

- **Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC)**

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION POLICY

Version 2.0

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles, commitments, and actions through which the **Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC)** integrates environmental sustainability and climate action into its operations, programs, partnerships, and advocacy efforts.

BCDC recognizes that environmental degradation and climate change are among the greatest threats facing vulnerable communities, especially those already experiencing displacement, poverty, and conflict. These challenges disproportionately affect the people BCDC serves – including refugee and diaspora communities from Myanmar, remote ethnic groups, and marginalized populations in Australia.

This policy affirms BCDC’s responsibility to:

- **Minimize the environmental footprint** of its programs and operations;
- **Promote climate resilience** in humanitarian and development programming;
- **Support sustainable community-led solutions** that are inclusive and equitable;
- **Comply with national environmental laws** in Australia and best practices in sustainability;
- **Align with international development standards**, including the ACFID Code of Conduct and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13 – Climate Action).

It also reinforces BCDC’s belief that sustainability and climate justice are not separate from development or humanitarian work – they are integral to its success. Through this policy, BCDC commits to doing its part in ensuring a healthy environment for current and future generations, while amplifying the voices of those most affected by climate change.

2. SCOPE

This Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action Policy applies to all operational, programmatic, advocacy, and institutional activities undertaken or supported by the **Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC)**. The policy ensures that environmental stewardship and climate-conscious decision-making are integrated throughout the organization's work—domestically in Australia and internationally, especially in Myanmar, Thailand, and other regional contexts where BCDC maintains partnerships or projects.

2.1 Organizational Reach

This policy is applicable to the following individuals and entities involved in the work of BCDC:

- **All BCDC Staff Members:** Including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contractual employees across administration, operations, and program teams.
- **Board Members and Senior Leadership:** Responsible for governance, policy endorsement, oversight of strategic environmental goals, and compliance.
- **Volunteers and Interns:** Regardless of duration or location, all persons contributing time or skills to BCDC's work are expected to uphold the principles of this policy.
- **Partner Organizations:** Including local CSOs, NGOs, diaspora-led networks, and service providers who deliver projects on behalf of or in collaboration with BCDC.
- **Suppliers, Contractors, and Consultants:** Entities providing goods or services to BCDC must adhere to environmentally responsible practices as outlined in contracts or procurement standards.

2.2 Programmatic and Operational Activities

This policy applies across all **functional and programmatic domains** of BCDC's work. Specifically, it governs activities such as:

- **Project Design and Planning:** Environmental considerations must be incorporated at the design stage of every project, including sustainability assessments, climate risk analysis, and the integration of environmental indicators.
- **Humanitarian and Development Programming:** All projects in education, health, livelihoods, aged care, refugee support, and community resilience must be delivered in ways that minimize environmental degradation and promote long-term ecological balance.
- **Procurement and Logistics:** All purchasing, sourcing, and transport activities must seek to reduce emissions, eliminate unnecessary waste, and favor environmentally responsible suppliers.
- **Construction and Infrastructure Projects:** Any physical infrastructure or rehabilitation works must comply with environmental regulations and sustainable building principles.
- **Community Engagement and Education:** Environmental literacy and climate change awareness will be embedded in community activities, workshops, and advocacy efforts.
- **Resource Use and Waste Management:** Internal office practices—whether in Australia or in-field sites—must reduce consumption of paper, water, plastics, and energy; implement recycling protocols; and favor digital processes where possible.

2.3 Geographic Applicability

This policy is applicable to **all geographic areas where BCDC operates**, funds, or collaborates on activities, including:

- **Australia:** Across BCDC's refugee support programs, diaspora engagement, aged care services, and advocacy work.
- **Myanmar:** Across humanitarian and development programs operated directly or in collaboration with trusted local partners.
- **Thailand:** Specifically in cross-border programming and refugee support services based in Mae Sot or nearby regions.
- **Other countries:** Where BCDC may enter into regional or international partnerships in the future.

2.4 Lifecycle Integration

This policy applies throughout the **entire program and project lifecycle**, from early ideation to post-project evaluation:

- Initial environmental and climate risk assessments
- Program design and budgeting
- Implementation and partner collaboration
- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
- Transition or closure, including restoration and responsible handover

All BCDC program and support teams must integrate environmental sustainability considerations into each stage of their work and be held accountable for their implementation.

2.5 Linkages with Other Organisational Policies

This policy is interdependent with BCDC's broader governance and program delivery framework and must be read in conjunction with the following:

- **Partnership Commitment Policy**
- **Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) Policy**
- **Financial Wrongdoing and Procurement Policies**
- **Safeguarding and Protection Policies (including Child Safeguarding and PSEAH)**
- **Code of Conduct and Human Resources Management Policy**

These documents collectively support the implementation of a consistent, risk-informed, and ethically grounded approach to environmental sustainability.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC) is committed to environmental stewardship and climate resilience as integral to our mission of supporting communities through humanitarian aid, development, aged care, and diaspora engagement. The following principles guide our approach to environmental sustainability and climate action across all programs, partnerships, and internal operations.

