



## ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Approved by Board: 18 June 2019

Next review date: June 2020

Managed on behalf of the CEO and Board by:  
Program Manager

\*Revisions to this version are identified on the last page

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### 1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines Interplast Australia & New Zealand's (Interplast's) commitment to becoming a more environmentally conscious organisation and to operating in an environmentally sustainable way across all facets of the organisation and its activities. Interplast acknowledges the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation in many of the countries where we work, including in Australia where Interplast is based. Interplast understands that its work in Australia and overseas can impact on the environment. Consequently, Interplast works with partner organisations, local stakeholders and the Australian public to reduce and, where possible, mitigate the environmental impact of its work, and ensure it has the information required to make informed, environmentally-sustainable choices.

### 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the following people:

- Interplast staff members, contractors and consultants;
- Interplast volunteers<sup>1</sup>;
- Interplast Board of Directors and Committee members;
- Partner organisations<sup>2</sup>; and
- Observers/visitors accompanying an Interplast activity.

### 3. Definitions

Interplast defines the key terms in this policy as follows:

**The environment** as defined in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* includes:

- a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities;
- b) natural and physical;
- c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; and

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers include medical volunteers (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied therapists) undertaking an activity overseas or participating in professional development in their own country or overseas and non-medical volunteers, such as those in administrative, promotional or fundraising roles.

<sup>2</sup> Partners are individuals, groups of people or organisations that collaborate with Interplast to achieve mutually agreed objectives in development activities.

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d) the social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in (a), (b) or (c).

**An impact** is defined as any direct or indirect activity which has a positive or negative effect on the environment. A significant negative impact is any activity which has potential to disrupt ecosystems or that is large scale or of a permanent or long-term nature.

**An environmental mitigation plan** is a series of sub-activities that are implemented within the major activity to minimise the impact on the environment. These should include the phases of planning and design, implementation and completion for each activity.

#### 4. Legislative Framework and Standards

Interplast is in alignment with the Australian Government's main legislative framework for the environment, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)<sup>3</sup>. The Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the Department) administers the EPBC Act.

Other multi-lateral agreements to which the Australian Government is a signatory, and which are relevant to Interplast's work are:

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris, 2015)
- Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse emissions (Bali, 2007);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (New York, 1992);
- Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel, 1989);
- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna, 1985) and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; and
- Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015

Interplast also recognises the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Environment Protection Policy for the Aid Program 2014 as well as all partner country laws, standards and/or policies relating to the environment.

#### 5. Policy Statement

Interplast's objectives in relation to the environment, which are aligned with the standards in the ACFID Code of Conduct, are to:

- Comply with all applicable legal and other environmental requirements
- develop an effective system to monitor the environmental impact of Interplast's development work wherever feasible and appropriate;
- become a greener organisation;
- ensure its in-country programming is implemented with an understanding of the environmental impact and, as much as possible, in an environmentally sustainable way;

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<sup>3</sup> Last amended in June 2013

- Support local implementing partners to identify key issues relating to environmental management (as they relate to Interplast programs), and opportunities to address these
- ensure its Australian domestic operations operate in an environmentally sustainable way and reduces its environmental impact; and
- continue to support the development of relationships with suppliers who have environmentally sustainable products and ways of operating.

Interplast recognises that this Environment Policy, and its broader efforts to minimise the impact of Interplast's programs on the environment, is part of its broader suite of safeguarding policies and processes – intended to protect and safeguard vulnerable people and places.

## **6. Policy in Practice**

This policy will be embedded in Interplast's organisational culture and practices.

### Organisational Culture and Behaviour

- a) Interplast will continually review its operational processes and practices to identify opportunities to strengthen its environmental sustainability, including working towards minimising paper files within the office and encouraging volunteers and other personnel to submit paperwork electronically.
- b) Interplast will work to develop a stronger capacity for monitoring the environmental impact and sustainability of its in-country development programs as part of its strengthened program evaluation process, and its organisational Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

### International Programs

- c) Interplast's programs have a primary focus on building of local partner capacity to improve their ability to provide quality plastic and reconstructive surgical services. Successful program delivery will reduce the overall burden of the health system on the environment through following and promoting basic infection prevention standards, training local partners in infection control to reduce hospital stay and need for additional supplies to be used, and minimizing use of medical supplies which are known to have specific negative impact.
- d) All Interplast international programs will be screened for their potential environmental impact. This will include an analysis environmental considerations Interplast country programs and individual activities, and any potential risks or impacts of activities – documented in annual country program plans, and in individual program activity management tools.
- e) Interplast supports local implementing partners to develop and strengthen policies, processes and practices relating to environmental management, and ensuring they understand Interplast's commitment and requirements relating to environmental management

- f) Interplast ensures volunteers understand Interplast's commitment and requirements relating to environmental management, as relevant to their role delivering Interplast programs overseas
- g) Where possible, Interplast makes decisions relating to the procurement and use of medical equipment and supplies which have minimal environmental impact.
- h) Where practical and possible, Interplast makes decisions regarding program logistics (travel, accommodation etc) which minimise environmental impact, and support suppliers who are investing in environmental sustainability

Other Interplast Activities (fundraising, events, supporter engagement)

- i) All activities supported by Interplast (including those involving fundraising and communications with the Australian public) will be initially screened for their environmental impact. Projects that are assessed to have significant negative environmental impacts will not be supported by Interplast.
- j) Interplast will also seek to develop relationships with suppliers which share its environmental values and approach to becoming environmentally sustainable.
- k) Interplast will consider environmental impact when assessing new donor partnerships, in line with its Ethical Fundraising Policy.

## **7. Monitoring and Review of Policy**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed in line with the process outlined in the Policy Framework. The Program Manager is accountable to the CEO and Board for managing and maintaining this policy.

Where compliance issues are identified, the Program Manager will work with staff and other relevant stakeholders to address these issues promptly.

Any updates and revisions to this policy must be endorsed by the Program Manager and CEO before being submitted to the Interplast Board for its approval. Policy changes will be reflected, as necessary, in updated operational manuals.

## **List of Acronyms**

<b>ACFID</b>	Australian Council for International Development
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government organisation

**\*Revisions to Environment Policy**

<b>Nature of proposed revisions</b>	<b>Date on which CEO endorsed</b>	<b>Date on which Board approved</b>
Initially approved	22 March 2007	27 March 2007
Minor grammatical, spelling and wording changes. Changed from 'Senior' Program Activities Coordinator to 'designated' Program Activities Coordinator.	9 October 2013	15 October 2013
Grammatical and wording changes, updates to terminology and legislative standards	Annual review, 2014 - 2018	
Minor changes to legislative frameworks, and additions to Policy in Practice section – particularly related to programming practices. Realignment of policy structure/format to fit with Policy Implementation Report.	19 May 2019	18 June 2019

**This Policy will be reviewed and adjusted, as required, by the CEO, staff and Board on an annual basis.**