



INTERSOS

**ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY**

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INTRODUCTION

The principle on which humanitarian action is based, is to preserve the lives and dignity of populations in distress. INTERSOS is committed to reach this objective and to respond to humanitarian crises, while implementing best practices and actions leading to a sustainable impact on the environment and on the communities with whom it engages.

As a humanitarian organization, INTERSOS is aware that the environment is intrinsic to sustainable humanitarian actions and that climate change threatens the access of beneficiaries and communities to food, water and livelihoods. Due to INTERSOS' explicit choice to intervene in conflict and war-torn areas, which are often also affected by the effects of climate change, the organization is committed to follow the good environmental practices presented in this policy in all its operations and in all of its humanitarian programming.

INTERSOS, through this policy, commits to minimizing as much as possible the environmental impact of its operations, balancing it with necessities to fulfil its mandate. This policy aims at protecting the environment and reducing the risk of negative impacts. We recognize this to be a long-term commitment to regularly update our practices, in light of the advances in technology and environmental science.

The aim of this Environmental Policy is to define the guiding principles of environmental sustainability for INTERSOS HQ, INTERSOS country offices and projects.

This policy applies to all INTERSOS staff and governance members. Under the terms of this policy, the term “INTERSOS staff” refers to any person employed by INTERSOS. The interns of INTERSOS are considered to fall within this category, for the purposes of this policy. Under the terms of this policy, the term “governance” refers to any person elected by decision making bodies to participate in the managerial and administrative bodies of INTERSOS. In particular, the members of the board of directors are Governance members.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to describe the basis for incorporating environmental factors into specific INTERSOS guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Programmes. Environmental issues are cross-sectoral by nature, and environmental considerations have to be introduced in a consistent and coordinated manner into all relevant sectoral activities and internal regulations.

Moreover, the policy is meant to inform third parties, partners, suppliers, consultants, donors, supporters, contractors, on the conduct they are entitled to expect from INTERSOS and on which requirements are necessary in partnering with the same Organization.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION, THE ENVIRONMENT **PRINCIPLES AND OPERATIONAL APPROACHES**

1. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Humanitarian operations have a high risk of negatively impacting on the environment, the effects of which may be far reaching and long-lasting, affecting not only the physical environment but also the health, well-being and livelihoods of affected and host communities and increasing the risk for secondary or future disasters.

Consideration of environmental impacts and their links with human health, livelihoods and survival must, however, be balanced with regard to the efficient delivery of emergency and recovery assistance

INTERSOS is committed in a timely and systematic inclusion of environmental concerns as an inter-sectoral issue at all stages of humanitarian action with the aim to protect lives, livelihoods, and sustainable resource management.

2. SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERSOS will sustain the use of renewable natural resources and will conserve non-renewable resources through efficient use and careful planning.

Operational approaches: INTERSOS will commit to determine sustainable levels of water use. On this purpose, an early assessment of the presence, quality, quantity and recharge rate of groundwater sources should be regularly done. Moreover, groundwater extractions will need to be monitored to ensure that the natural recharge rate is not exceeded.

3. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

INTERSOS will ensure that consideration is given to purchasing environmentally sustainable products and services and develop sustainable supply chains by prioritising suppliers that have environmental standards compatible with its own. Within the terms of the domestic law, INTERSOS will make provision to ensure that contractors working on INTERSOS' behalf apply environmental standards equivalent to INTERSOS' own. However, the humanitarian imperative is paramount: where speed of deployment is essential in saving lives, INTERSOS will purchase necessary goods and services from the most appropriate available source and do likewise when the security and safety of its staff is at stake.

Operational approaches: INTERSOS procurement policy will be based on climate friendly and ethical standards. This will include selecting sustainable and ecological suppliers and promote, e.g., the use of recycled paper, energy-efficient computers, non-toxic wax printers, environmental friendly cleaning agents, climate friendly catering for office events, etc.

Sourcing goods: INTERSOS will give preference to local procurement. To support the local economies of areas hosting refugees or other persons of concern, preference may be given to procurement of goods or services manufactured in the area of operation or readily available locally in the required quality and at competitive prices. In practice, this translates into allowing a 15% higher price differential for locally manufactured goods as compared to the landed or customs-cleared cost of international procurement.

INTERSOS will commit to source goods from suppliers who can show that they understand the need to protect the environment. The pre-qualification of suppliers will be based on new criteria and the Suppliers Assessment Questionnaire will include information on source of supplies and sustainable sources will be preferred.

The technical specifications required, and the evaluation of tenders, will include criteria in order to look at the recyclable component of goods that are resourced in a sustainable manner. The technical specifications required will ensure that goods we buy are the best we can buy in terms of their energy or water efficiency (e.g. A+ rated goods such as computer).

4. RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

INTERSOS will as much as possible promote responsible travel and transport by encouraging the use of travel options that minimise environmental impact wherever practicable. In addition, INTERSOS will monitor and reduce logistics transport to ensure efficient distribution and delivery of products and services.