3.1 Environmental Stewardship as a Core Ethical Obligation

BCDC recognises that environmental degradation undermines the rights, health, and livelihoods of current and future generations. We embrace environmental responsibility as a core ethical obligation and an expression of our organisational values—particularly those of care, respect, and justice. All programs and operational decisions must be grounded in a commitment to safeguarding the natural environment, preserving biodiversity, and promoting ecological balance.

3.2 Climate Justice and Equity

Climate change is a global crisis that disproportionately affects those with the least capacity to respond—especially people experiencing poverty, displacement, social exclusion, or political marginalisation. BCDC’s climate action is rooted in the principle of climate justice. We aim to amplify the voices of affected communities, promote fair access to resources and adaptation solutions, and challenge structural inequalities that drive environmental vulnerability. This includes recognizing the disproportionate burdens borne by Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

3.3 Do No Harm and Risk Prevention

Consistent with the humanitarian principle of “Do No Harm,” BCDC strives to prevent environmental damage through responsible design, implementation, and exit of all programs. Environmental and climate-related risks will be proactively identified, assessed, and mitigated. We commit to:

- Avoiding pollution and unsustainable resource extraction;
- Ensuring waste is managed responsibly and ethically;
- Preventing deforestation, biodiversity loss, and waterway contamination;
- Considering long-term impacts of aid delivery, construction, procurement, and transportation.

All staff and partners must integrate environmental considerations into risk assessments, using appropriate tools and checklists, and consult affected communities in identifying risks and mitigation strategies.

3.4 Sustainability, Resilience, and Regeneration

BCDC will not only avoid harm but also work toward regenerative practices that strengthen the resilience of people and ecosystems. This includes:

- Promoting sustainable land, water, and energy use;
- Supporting community-based disaster preparedness and natural resource management;
- Integrating ecosystem-based adaptation into climate-vulnerable programs;
- Encouraging circular economy practices such as reuse, repair, and recycling;
- Supporting reforestation, conservation, and other climate mitigation activities wherever feasible.

Program designs will prioritize long-term sustainability and self-reliance over short-term gain, including consideration of climate scenarios and environmental trends.

3.5 Transparency, Accountability, and Public Disclosure

BCDC will be transparent and accountable in how it manages environmental and climate impacts. We will:

- Publicly report on our environmental commitments, where relevant;
- Disclose potential risks or negative impacts of projects to affected communities;
- Establish accessible grievance mechanisms for environmental concerns;
- Incorporate environmental performance into monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Ensure internal accountability through clear responsibilities, documentation, and review.

Our policies, decisions, and operations will reflect respect for the rights of communities to be informed and consulted about environmental issues that affect them.

3.6 Participation, Inclusion, and Indigenous Knowledge

Environmental action must be inclusive, participatory, and rooted in community knowledge and leadership. BCDC will:

- Ensure women, youth, older persons, and people with disabilities are actively involved in climate and environmental initiatives;
- Acknowledge and protect the environmental rights of Indigenous peoples;
- Integrate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge into program design and advocacy;
- Facilitate locally led environmental solutions and resilience planning;
- Build capacity among community members to advocate for their environmental and climate rights.

BCDC respects the agency and lived experience of local actors, recognizing them as leaders and co-creators of sustainable and context-specific environmental strategies.

3.7 Organizational Learning and Innovation

Environmental sustainability is an evolving field. BCDC commits to continuous learning, reflection, and innovation to improve our environmental performance and climate responsiveness. We will:

- Train staff and partners on environmental and climate action principles;
- Regularly review and update internal systems and tools to reflect emerging standards and best practices;
- Engage with the broader development and humanitarian sector to share knowledge and learn from others;
- Pilot and scale innovative, environmentally friendly solutions within projects and operations;
- Allocate appropriate resources for environmental integration across departments.

Innovation in climate adaptation, low-emission technology, and community-led mitigation strategies will be actively pursued and promoted.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AREAS RELEVANT TO BCDC

As a grassroots, diaspora-led organisation operating across Australia, Myanmar, and Thailand, BCDC acknowledges its environmental responsibilities in all areas of its programming and organisational operations. The following subsections identify key environmental impact areas where BCDC's work intersects with climate and ecological sustainability concerns.

4.1 Program Delivery and Project Implementation

BCDC's humanitarian and development programs—particularly community-based education, refugee support, health outreach, and offline teaching projects in Thailand and Myanmar—can create environmental footprints through:

- **Use of printed learning materials and physical supplies** for education and outreach;
- **Short-term logistics and storage systems** that may contribute to waste generation (e.g., plastic wrapping, food packaging);
- **Project-related travel** across border regions and internally displaced areas, potentially increasing carbon emissions;
- **Technology-enabled learning platforms**, which may depend on unsustainable e-waste disposal if hardware (laptops, drives, routers) is not repurposed or recycled.

Mitigation strategies include using digital materials where possible, encouraging low-emission transport, and supporting partners in adopting eco-conscious procurement and recycling methods.

