



**African Population and
Health Research Center**

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Compliance Officer	Director of Operations
Approval Authority	APHRC Board of Directors
Approval Date	May 2023
Review Date	May 2026
Revision History	Date

1. Introduction

Policy Statement

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) acknowledges its responsibility to act sustainably across all of its functions. This policy outlines the measures that APHRC will take to embed environmental sustainability into all its activities and functions; identifies methods of delivery; and outlines the ways of communicating the policy to staff, partners, visitors, and service providers to make them aware of and support best practice procedures.

2. Application

This policy applies to all APHRC staff, partners, visitors, and service providers.

For the purposes of this policy, the term:

- "Staff" refers to all persons who have signed a contract with APHRC to work in any capacity at any given time (on regular or temporary terms, interns, volunteers, and consultants), including outsourced staff.
- "Partners" refers to individuals or institutions with whom APHRC has a contractual agreement to deliver all or part of a project. It does not refer to lead institutions on a grant where APHRC is a sub-awardee.
- "Visitor" refers to an individual(s) who comes to APHRC and spends time with, or stays with others within the premises including the offices, meeting and conference rooms, grounds, and the 'Ulwazi Place', for official purposes, capacity strengthening activities or personal social activities.
- "Service provider" refers to a third party organization or individual that provides services to APHRC, such as, legal, real estate, information communication technology, transport, storage, and processing services.

3. Guiding Principles

APHRC is committed to reducing the environmental impact of its operations and activities by minimizing its environmental footprint in ways that are practical and sustainable and by promoting an eco-friendly culture among its staff, volunteers, consultants, collaborators, and other service providers

4. Policy Implementation

APHRC will:

- a) Implement smart travel initiatives that reduce our environmental footprint and ensure that travel makes a compelling contribution towards achieving APHRC's mission. In this regard,
 - i. Travel will only be considered where:
 - a critical business need exists;
 - benefit to the organization can be proven;
 - travel satisfies more than one agenda; and
 - all alternative options have been considered.
 - ii. Where travel is necessary, APHRC will pursue options to offset the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of the trips we make, including purchasing credits. In doing so, we are cognizant that the cheapest travel is not always the most cost-effective or acceptable environmentally, and can result in longer hours of travel than is necessary, higher CO₂ emissions, and greater environmental and climate damage.

- b) Take environmental considerations when purchasing office vehicles and ensure that vehicles are well maintained to reduce emissions.
- c) Encourage the use of teleconferencing facilities and promote remote working and remote participation in events to minimize travel.
- d) Encourage local and sub-regional events that reduce the number of participants who need to travel long distances.
- e) Comply with all relevant environmental regulations in the countries in which we operate.
- f) Minimize the environmental impact of new and existing buildings through sustainable designs.
- g) Protect biodiversity and green spaces in our premises.
- h) Conserve energy within our offices through the use of energy saving devices such as sensor lighting.
- i) Monitor water use and reduce wastage of consumption by fitting water saving taps and ensuring regular maintenance to prevent water leaks.
- j) Encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling by, among other practices,
 - i. Avoiding the use of single use plastics in our premises (e.g., removing plastic single use cups from our drinking water dispensers, using paper straws in eateries within our premises, etc.);
 - ii. Putting in place effective arrangements for waste recycling, including having paper recycling bins; and
 - iii. Promoting a paperless office and electronic data collection for our research work.
- k) Incorporate environmental sustainability principles in our strategic and operational processes. This will include:
 - i. Procuring goods and services from institutions that demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability;
 - ii. Conducting routine environmental impact assessments of our work; and
 - iii. Pursuing organizational certification for environmentally friendly practices.
- l) Promote an environmentally conscious workplace by:
 - i. Providing information and training on environmental sustainability to all staff, volunteers, consultants, collaborators, and other service providers;
 - ii. Placing signage in relevant areas to remind staff and others to observe environment friendly practices; and
 - iii. Encouraging staff to participate in activities that sequester carbon, such as tree planting, as part of our corporate social responsibility.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following individuals have specific roles in relation to the Policy as below:

5.1. The Board of Directors

- a) Approval of this policy and any revisions.
- b) Ensure that relevant operational guidelines are maintained.

5.2. Executive Leadership Team

- a) Regularly review and further develop the policy.
- b) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that APHRC exercises duty of care for the sustainability of the environment, in line with the policy.

5.3. Director of Operations

- a) Disseminate the policy to all APHRC staff, volunteers, consultants, collaborators, and other service providers. The policy will also be included in the APHRC new starter

induction kit, and links to the same will be available, through the APHRC Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

- b) Send an annual reminder to all concerned parties, emphasizing the importance of compliance with this policy.

5.4. Internal auditor

Regularly monitor the implementation of the policy and submit regular status reports on compliance to the APHRC Executive Leadership Team.

5.5. All APHRC staff

- a) Keep abreast and comply with the principles outlined in this policy.
- b) Report any breaches to the Director of Operations within 24 hours of being aware. Staff can also use the anonymous whistleblowing channels at APHRC.

6. Non-compliance

Any individual who identifies a lack of compliance with this policy should report the same to the Director of Operations through the channels outlined in the Whistle Blowing Policy. The Director of Operations will assess the situation and apply the necessary action, including resolving the situation at hand and taking disciplinary actions against any perpetrators.

7. Related Policies

This policy will be appended to the “Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual” and will be enforced alongside the following related policy documents:

- a) APHRC Policy on Safety and Health, 2018
- b) APHRC Safeguarding Policy, 2020
- c) APHRC Travel Policy
- d) Whistleblowing Policy

8. Monitoring and review

The Internal Audit Unit will monitor the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

9. Policy revision

This policy is subject to revision whenever legal, pragmatic, or technological developments make revision necessary. In any case, the policy will be reviewed at least every three years.