration of degraded and unproductive areas; c) Improving water supply services in marginalized areas; d) Implementing rainwater harvesting interventions.

1.2. Forest & Finance

Our aim is to stop deforestation. We assist the private sector, investors, and civil society in their decision-making on deforestation challenges and in contributing to healthy climate production systems. We do this by a) Translating sustainability risks linked to commodity production into financial risks; b) Data-driven Rapid Response Reporting on deforestation and links with commodity supply-chains; and c) Benchmarking Zero-Deforestation performance of companies.

1.3. Sustainable Sector Transformation

Our aim is to build competitive and sustainable commodity sectors. We assist our clients in achieving wide-scale and long-term impact, by a) Offering structured and integrated approaches to assess sectors and develop sector transformation strategies; b) Identifying systemic solutions related to living wage & living income, sustainable pricing & procurement, and the role of sustainability initiatives; c) Monitoring and evaluating systemic impacts for evidence-based learning.

2. Sense of Urgency of developing a Sustainability Guidelines

While developing and evaluating plans and initiatives for a transition towards a more sustainable world, Aidenvironment felt the need to look what we can do from inside out. We are encouraged by the many positive initiatives and developments towards sustainability, because a lot of effort is still needed. The rise on global temperatures according to the expected green-houses gas emission rates for the next 10 years, show that current policies are far from achieving sufficient positive changes.

Figure 1. The gaps on greenhouses gases emission rates between the current scenario, the Cancun agreement (limit the increase of temperature to 2.0° Celsius) and the Paris agreement (limit the increase of temperature to 1.5° Celsius).



Aidenvironment wants to reduce its own ecological footprint in order to contribute to the decrease in green-houses gases emissions. Our **Sustainability Guidelines** and **Implementation Plan** strengthens the organization contribution towards needed changes.

3. Purpose of the Sustainability Guidelines

We believe in a societal response fuelled by positive and voluntary changes that is inspired by organizational, personal, and intrinsic motivation. At the same time, as an organization working with and for people, we do respect the individual values and limits of personal behaviour towards changes. For these reasons, this Sustainability Guidelines, and its Implementation Plan is meant to inspire our staff, partners, and clients.

This Sustainability Guidelines and Implementation Plan aims to support changes based on organizational commitments and with this, also stimulate and inspire personal commitments, partners, and clients. We do not aim to have a blue-print model to achieve well defined goals within a certain timeframe (e.g. a carbon neutral reality). Instead, we aim for a process of continuous improvement by regularly providing updates on how this Sustainability Guidelines and Implementation Plan is being implemented, the progress achieved and its challenges.

The Sustainability Guidelines and Implementation Plan is based on three principles:

 Creating awareness and driving continuous improvement to take responsibility for our ecological footprint.

We will take responsibility for our own footprint through awareness of our actions, and when feasible, measuring our footprint to better understand our current impacts. We will ensure a continuous improvement on methods and strategies for doing this.

• Reducing our current ecological footprint.

We will commit to take actions, first, to reduce the current footprint of our organization, hoping that these actions also inspire our own staff, partners, clients, and target groups to do the same.

• Compensating for our residual ecological footprint.

We will compensate our residual footprint after taking actions for reducing it. The compensation actions will avoid the traditional mechanism of "paying for polluting". We understand compensation as an emergency measure to impacts that cannot, in a feasible timeframe, be reduced.

4. **Operational areas**

Four operational areas are identified to apply the principles of Creating Awareness, Reducing (which also includes repairing, recycling and reusing), and Compensation (focus on energy and transport operational areas):

- 1. Transport
- 2. Food consumption and food waste
- 3. Office material waste and water use
- 4. Energy

These four operational areas were defined in internal discussions and will be continuously monitored and updated during organisation-wide meetings. The implementation plan for each operational area require organisational and personal commitments actions and investments. The costs need to be considered in the yearly organizational budget and at project level budget, especially where compensating carbon emissions on travel is concerned. The principles, areas and actions linked to the implementation plan will be assessed regularly and new measures and actions can be included accordingly.

For each operational area, the following is described:

- Creating awareness of our current footprint
- Reducing options (including options of reusing, recycling, and repairing)
- Actions & timeline
- Implementation costs

Compensation Actions is presented as a separate section involving only transport and energy operational areas.