4.2 Aged Care and MCCS Service Delivery

Through Metta Community Care Sydney (MCCS), BCDC operates aged care services for the Burmese diaspora in Australia. Environmental impacts specific to this sector include:

- **Energy and water use** at community centres and private residences during in-home care activities;
- **Procurement of uniforms, PPE, hygiene products**, and mobility equipment, which may include plastics or non-recyclable materials;
- **Waste generated** from daily aged care routines (e.g., incontinence products, packaging of meals or medications);
- **Transportation use** by staff and volunteers attending home visits, events, or senior gatherings.

BCDC commits to applying environmentally responsible principles in aged care by exploring sustainable procurement, staff awareness on waste separation, and minimizing single-use materials in daily operations.

4.3 Community Events and Cultural Engagement Activities

BCDC organizes regular community-based events, including senior gatherings, cultural celebrations, training workshops, and awareness forums. These events can lead to environmental impacts such as:

- **Use of single-use items** (cups, banners, water bottles) during events;
- **Food waste** and packaging from catering services;
- **Excessive paper use** for flyers, feedback forms, and handouts;
- **Uncoordinated waste disposal** when events are held in hired or outdoor venues.

BCDC is integrating “green event” guidelines into its community engagement framework, encouraging the use of reusable tableware, limiting printed materials, and coordinating proper waste disposal practices with venues and volunteers.

4.4 Office Operations and Administration

BCDC’s core operations, including planning, monitoring, administration, and communication, can have environmental implications due to:

- **Electricity consumption** from office equipment and heating/cooling systems;
- **Frequent printing** of reports, forms, policies, and training materials;
- **Improper e-waste handling** of obsolete laptops, routers, or phones used in project delivery;
- **Procurement practices** that may not consider sustainability (e.g., office supplies made from virgin plastics or paper).

BCDC promotes sustainable office operations through internal practices such as double-sided printing, energy-efficient lighting, digital filing systems, and ethical procurement policies that favor recycled or eco-certified goods.

4.5 Partner and Supplier Engagement

BCDC works with a range of local partners, service providers, and vendors in Myanmar, Thailand, and Australia. Environmental risks can arise when:

- **Suppliers or implementing partners lack environmental awareness**, or fail to adhere to sustainable practices;
- **Products or services procured** do not meet basic sustainability standards (e.g., high energy consumption, non-biodegradable packaging);
- **Field operations in environmentally sensitive areas** are not conducted with adequate care for biodiversity or community resources.

BCDC is committed to promoting environmental consciousness among partners by including sustainability criteria in procurement and partnership agreements, sharing environmental good practices, and co-developing context-appropriate mitigation strategies.

4.6 Disaster Risk and Climate Vulnerabilities in Program Locations

BCDC operates in areas highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters—such as cyclones, floods, and droughts—especially in Myanmar’s ethnic regions and refugee camps in Thailand. Environmental sustainability in these settings is crucial to ensure:

- **Resilience of community infrastructure** (e.g., shelters, informal learning spaces);
- **Safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)** management, particularly during monsoon seasons;
- **Sustainable land use** when coordinating with displaced populations or rural communities.

Programs implemented in these high-risk areas are designed with attention to environmental resilience, climate adaptation, and reduced ecological burden—working closely with affected communities and local actors to ensure alignment with their capacities and environmental realities.

5. BCDC'S INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC) affirms that environmental sustainability must be a foundational value integrated into all areas of its work—both within Australia and internationally. This includes program design, aged care services through Metta Community Care Services (MCCS), humanitarian and diaspora engagement, community events, and partnerships in Myanmar and Thailand. Environmental sustainability is not viewed as a separate activity but as a core element of ethical, responsible, and future-oriented development practice.

These commitments are designed to guide BCDC and its affiliated programs to uphold Australia's environmental regulations, the ACFID Code of Conduct, and DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguards. Importantly, they respond to the lived realities of our partner communities, especially those vulnerable to climate change and ecological degradation.

5.1 Integration of Sustainability in Organizational Planning

BCDC commits to embedding environmental sustainability into its overarching planning frameworks and organizational culture. This includes:

- **Incorporation into Strategic Planning:** All BCDC strategic plans, annual operational plans, and key project strategies will include explicit reference to environmental goals, risks, and mitigation strategies.
- **Sustainability Screening:** Prior to the implementation of any new project or major activity (including those under MCCS), BCDC will undertake an environmental impact screening using an internal tool. This screening will assess risks related to waste, energy use, emissions, procurement, or disruption to natural ecosystems.
- **Environmental Design Considerations:** Project and event design templates, budgeting tools, and workplans will include prompts to consider low-impact alternatives, resource efficiency, and climate resilience strategies.
- **Resilience Integration:** BCDC will support climate adaptation and disaster preparedness as part of its program planning—especially in communities in Myanmar and Thailand that face recurrent environmental shocks.