Operational approaches: INTERSOS travel policy will promote a 'train before plane'-policy (e.g. guidelines not to fly within Italy or within a radius of 800 km), as well as the selection of sustainable and eco-fair accommodation and overall transportation means. The policy will aim at increasing the efficiency of business trips and the need for pre-travel analysis regarding the avoidance of trips versus online calls and meetings.

5. DEDICATED HUMAN RESOURCES

INTERSOS staff tasked with supervising or managing other INTERSOS staff must take the necessary measures to prevent staff under their supervision from engaging in acts likely to generate environmental damage. These measures may be: to draw attention to and implement the laws and regulations; to ensure adequate training related to environmental damage and to set an example of integrity through their personal conduct.

Operational approaches: within INTERSOS a dedicated staff is identified acting as Environmental Manager/Officer, who will analyze current INTERSOS operations' environmental impact, suggest and help introduce mainstream climate friendly work procedures, and monitor and evaluate its implementation.

6. WISE USE OF ENERGY

Whenever possible, INTERSOS will use environmentally safe and sustainable energy sources in its humanitarian operations. Moreover, INTERSOS will reduce the amount of energy consumed by promoting energy-efficient practices, investing in energy efficient products, and using / advocating for environmentally sustainable energy sources where possible.

Operational approaches: INTERSOS is committed in using renewable sources of energy production. Solar power is the most widely available source in most of INTERSOS country offices and provides less use of carbon energy.

INTERSOS will promote the use of solar energy in its operations. The MoU with SEVA for Africa (<http://www.sevasrl.it/index.php/en/seva-for-africa>) allows INTERSOS to benefit of free supply and installation (with training of local staff included) of some complete solar systems, at its own project bases.

The subsequent solar panel systems will be bought by INTERSOS from SEVA, at favorable prices, to continue the project of using eco-sustainable and recyclable resources in their missions and projects.

7. MINIMIZATION AND SAFE DISPOSAL OF WASTE

INTERSOS will minimize the creation of waste, and wherever economically possible reuse, repair and recycle materials and encourage others to act likewise. INTERSOS will encourage the sorting of waste and its disposal via recycling processes. INTERSOS will dispose its waste in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

Operational approaches: Manual for Procurement, Storing and Management of Pharmaceutical Products at Field Level.

INTERSOS commits to store all medicines and related supplies with expiry dates by using "FIRST EXPIRY FIRST OUT" procedures.

Manufacturers print dates on containers to show how long the contents will remain effective. The dates are called expiry dates. At regular intervals expiry dates are checked in all stocks, in each store. Items with shorter expiry dates are stored in front of those with longer expiry dates. If two containers have the same expiry date, the newly received one is stored behind the one already on the shelves.

This method is referred to as FEFO, which is FIRST EXPIRY FIRST OUT. FEFO procedures reduce waste caused by product expiry.

8. USE OF AN ECO-FRIENDLY AND ETHICALLY GUIDED BANK

INTERSOS will, whenever possible, ensure to select eco-friendly and ethically guided banks in order to support investment into companies which protect our climate and to avoid investing in those who harm our environment.

This will include the use of financial services which are cooperative banks deeply engaged in financing project for the reduction of energy consumption, development of renewable energy sources, promotion of organic and bio-dynamic farming and sustainable projects.

9. LIVELIHOOD IMPACT MITIGATION

INTERSOS will seek support at technical level (single partner) on a study for the designing of construction modules, with renewable materials and with almost no impact for all the different climates of the different emergency countries.

Operational approach: Modular emergency system, on this purpose at the beginning of 2019 an MOU was signed with University of Trento – Department of civil, environmental and mechanical engineering. The use of the first prototypes in some INTERSOS projects has already been agreed between the parties.

10. RISK REDUCTION

INTERSOS will, whenever possible, minimize the risk of environmental damage by employing safe technologies and operating procedures. INTERSOS will, whenever possible, conduct environmental assessments to identify and assess any adverse environmental impacts of its programming and implement measures to prevent, reduce, and mitigate any negative impacts. INTERSOS will, whenever possible, develop mitigation plans on a case-by-case basis, depending on the context, type of programming, and donor requirements.

COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

INTERSOS staff certify that they adhere to the environmental safeguarding principles outlined in this policy by signing the INTERSOS Acceptance Form and by signing their employment contract. The policy is published under the authority of INTERSOS Secretary General.

INTERSOS staff, who are responsible to negotiate the terms of conditions of employment of any INTERSOS staff, must ensure that staff is aware of and commits to the full respect of this policy. It is the responsibility of INTERSOS staff with managerial responsibilities to ensure that staff under their supervision comply with this policy. This policy shall form part of the working conditions of INTERSOS staff and the conditions, when applicable, for the performance of the operations.

This Policy is effective starting from January 1st, 2020. It will be revised and updated on November 2020, to reflect operational needs and resource consideration, unless an earlier review or update is deemed necessary.

INTERSOS Environmental Officer may be contacted for the implementation of the principles and for support on operational approach.

Grants Control and Compliance Unit may be contacted for compliance aspects related to the implementation of the policy.