4.1. Transport

Creating awareness on our current transport footprint

Aidenvironment staff shared information within its three offices on CO2 emissions from different types of transport (Figure 2). Our travel agent (Key Travel) provided the annual CO2 footprint from business-related travel by airplanes. In 2019, Aidenvironment staff from all the three offices emitted 152 tons of CO2, considering the 26 people included in the search, which means an average of 5.84 tons of CO2 per person per year. The aim is to reduce and compensate this footprint.

At the Europe office, around 3/4 of the staff do not live in Amsterdam and make use from public transport for home-office commuting (domestic rail and bus). The aim is to make as much as possible the use of bicycle from home-train station and from train station-office, avoiding the use of buses and cars for the home-office daily trips.

Figure 2. Comparison of emission of CO2 of different modes of transport (emissions per passenger per km travelled)



CO2 emissions Secondary effects from high altitude, non-CO2 emissions

Source: https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-49349566

The proposed action for creating awareness of Aidenvironment footprint in the transport sector is to **develop a baseline measuring and reporting our current CO2 emissions** and **develop a methodology to map our gradual improvements** in the coming years. This includes the transport used for traveling from home to work every day and transport used during business trips.

Reducing options

For reducing and compensating our footprint on the transport sector, we agreed on the following:

- Always consider if the business trip is essential or if online meetings will suffice
- Opt as much as possible for direct flights
- Short city transfers in Europe (e.g. to London, Paris, Berlin, and Brussels) should be replaced with train transportation or carpooling by car if < 6 hours travel time

- Avoid short in country flights, considering local safety parameters¹ of other options
- Use of public transportation abroad, considering safety parameters on opting for it
- Share private transportation/taxis abroad, considering safety parameters
- Reduce travel distance from hotel to meetings when possible

Actions & timelines

Actions for reduction	Timeline/Status
1. Have regular sessions with the travel agent to a) inform them on our new	Bi-annually
travel policy; b) monitor our CO2 footprint; c) encourage lower emission	
alternatives (e.g. direct flights)	
2. Share experiences in reducing CO2 impact by travel, encourage and	Continuous
motivate each other	
3. Invest in IT/online video conferencing to replace travel where possible,	Done in June 2020
especially for short duration events	

Implementation costs

Costs to consider:

- Realistic costs for compensation of emissions by flights, home-office commuting, and other business trips
- Hours/costs for having a sustainability officer that will coordinate/monitor/execute tasks in the transport area
- IT/video conferencing materials

¹ Local safety parameters: avoiding the exposition of staff to violence, robberies, or insecure transport systems

4.2. Food Consumption and Food Waste

Creating awareness on our current food and food waste footprint

The main objective for this operational area is to inform and create awareness among Aidenvironment staff, while avoiding a 'moralistic tone'. While we all hear mantras like 'eat local', 'reduce meat eating', 'eat no fruits outside the season' it appears to be difficult to value information for the best options that exist for reducing your footprint from food and food waste. The below figure 3 gives a clearer idea of emissions per type of food.



Figure 3: Green House Gases emission per kilogram of food product

Source: https://www.visualcapitalist.com/visualising-the-greenhouse-gas-impact-of-each-food/

The actions planned for creating awareness on our food consumption and food waste is based on **knowledge sharing sessions**. In these sessions we discuss the possibility of using new **parameters for selecting food** consumed in the offices, and tips and **good practices for food storage** to avoid food waste.

Reducing options

For reducing our footprint on food consumption and food waste we agreed on the following:

- Opt for seasonable and sustainable products for the consumption in the office
- Develop a strategy to improve the storage capacity and options for avoiding food waste
- Reduce the use of plastic packaging of food consumed in the office and opt for paper packaging when possible

Actions & timelines

Actions	Timeline/Status
1. Share information on existing tools that provide best-buy and	Partially done (still need to
consume options (e.g. Milieucentraal, KeurmerkenWijzer,	spread info charts in the
Viswijzer)	office)
2. Reduce the amount of packaging on food ordering in the office	Continuous
and opt always for paper packaging instead of plastic when it is	
not possible to reduce it	
3. Have occasional information sharing sessions and fun quizzes on	1-2 times a year (2020 already
food facts	executed once)
4. Sharing a list in the office for new vegan/vegetarian products	Done
ideas for lunch and more sustainable food options	
5. Assess the current list of groceries for the office to select best	Before November 2020
options for buying the food consumed in the office considering	
carbon footprints	
6. Make a list of vegan/vegetarian restaurants in Amsterdam for	Before November 2020
business and office dinners	
7. Invest in better storage options, e.g. a freezer to avoid the	During 2021
waste of bread	
8. Organize challenges, e.g. a vegan challenge for one week to	Twice a year (one week)
inspire staff to come up with new vegan/vegetarian recipes	
9. Make an inventory of the options for buying food products with	Before January 2021
minimum / zero waste options (See <u>Volkskrant article</u> for more	
information)	