5.2 Mainstreaming in Key Program Areas

BCDC will systematically apply environmental sustainability principles across all its program areas, including:

- **Aged Care Services (MCCS):**
 - Use of environmentally friendly cleaning and personal care products.
 - Reducing paper-based documentation through digitization of client records and internal communications.
 - Encouraging staff and clients to practice energy and water conservation in the home care environment.
 - Collaborating with clients and families to introduce sustainable habits, such as waste separation and composting where appropriate.

- **Community Gatherings, Cultural Events, and Workshops:**
 - Selecting venues with strong environmental credentials (e.g. natural lighting, recycling facilities).
 - Using reusable, compostable, or recyclable materials for catering and decorations.
 - Reducing reliance on printed materials by promoting QR codes and digital programs.
 - Sharing environmental tips or short awareness talks during community events.

- **Diaspora Engagement and Refugee Support Projects:**
 - Including environmental themes in educational and vocational training where appropriate.
 - Supporting eco-conscious livelihoods or green skills development among refugee and migrant communities.

- **Partnership Programs in Myanmar and Thailand:**
 - Encouraging local partners to integrate sustainability in project activities.
 - Promoting context-relevant practices, such as reforestation, permaculture, water conservation, or plastic reduction.
 - Mapping environmental vulnerabilities and engaging communities in local adaptation strategies.

5.3 Partnership and Supplier Expectations

To influence wider systems of sustainability, BCDC will promote environmental responsibility across its partnerships and procurement processes:

- **Partner Alignment:** All partner organizations will be expected to acknowledge BCDC's environmental principles and demonstrate a willingness to adopt sustainable practices appropriate to their context.
- **Supplier Evaluation:** BCDC will favor suppliers that follow ethical sourcing, waste minimization, and low-emission practices. Procurement assessments will include environmental performance as a factor.
- **Capacity Support:** For grassroots partners and suppliers with limited resources, BCDC will offer support through toolkits, training, and mentoring to help them meet environmental standards.
- **Shared Agreements:** Environmental clauses will be included in MoUs and service contracts, specifying mutual responsibilities for waste management, energy use, and materials selection.

5.4 Environmentally Responsible Procurement and Office Practices

BCDC recognizes that internal operations must model the change we seek. To that end, the organization will:

- **Office Supplies and Utilities:**
 - Purchase recycled or sustainably produced office and cleaning supplies.
 - Reduce single-use plastics and implement waste separation and recycling systems.
 - Encourage switching off lights and equipment when not in use, and use natural ventilation/light when possible.
- **Digital and Remote Work Practices:**
 - Prioritize virtual meetings and online document sharing to reduce travel, printing, and emissions.
 - Maintain electronic records wherever safe and feasible, reducing unnecessary paper usage.
- **Fleet and Travel:**
 - Use shared vehicles, fuel-efficient transportation, or public transport for staff travel when appropriate.
 - Consider carbon offsets for long-distance flights related to international programs or training.
- **Home Care Practice (MCCS):**
 - Train support workers to responsibly dispose of hygiene and medical waste.
 - Equip staff with environmentally conscious checklists when delivering in-home services.

5.5 Public Awareness and Advocacy on Environmental Issues

BCDC will use its influence and communication platforms to promote environmental awareness within the community and advocate for ecological justice. This includes:

- Publishing case studies or program spotlights that feature sustainability efforts (e.g., waste reduction at senior events, green workshops).
- Developing short educational materials in relevant community languages (Burmese, Karen, English).
- Partnering with diaspora organisations or environmental movements to share messages on climate resilience.
- Amplifying voices of affected communities, especially in Myanmar, who are facing displacement due to environmental degradation or climate disasters.

5.6 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

To track performance and improve over time, BCDC will:

- Include sustainability indicators in the organisation's PMEL (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) Framework.
- Collect data on sustainability measures—such as materials used, waste reduced, or green procurement implemented—across major events and programs.
- Integrate environmental reflections into After Action Reviews, partner assessments, and annual reports.
- Engage the BCDC Board, donors, and partners in reviewing and strengthening the environmental policy through periodic audits or consultations.

Community feedback will also be encouraged to ensure environmental practices are inclusive, accessible, and respectful of diverse cultural values and economic realities.

6. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The effective implementation of this Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action Policy requires coordinated actions, clear responsibilities, and integration across all areas of BCDC's operations and program work. This framework outlines how BCDC will ensure the policy is understood, applied, monitored, and continuously improved.

6.1 Environmental Focal Roles and Responsibilities

BCDC will establish dedicated internal roles and mechanisms to support policy implementation:

- **Environmental Focal Person:** A staff member or designated officer will be appointed to coordinate environmental sustainability efforts across BCDC and MCCA programs. This person will provide guidance, conduct internal reviews, and serve as a point of contact for environmental issues and opportunities.
- **Program Managers and Coordinators:** Responsible for integrating environmental considerations into program design, budgeting, and reporting. They will ensure that sustainability is reflected in the planning of events, projects, and service delivery.
- **Support Staff and Volunteers:** All BCDC and MCCA team members are expected to uphold and apply this policy in their daily work, report environmental concerns, and encourage good practices among peers and community members.
- **Board of Directors:** Responsible for endorsing this policy, reviewing its implementation annually, and ensuring that environmental objectives are incorporated into strategic governance decisions.

