

WISE Nigeria Environmental Policy

1. Introduction

WISE Nigeria recognizes the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability, climate change resilience, conflict and context sensitivity, human rights, and gender equality in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. As an organization committed to empowering communities and promoting social justice, WISE Nigeria acknowledges that environmental degradation, climate variability, and inequitable access to resources exacerbate poverty, conflict, and social inequalities.

This Environmental Policy establishes the guiding framework for ensuring that all WISE Nigeria programs, projects, and operations are implemented in an environmentally responsible, climate-smart, conflict-sensitive, rights-based, and gender-inclusive manner. It reflects our commitment to the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**, the **African Union Agenda 2063**, and Nigeria's national environmental, climate, and gender policies.

2. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Environmental Policy are to:

1. Promote sustainable environmental management practices within WISE Nigeria's programs, operations, and partnerships.
2. Strengthen community resilience to the impacts of climate change through adaptive and mitigation strategies.
3. Integrate conflict and context sensitivity to prevent unintended harm and to promote peace and social cohesion.
4. Uphold human rights, particularly the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups, in all interventions.
5. Ensure gender equality and women's empowerment in environmental and climate-related decision-making.
6. Build organizational accountability and compliance with relevant national and international environmental frameworks.

3. Guiding Principles

WISE Nigeria's Environmental Policy is guided by the following principles:

- **Do No Harm:** Ensure interventions do not exacerbate environmental degradation, social conflict, or exclusion.
- **Sustainability:** Promote practices that safeguard ecosystems and natural resources for future generations.
- **Participation and Inclusivity:** Actively involve communities, especially women, youth, and vulnerable groups, in decision-making processes.
- **Equity and Justice:** Guarantee fair access to resources and opportunities, while protecting human rights.
- **Resilience and Adaptation:** Support strategies that strengthen adaptive capacity to environmental and climate risks.

- **Accountability:** Uphold transparency and responsibility in implementing environmental commitments.

4. Environmental Sustainability

WISE Nigeria recognizes that sound environmental stewardship is central to sustainable development. Our commitment includes:

- **Sustainable Natural Resource Management:** Promote responsible use of land, water, and forest resources through reforestation, soil conservation, water management, and biodiversity protection.
- **Pollution Prevention:** Minimize waste generation, adopt recycling and safe disposal practices, and prevent pollution of air, soil, and water.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Encourage renewable energy solutions and energy-efficient technologies in all operations and partner interventions.
- **Green Procurement:** Adopt environmentally friendly procurement practices, favoring goods and services that reduce ecological footprint.
- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):** Ensure all major interventions are screened for environmental risks and integrate mitigation measures into project design.

5. Climate Change

WISE Nigeria acknowledges the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, particularly smallholder farmers, women, and children. We commit to:

- **Adaptation:** Support climate-smart agriculture, climate-resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction strategies.
- **Mitigation:** Promote renewable energy, carbon reduction initiatives, and sustainable land use practices to lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhance community and institutional knowledge on climate risks and climate-smart solutions.
- **Policy Engagement:** Advocate for effective implementation of Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and climate policies.
- **Climate Justice:** Ensure equitable access to climate finance and technologies, prioritizing vulnerable groups.

6. Conflict and Context Sensitivity

Environmental degradation and resource scarcity can exacerbate conflicts, particularly in fragile contexts. WISE Nigeria will:

- **Conflict Sensitivity Analysis:** Conduct regular context assessments to identify potential drivers of conflict linked to environmental interventions.
- **Peacebuilding Integration:** Promote natural resource management as an entry point for building trust and social cohesion.
- **Inclusive Dialogue:** Facilitate platforms for dialogue and negotiation on natural resource sharing among communities.
- **Do No Harm Approach:** Ensure that interventions do not reinforce inequalities or contribute to disputes.

- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local and international peacebuilding organizations to promote conflict-sensitive development.

7. Human Rights

WISE Nigeria upholds the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights in environmental and climate action. Our commitments include:

- **Right to a Healthy Environment:** Advocate for community rights to clean air, safe water, and unpolluted land.
- **Participation Rights:** Ensure communities have the right to participate in decisions affecting their environment.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Groups:** Safeguard the rights of children, persons with disabilities, displaced populations, and indigenous peoples in environmental and climate programs.
- **Accountability Mechanisms:** Establish grievance redress systems for communities to report human rights violations linked to environmental interventions.
- **Advocacy:** Work with policymakers to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks for environmental human rights.

8. Gender Equality

WISE Nigeria recognizes that environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately affect women, who often depend on natural resources for livelihoods. Gender equality will be mainstreamed across all policies and programs by:

- **Women's Participation:** Ensuring women's equal representation in environmental decision-making at community and institutional levels.
- **Capacity Development:** Providing training for women and girls on climate-smart technologies and environmental management.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Supporting women's access to land, finance, and technologies for sustainable livelihoods.
- **Gender-Sensitive Programming:** Applying gender analysis in project design to address the unique needs of women and men.
- **Advocacy for Gender Justice:** Promote gender-responsive climate and environmental policies at national and community levels.

9. Implementation Framework

To operationalize this policy, WISE Nigeria will:

1. **Institutional Structures:** Establish an Environmental and Climate Change Unit within the organization to oversee policy implementation.
2. **Capacity Building:** Provide continuous staff and partner training on environment, climate change, gender, and human rights.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Integrate environmental indicators into M&E frameworks, with annual reporting on progress.
4. **Partnerships:** Collaborate with government, private sector, civil society, and international organizations for shared learning and action.

5. **Resource Mobilization:** Seek funding for environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient programs.
6. **Policy Review:** Review and update this policy every three years to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.

10. Accountability and Compliance

WISE Nigeria commits to:

- Complying with Nigerian environmental laws and international agreements.
- Upholding donor and partner environmental safeguards.
- Ensuring transparent reporting of environmental performance to stakeholders.
- Establishing accountability mechanisms, including internal audits, external evaluations, and community feedback.

11. Conclusion

This Environmental Policy reflects WISE Nigeria's holistic commitment to safeguarding the environment, addressing climate change, ensuring conflict sensitivity, promoting human rights, and advancing gender equality. Through this policy, WISE Nigeria affirms its responsibility to contribute to a just, inclusive, and sustainable future for all Nigerians, in line with global commitments.