Implementation costs

Costs to consider:

- Investment costs for better storage options (e.g. a freezer)
- Hours/costs for someone to coordinate/monitor/execute tasks in the food and food waste area

4.3. Office material waste and wastewater

Creating awareness on our current material waste footprint

The global production of waste is around 2,02 Billion tons/year. Plastic represents 12% of the total global waste yearly. Among the recyclables, only 14% of plastic waste is collected for recycling, and only 2% of the total plastic waste is indeed recycled (Figure 4). Aidenvironment has been paying attention to reduce packaging and a system of separating different kinds of garbage, but both can be further improved. Already for long, we use FSC certified paper for printing and try to limit the use of paper.

European exportation of e-waste to other countries can be extremely hazardous for the environment and for the workers that disassemble these products. A study from 2016 found that only 20% of the e-waste generated in the world was documented to be collected and properly recycled. The same study projected 52.2 Mt of e-waste to be produced in 2021 (Figure 5). Currently, Aidenvironment is relying its e-waste to an <u>external agency</u> that exports it to Russia and Pakistan. Our aim is to search for alternative agencies that work with local safe disassemble and recycling of e-waste and do not export it for countries outside Europe.

Discarded office furniture can also be linked to huge environment impacts as only an estimated 10% of its waste is recycled according to a <u>study</u> from the European Environmental Bureau (2017). The same study analyses one of the largest Dutch furniture producers, <u>Gispen</u>, and its innovative initiatives regarding the production of sustainable office furniture based on circular economy. Our aim is to study possibilities of reducing discarded office furniture (by repairing it) or recycling the office furniture and opt for sustainable produced furniture once there is a need for replacing it.



Figure 4: Annual global waste generation per region and type

Source: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2018/09/20/what-awaste-20-a-global-snapshot-of-solid-waste-management-to-2050



Figure 5: Annual global e-waste generation (total and per inhabitant)

Creating awareness on our current wastewater footprint

Apart from material waste, every citizen in the Netherlands has a high-water footprint which can be reduced. The use of water may be reduced by several options. This will need to be done in collaboration with the office building management.

Reducing options

For reducing our footprint on water use, garbage, e-waste, and office furniture we agreed on the following:

- Separate the type of waste in the office and be sure that
 - o it is properly deposited in the streets' right waste containers, or
 - the city cleaning department is called for an appointment to pick up the bulky waste (including e-waste, discarded office furniture)
- Opt for alternatives for e-waste and office furniture destinations (prioritize local recycling and avoid exportation to non-European countries)
- Discuss within the VVE of the building how water use may be reduced / made more effective, e.g. by installing water-saving flush toilets, using water-saving options of the dish washers, catching roof water to be used for flushing toilets.
- Also, options of using environmentally sound detergents in toilets and for cleaning the building should be discussed, in order to reduce the water pollution with chemicals.

Actions & timelines

Actions	Timeline
1. Find out what happens with the different types of waste in	Before March 2021
Amsterdam, and check for alternatives where relevant (e.g. organic	
waste)	
2. Remove the individual bins from people's desks and have central	after end of home working
bins by type of waste (paper, glass, plastic, organic, e-waste,	period
batteries, ink cartridges, other hazardous waste and residual waste)	

Source: United Nations University (https://drive.google.com/file/d/11DCXXZM-bflxHxk92gOXbwelceb40brP/view)