6.2 Policy Dissemination and Awareness

To ensure full understanding and application of this policy, BCDC will:

- Disseminate the policy to all staff, volunteers, Board members, partners, and suppliers during orientation or onboarding processes.
- Provide accessible versions of the policy in English and relevant community languages (e.g., Burmese, Karen).
- Display summaries of environmental commitments in BCDC and MCCA office spaces, event venues, and digital platforms.
- Embed key policy messages into internal communications, community forums, and partnership discussions.

6.3 Training and Capacity Strengthening

BCDC will invest in capacity-building to ensure that all personnel and partners have the knowledge and tools to implement environmental commitments effectively:

- Conduct regular **training sessions** on climate risks, sustainability principles, environmental risk management, and eco-friendly practices.
- Integrate environmental topics into **staff development plans**, orientation sessions, and supervision meetings.
- Provide **practical toolkits** for frontline MCCS staff on green home care, waste disposal, and eco-conscious support work.
- Support local partners in Myanmar and Thailand with environmental learning resources and contextualized guidance.

6.4 Integration into PMEL Systems

BCDC's Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) systems will be updated to capture environmental data and reflect this policy:

- **Sustainability Indicators** will be added to monitoring templates and project log frames (e.g., energy use, paper reduction, carbon-saving actions, waste minimization).
- Environmental performance will be included in:
 - **Quarterly internal reviews**
 - **After Action Reviews (AARs)**
 - **Annual program evaluations**
- Lessons learned related to environmental effectiveness will be integrated into **continuous improvement mechanisms** and future program planning cycles.

6.5 Internal Systems and Documentation

To institutionalise environmental sustainability within BCDC operations:

- Policy checklists and guidance will be incorporated into:
 - Project design forms
 - Event planning tools
 - Procurement and budget templates
 - Risk assessment matrices
- Key documents (e.g., partnership MoUs, contractor agreements, tender requests) will include environmental clauses or sustainability requirements.
- Environmental self-checks will be conducted at least annually, with results presented to the Board.

6.6 Alignment with DFAT/ACFID Requirements

BCDC will ensure that its environmental commitments align with the expectations of Australian donors, networks, and regulators, including:

- **ACFID Code of Conduct (Commitment 3.2):** All required indicators and good practice standards will be integrated into policy implementation.
- **DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguards:** Risk assessment tools and mitigation strategies will reflect DFAT's safeguard guidelines, especially for activities involving infrastructure or supply chains.
- **Australian environmental laws and local council regulations:** Office practices, waste disposal, and aged care delivery (MCCS) will remain compliant with local regulations in NSW and other relevant jurisdictions.

6.7 Support for Partners and Community Stakeholders

BCDC recognizes that meaningful environmental outcomes require collective action. To that end, the organization will:

- Include a brief overview of environmental commitments in all **partnership inductions** and MoU templates.
- Offer **tailored capacity support** to small CSOs, diaspora-led initiatives, or local service providers to meet sustainability standards.
- Create opportunities for **joint learning**, such as partner workshops, co-hosted green events, or shared reflection on environmental risks.
- Encourage **community consultation** when assessing environmental risks in project areas, particularly in Myanmar and Thailand.

6.8 Annual Review and Policy Updates

To ensure continued relevance and improvement of this policy:

- BCDC's Executive Team will conduct an **annual review** of implementation progress, with input from the Environmental Focal Person and program leads.
- Findings will be summarized in a short **Environmental Sustainability Implementation Report** shared with the Board, staff, and key stakeholders.
- The full policy will be **formally reviewed every three years**, or earlier if required by changes in:
 - Organizational strategy
 - ACFID or DFAT policy frameworks
 - Community or environmental conditions
- Updates and lessons learned will be incorporated into subsequent planning and budgeting cycles.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

BCDC recognises that effective environmental sustainability cannot be achieved without robust systems for risk identification, mitigation, and accountability. Environmental risks—such as resource depletion, pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate-related disasters—pose direct threats to the health, safety, and dignity of the communities BCDC serves. This section sets out how BCDC will embed environmental safeguards across its work to prevent harm and enhance ecological resilience.

7.1 Environmental Risk Assessment

Environmental risk assessments will be integrated into BCDC’s core project cycle management processes to ensure that risks are identified and mitigated early. Specifically:

- All new programs, events, construction activities, or procurement processes must undergo an **initial environmental risk screening** using BCDC’s internal Environmental Safeguard Checklist.
- Risk assessment tools will include prompts to evaluate:
 - **Waste generation and disposal**
 - **Energy and water use**
 - **Carbon emissions from transport or logistics**
 - **Impact on biodiversity, land, or waterways**
 - **Exposure to climate-related events (floods, droughts, heatwaves)**
- Activities classified as “moderate” or “high-risk” must have mitigation **plans and budgeted actions** documented prior to implementation.

These tools will be adapted to suit diverse contexts—ranging from community events in Sydney to refugee programs in Mae Sot and rural development initiatives in Myanmar.

