AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR WILDLIFE IN HUMAN CARE (AAWHC)

Sustainability Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines key principles and actionable strategies to minimize environmental impact, engage communities, and ensure responsible use of resources within all member institutions.

2. Scope and exemptions

This Policy applies to all accredited members of the African Association for Wildlife in Human Care (AAWHC). All other members are encouraged to abide by or achieve the standards set by the policy.

3. Definitions

Best Practicable Environmental Option - the option that provides the most benefit or causes the least damage to the Environment as a whole, at a cost acceptable to society, in the long term as well as in the short term;

Environment - the surroundings within which humans exist and that are made up of:
(a) The land, water and atmosphere of the earth;
(b) Microorganisms, plant and animal life;
(c) Any part or combination of (a) and (b) and the inter-relationship among and between them;
(d) The physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties and the conditions of the foregoing that influence human health and well-being;

Environmentally sound management - the taking of all practicable steps to ensure we protect health and the environment;

General waste - waste that does not pose an immediate hazard or threat to health or to the Environment, and includes —
(a) Domestic waste;
(b) Building and demolition waste;
(c) Business waste; and
(d) Inert waste;

Hazardous waste - any waste that contains organic or inorganic elements or compounds that may, owing to the inherent physical, chemical or toxicological cause harm to human health and the Environment;

Pollution - any change in the Environment caused by-
(a) Substances;
(b) Radioactive or other waves; or
(c) noise, odours, dust or heat, emitted from any activity, including the storage or treatment of waste or substances, construction and the provision of services, whether engaged in by any person, or organ of state, where that changes has an adverse effect on human health or well-being or on the composition, resilience and productivity of natural or managed ecosystems, or on materials useful to people, or will have such an effect in future;

Relevant legislation and regulation - legislation and regulation applicable to locations of Association members.

Sustainability goals - goals defined by the United Nations in 2015 to be reached by 2030.

4. Policy Statement

The African Association for Wildlife in Human Care (AAWHC) aligns its sustainability policy with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Strategy on Sustainability.

"In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, providing the framework through which to achieve global sustainability. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set therein, are an urgent call-for-action by all countries to take positive action and drive change towards a sustainable future. With the blueprint set forth by these SDGs, it is the responsibility of zoos and aquariums to contribute to the world's most pressing environmental, social and economic challenges".

The core work of AAWHC is to develop, maintain, and conserve the green environment, animal conservation, provision of recreational facilities within the Pan African continent with present and for future generations. AAWHC bases their policy on sustainability on the framework provided by the UN and the WAZA Strategy on Sustainability. The policy includes environmental management principals to minimize our environmental impact. It suggests ways to improve waste management, conserve water, energy and soil, educate staff, service providers and visitors and develop community-based programmes.

4.1 Environmental Footprint Reduction:

Carbon Neutrality:

Many zoos and aquariums aim to become carbon neutral, reducing their greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency measures, renewable energy sources, and offsetting remaining emissions.

Water Conservation:

Implementing water-saving technologies, such as low-flow fixtures and rainwater harvesting, can significantly reduce water consumption.

Waste Management:

Reducing, reusing, and recycling materials are crucial steps in minimizing waste and promoting a circular economy. Remove single use plastic products.

Sustainable Sourcing:

Choosing locally sourced and sustainably produced food and other materials can help reduce the environmental impact of operations. Incorporate sustainable design principles when designing facilities such as animal enclosures, administration buildings, public parking space, etc.

Transportation:

Prioritizing public transportation and promoting carpooling or cycling can reduce the carbon footprint of staff and visitors.

4.2 Community Engagement and Collaboration:

Partnerships:

Collaborating with local organizations, research institutions, and government agencies can strengthen conservation efforts and promote sustainability.

Volunteer Programmes:

Engaging volunteers in conservation initiatives can provide valuable support and raise awareness.

Community Outreach:

Organizing events and programmes that educate the public about conservation issues can drive behavioural change and community action.

Environmental principles:

- Integrate environmentally sustainable principles in all business decisions, also to comply with all applicable compliance obligations, regulations, standards and code of practice relevant to all operations related to each country;
- Continual improvement on environmental performance by adopting a risk-based approach process when undertaking activities and providing the framework for developing and reviewing the set objectives based on the significant impacts;
- Involve the employees in the drive to minimise environmental risks to prevent undesired incidents and non-conformities and to prevent pollution and promote efficient use and management of resources;
- Conduct awareness training for the employees and contractors on environmental programmes and systems to improve competence levels and ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the employees and contractors are clearly outlined;

- Take the responsibility and the accountability of the organisational environmental performance and provide financial and human resources to give effect to the environmental sustainability policy;
- Define the strategies aimed at preventing pollution by ensuring that management of pollutants including waste is aligned with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations as prescribed by the national, provincial and municipal compliance obligations;

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Compliance

a. The Management of an Accredited member, or their delegate, shall ensure that policy is implemented in their facility as well as the requirements of all relevant legislation and regulation as per the country in which the facilities are situated.

b. The Management of an Accredited member or their delegate is responsible for addressing situations of environmental compromise when they are identified.

c. The Management of an Accredited member or their delegate shall ensure their organisation identifies likely future risks and proactively plan to mitigate these risks. Assessment via a risk matrix support identification of priority risks. These risk scenarios could include:

- Spillage
- Pollution
- Illegal dumping of waste
- Wastage of scarce resources

6. Related Documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies, procedures and guidelines of the Association:

- AAWHC Code of Ethics
- AAWHC Education policy
- WAZA strategies

7. Resources

- WAZA Sustainability Strategy
- National Zoo Sustainability Strategy: https://nationalzoo.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/NZA-Sustainability-Strategy-2022-2025.pdf
- UN Sustainability Goals
- Animal Concepts: https://www.animalconcepts.eu/blog/Sustainable-practices-at-animal-careo-rganisations-sleep-in-the-digital-age