3. Monitor and reduce our paper print outs (total and per person); update the names in the printer menu in the printer	after end of home working period
4. Bring your own coffee cup/water bottle/bamboo cutlery when travelling	Continuous
5. Study the possibilities of hiring an external agency for the office e- waste destination that include recycling and do not export e-waste to non-European countries	Before March 2021
6. Study the possibility of recycling discarded office furniture and opt for sustainable produced furniture when replacing it	Before March 2021
 7. Find an artisan who can repair broken office furniture 8. Be part of the VVE (owners association) meeting of the office building in Amsterdam and propose a water use and wastewater 	Before March 2021
 management plan, and the use of detergents (see next point) 9. In the kitchen and toilets, and for cleaning the building, only use environmentally sound detergents, in order to reduce the contamination of water with chemicals 	Before March 2021

Implementation costs

Costs to consider:

- Central bin separating (paper, glass, plastic, organic, e-waste, batteries, ink cartridges, other hazardous waste and residual waste)
- Hours/costs for someone to coordinate/monitor/execute tasks in the waste area
- Bringing waste to places where it is treated / recycled / reused in a more sustainable way than it is through the Amsterdam municipality
- Repair of office furniture

4.4. Energy

Creating awareness on our current energy footprint

In the energy sector, there is a trend to increase the use of renewable sources. For this, the countries members of the European Union agreed on a 2020 target for renewable energy in its energy source. The Netherlands is among the countries with the lowest target, around 14% of its generated energy should be from renewable sources in 2020, while Sweden, for instance, set the target on 49%. However, in 2018, the Netherlands is still far from the planned (low) target, having only around 7% of renewable energy in its energy share. The electricity sector is where the renewable energy is planned to grow from 15% in 2018 to 37% in 2020 (Figure 6).





Source: http://www.euobserver.com/environment/147263

Reducing options

For reducing and compensating our footprint on energy consumption we agreed on the following:

- Propose to the VVE (building association) an energy efficiency plan for the building
- Improve the energy efficiency of the office appliances and be responsible for reducing the energy consumption (check if appliances, lights, and heating system are turned off before leaving the office)
- Reduce heating

Actions & timelines

Actions	Timeline
1. Have an energy provider that guarantees a renewable energy	The energy provider is
source	already " <u>Greenchoice</u> "
2. Be part of the VVE (owners association) meeting of the office	Before December 2020
building in Amsterdam and propose an energy efficiency plan	

3. Improve the electricity installations, appliances, IT equipment, and heating system in the office without producing more waste than	Plan dependent on resources
strictly needed	
4. Not use the office elevator unless extremely necessary (e.g. if sick,	Continuous
disabled, carrying heavy luggage)	
5. Turning out lights, laptops, electronic equipment heating once	Continuous
you are the last one to leave the office	

Implementation costs

Costs to consider:

- Hours/costs for someone to coordinate/monitor/execute tasks in the energy area
- Costs for improving electrical installations, appliances and heating system depending on the owners' association plan (VVE)

4.5 Compensation for transport and energy

By far the largest amount of CO2 emissions from activities related to the Aidenvironment office are due to travel, especially air travel. In addition, energy use especially heating within the office will be the second largest cause of CO2 emissions, to be compensated. Therefore, compensation is limited to these two operational area.

On travel, many airlines offer the possibility to compensate for CO2 emissions from flights. However, there are several carbon compensation tools that do not make true their promises.

Therefore, we will opt for making an estimate of our annual CO2 emissions on travel and energy use, and compensate this through well qualified and recognised compensation tools.

Annual carbon emissions can be calculated through <u>https://www.milieucentraal.nl/klimaat-en-aarde/klimaatverandering/klimaatcompensatie/</u>.

The following are considered to be more effective compensation mechanisms:

- <u>www.greenchoice.nl/stoken/</u>
- <u>www.carbonkiller.org/nl</u>
- www.wildlifeworks.com/shopcarbon
- <u>www.groasis.com/en</u>

Actions and timelines

Actions for compensation on transport and energy	Timeline/Status
1. Annually, determine the Aidenvironment CO2 emissions by travel and	Continuous
energy and compensate these by a reliable and effective CO2	
compensation tool (see above)	
2. Explore more effective tools for the compensation of emissions by flights	Before the end of
(e.g. Climate Neutral Group - https://www.climatepartner.com/en/carbon-	2020
calculator)	

3. Adopt a more effective tool for compensating the CO2 emissions from	From January 2021
our flights and other travel besides the normal compensation fee offered	
by the airline companies	

Implementation costs

Costs to consider:

• Hours/costs for someone to coordinate/monitor/execute tasks in the compensation area