7.2 Program Design and Safeguard Integration

Environmental safeguards will be embedded into the design and delivery of all projects and services:

- **Design templates** and funding proposals will require a section on environmental considerations.
- MCCS aged care programs will incorporate low-impact options and safety standards for waste disposal and in-home care products.
- For activities in environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. forested zones, floodplains), specific design considerations will be made to minimise ecological disruption.
- Partners will be encouraged to integrate local knowledge and ecological priorities into project planning, particularly where land, water, or forest use is involved.

7.3 Prevention of Environmental Harm

BCDC commits to the principle of “Do No Harm” in all environmental contexts by:

- Avoiding unsustainable resource extraction, harmful emissions, and non-recyclable procurement.
- Refraining from activities that could trigger deforestation, soil erosion, or contamination of water sources.
- Ensuring that all infrastructure-related initiatives (e.g. shelters, learning spaces) incorporate sustainable materials and renewable energy options where feasible.
- Working with community members to understand and prevent long-term environmental harm.

Environmental ethics will be treated as non-negotiable across all sectors—whether through MCCS’s delivery of aged care or partnerships with community groups in ethnic areas of Myanmar.

7.4 Capacity Strengthening

Given the increasing frequency of climate-related shocks in areas where BCDC works (e.g. monsoonal floods in Myanmar, heatwaves in Australia), climate risk will be a central lens in project planning:

- Project designs will include climate vulnerability assessments, identifying groups at greatest risk (e.g. older persons, people with disabilities, children, displaced households).
- BCDC will invest in community-based adaptation measures, including:
 - Promotion of climate-smart agriculture or livelihoods
 - Localised early warning systems
 - Awareness workshops on flood, heat, or fire preparedness
- Partnerships in Thailand and Myanmar will involve emergency preparedness protocols, including safe evacuation, WASH contingency planning, and continuity of services during extreme events.

BCDC will collaborate with local disaster management authorities, environmental CSOs, and Indigenous leaders to contextualize climate action and build long-term resilience.

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 - Localized early warning systems
 - Awareness workshops on flood, heat, or fire preparedness
- Partnerships in Thailand and Myanmar will involve **emergency preparedness protocols**, including safe evacuation, WASH contingency planning, and continuity of services during extreme events.

BCDC will collaborate with local disaster management authorities, environmental CSOs, and Indigenous leaders to contextualize climate action and build long-term resilience.

7.5 Accountability for Environmental Risks

To uphold accountability and transparency in managing environmental risks:

- Risk registers will be maintained at the program and organisational levels, with quarterly updates.
- Identified environmental risks will be tracked through BCDC's PMEL systems, with responsibility assigned to team leads.
- **Community consultation** will be conducted during project planning and after any significant environmental incident or disruption.
- All stakeholders—including partners, staff, and community members—will have access to BCDC's complaints and feedback mechanisms for environmental concerns.

BCDC will document any reported environmental incident or breach, investigate the root causes, and publish findings where relevant.

7.6 Ethical Use of Natural Resources

BCDC affirms its commitment to using natural resources ethically and equitably by:

- Avoiding overuse of water, energy, timber, or other natural resources during project activities.
- Ensuring that local populations are not displaced or disadvantaged by project-related land or resource use.
- Consulting Indigenous and traditional knowledge holders before initiating projects that affect communal land or culturally significant environments.
- Committing to fair benefit-sharing in the use of environmental assets, especially in cross-border or displacement-affected settings.

All environmental safeguards will reflect the interconnected rights of people, land, and ecosystems, and will be grounded in a human rights-based approach to development and humanitarian work at the program level. Organizational-level review mechanisms are outlined in Section 10.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

At the heart of BCDC’s mission is the belief that meaningful, lasting change begins with the communities we serve. Environmental sustainability efforts must therefore reflect the voices, needs, and aspirations of local communities—particularly those most impacted by ecological degradation and climate change. BCDC is committed to participatory, inclusive, and culturally respectful approaches that empower communities to become agents of environmental change.

8.1 Community-Led Environmental Action

BCDC will prioritize community-driven strategies in its environmental and climate-related work by:

- Supporting **grassroots initiatives** that promote local stewardship of land, water, and ecosystems (e.g. reforestation, clean-up campaigns, composting, and home gardens).
- Facilitating **participatory environmental planning**, where communities co-design project activities, identify risks, and propose sustainable solutions.
- Encouraging **locally led climate adaptation** measures, including disaster preparedness, sustainable agriculture, and traditional conservation practices.
- Amplifying stories of environmental action from diaspora, refugee, and ethnic communities to raise awareness and inspire replication.

All programs will be designed to support not only environmental outcomes, but also **community ownership, dignity, and resilience**.

8.2 Inclusion of Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

BCDC acknowledges that the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are not felt equally. Older persons, women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and displaced communities face disproportionate risks and often have limited access to adaptation resources. In response, BCDC will:

- Proactively include **women, youth, elders, and persons with disabilities** in climate and environmental decision-making processes.
- Design programs and communications that are **culturally and linguistically appropriate**, using translated materials in Burmese, Karen, and other relevant languages.
- Offer **accessible venues, materials, and engagement methods** for people with mobility, sensory, or cognitive limitations.
- Ensure **equity in benefit distribution** from environmental programs, especially in resource-scarce or disaster-affected areas.

Inclusive engagement is not only ethical—it enhances the quality and sustainability of environmental action.

8.3 Respect for Indigenous Knowledge and Land Rights

BCDC recognizes the profound environmental knowledge and spiritual connection to land held by Indigenous peoples in Australia, Myanmar, and Thailand. Their wisdom offers vital guidance for sustainable practices. To that end, BCDC commits to:

- Consulting Indigenous elders and knowledge holders when working on or near traditional lands or cultural heritage areas.
- Promoting **Indigenous environmental leadership** in project design, implementation, and advocacy.
- Acknowledging and protecting **Indigenous land rights, sacred sites, and traditional ecological knowledge** in all partnerships and field operations.
- Advocating for the **environmental rights of displaced Indigenous communities** affected by land grabs, deforestation, or extractive industries.

BCDC stands in solidarity with Indigenous environmental defenders and aims to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems as part of climate resilience strategies.

8.4 Environmental Education and Behavior Change

BCDC will promote environmental awareness and sustainable behavior change within the communities it supports through:

- Conducting **workshops, training sessions, and school-based programs** on environmental stewardship and climate action.
- Embedding **sustainability themes** in community events, diaspora gatherings, and aged care engagement activities (e.g., sharing energy-saving tips or waste reduction guides).
- Providing **practical tools and resources**, such as home gardening kits, waste separation bins, or instructional posters in local languages.
- Creating **multimedia content** (short videos, infographics, social media posts) that showcase good practices and highlight real-life community role models.

Environmental education will be tailored to the cultural context, literacy levels, and local challenges of each community BCDC serves.

8.5 Feedback, Grievances, and Mutual Accountability

To ensure that environmental action is community-owned and accountable:

- BCDC will provide **accessible mechanisms for environmental feedback and complaints**, including anonymous submissions, surveys, and verbal reporting options.
- Community members will be **invited to review and reflect** on environmental program activities during community meetings or After Action Reviews.
- Partner organizations and local groups will be **trained in participatory monitoring** of environmental impacts, enabling shared accountability and peer learning.
- Lessons learned from communities will be documented and used to **adapt BCDC's programs and policies** on sustainability.

Trust and accountability form the foundation of all of BCDC's community relationships—including those related to environmental sustainability.

9. TRAINING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that environmental sustainability and climate action are embedded across its operations and partnerships, BCDC is committed to building the knowledge, skills, and systems necessary for meaningful, lasting change. This includes strengthening internal capacity, supporting partner organizations, and actively engaging in shared learning within the wider humanitarian and development sector.

9.1 Staff and Volunteer Capacity Building

BCDC will provide ongoing learning opportunities for all staff and volunteers to enhance their understanding of environmental issues and sustainability practices. This includes:

- **Mandatory induction** on environmental sustainability for all new BCDC and MCCC staff and volunteers.
- Regular **training and refresher sessions** on key topics such as:
 - Climate change impacts and adaptation
 - Environmental risk assessment and mitigation
 - Sustainable procurement and office practices
 - Environmental justice and equity
- Development and dissemination of **practical tools, checklists, and guidelines** tailored to specific roles (e.g., aged care workers, project officers, event coordinators).
- Promotion of **peer learning and reflection** through team discussions, case studies, and lessons learned from project implementation.

Training efforts will be context-sensitive and supported with resources in English, Burmese, Karen, and other relevant languages where appropriate.

9.2 Partner and Supplier Capacity Support

Recognizing that many of BCDC's grassroots partners and service providers may have limited environmental capacity, BCDC will invest in shared learning and practical support. This includes:

- Providing **orientation sessions for partners and suppliers** on BCDC's environmental commitments and expectations.
- Sharing templates and tools for:
 - Local environmental risk assessments
 - Low-impact event planning
 - Eco-friendly procurement
- Offering **coaching and mentoring** for small organizations and community-based groups to help build their internal environmental practices.
- Hosting **joint capacity-building workshops** (virtually or in-person) on sustainability practices, climate risks, and adaptive strategies in Myanmar, Thailand, and Australia.

By supporting others to grow in this space, BCDC strengthens its collective environmental impact and promotes more equitable outcomes.

9.3 Organizational Learning and Internal Systems Development

Environmental sustainability requires continuous learning and systems improvement. BCDC will:

- Embed environmental metrics into its **PMEL (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) framework**, enabling ongoing tracking of sustainability performance.
- Incorporate environmental themes into **After Action Reviews**, partner meetings, and strategic planning retreats.
- Encourage cross-departmental collaboration to foster a **culture of innovation**, e.g., piloting green technologies or refining low-impact program models.
- Conduct internal reviews and spot checks to assess compliance with environmental policies and identify areas for improvement.

Organizational learning will be documented and inform future updates to BCDC's policies and operational guidance.

9.4 Sector Engagement and Advocacy

As a diaspora-led organisation with strong links across the humanitarian, development, and aged care sectors, BCDC has a unique role to play in promoting sustainability beyond its immediate operations. BCDC will:

- **Engage actively in local and national networks** focused on climate action, sustainability, and environmental justice, including relevant working groups under ACFID or CALD networks.
- Partner with academic institutions, environmental NGOs, and sector peers to:
 - Co-host learning events or community outreach campaigns;
 - Contribute to joint research, case studies, and policy submissions;
 - Share lessons from BCDC's grassroots experience in cross-border contexts.
- Advocate for stronger environmental standards and support for vulnerable communities through public communication, coalition work, and donor engagement.
- Represent the perspectives of **ethnic, refugee, and migrant communities** in discussions on climate adaptation, circular economy, and ecological equity.

Through this engagement, BCDC aims to contribute to systemic change and amplify the environmental priorities of the communities it serves.

10. POLICY GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

10.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the implementation and oversight of this Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action Policy lies with the **BCDC Executive Committee**, under the leadership of the Chairperson and Executive Director. Specific responsibilities are delegated as follows:

- **Executive Director / Environmental Focal Person:**
 - Ensures that environmental sustainability is embedded across organizational systems, program delivery, and partnership frameworks.
 - Oversees compliance with relevant national laws, ACFID Code requirements, and DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguards.
 - Leads policy roll-out, internal awareness, and cross-departmental collaboration.

- **Program Managers and Team Leaders:**
 - Integrate environmental sustainability in all project lifecycles—design, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation.
 - Ensure reporting on environmental indicators is embedded in PMEL frameworks and project reporting schedules.

- **MCCS Coordinators and Aged Care Staff:**
 - Apply environmentally conscious practices in home care services and related operations.
 - Promote climate-smart practices among clients, careers, and volunteers.

- **All Staff, Volunteers, and Interns:**
 - Comply with the policy in their daily roles.
 - Identify environmental risks or improvements and report them to relevant supervisors.
 - Act as champions of sustainability within their teams and communities.

10.2 Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed and updated every **three (3) years**, or earlier if:

- Significant changes occur in BCDC's operations, program locations, or partnerships;
- Updates are required by changes in **ACFID standards, DFAT regulations, or Australian environmental legislation;**
- Internal learning or feedback indicates a need for policy improvement.

The review process will be coordinated by the **Executive Director**, with input from:

- Senior staff and program leads;
- Community representatives and volunteers (where relevant);
- Partner organizations engaged in affected projects.

Proposed revisions will be submitted to the **BCDC Board of Directors** for formal approval.

10.3 Documentation, Version Control, and Transparency

All versions of this policy, including amendments and revision dates, will be:

- Stored securely in BCDC's internal governance database and PMEL systems;
- Clearly labelled with a **version number and approval date;**
- Shared with staff and partners upon release, with summary updates highlighted;
- Made available to the public upon request or published on BCDC's website where appropriate.

Version control and historical tracking ensure transparency, compliance, and institutional memory.

10.4 Related Policies and Legal Frameworks

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following BCDC policies and standards:

- **BCDC Code of Conduct**
- **Partnership Commitment Policy**
- **PMEL Policy**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies**
- **PSEAH Policy**
- **Financial Wrongdoing Policy**
- **Human Resource Management Policy**

In addition, this policy is informed by and supports compliance with:

- **ACFID Code of Conduct – Commitment 3.2:** Environmental stewardship, sustainability, and climate action;
- **DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Guidance;**
- **Australia's national environmental protection laws and waste management guidelines;**
- **Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 13 – Climate Action).**

11. CONCLUSION

The Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC) affirms that environmental sustainability and climate action are integral to our mission of promoting justice, dignity, and wellbeing for displaced, marginalized, and vulnerable communities in Australia, Myanmar, Thailand, and beyond.

This policy represents our ongoing commitment to embedding environmentally responsible practices across all aspects of our work – from aged care services and diaspora engagement in Australia to humanitarian and development projects in border regions. Whether through sustainable procurement, green community events, climate-resilient programming, or organizational advocacy, BCDC recognizes that meaningful development must protect the natural systems upon which all life depends.

Environmental responsibility is not an optional add-on, but a fundamental expression of our ethical obligations and shared humanity. As a community-driven organization, BCDC acknowledges the lived experience, knowledge, and leadership of grassroots partners, volunteers, and service users in identifying context-appropriate sustainability practices and responding to environmental challenges.

By implementing this policy and upholding its principles, BCDC aims to:

- Reduce the ecological impact of its operations and partnerships;
- Build resilience to climate shocks in the communities it serves;
- Foster a culture of care, accountability, and innovation within its teams and among its partners;
- Influence broader change through inclusive, equitable, and community-led environmental action.

BCDC will continue to monitor, reflect, and improve on its sustainability journey—learning from experience, responding to emerging risks, and working with others to build a safer, more sustainable future for all.

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