



**Accountable  
Now**

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST

# Environmental Policy

### Overarching policy statement:

To properly address the climate crisis, urgent and committed action is needed by all sectors to prevent further detriment to the environment. It is our role, as part of the civil society sector, to set an example whereby our environmental principles guide our organisational and individual actions.

Accountable Now commits to contributing to a healthy planet. This is entrenched in our third accountability commitment upon which we should not only hold our Members to account but Accountable Now itself, too. We can claim to be committed to the protection of the environment, but we must act upon the ecological principles that form the basis of our third accountability commitment.

This environmental policy aims to guide staff and Accountable Now to improving the awareness of the role and responsibility the organisation has towards protection of the environment so as to reduce the environmental impact of our operations, conserve resources and energy and advocate for and make possible sustainable practices that promote positive change in behaviour.

To do this, this environmental policy outlines practices Accountable Now and its staff should take up across three core areas of work, to ensure the organisation does not contribute more than absolutely necessary to the climate crisis.

## 1. Office and day-to-day operations:

### 1.1 Resources & Procurement

Office supplies for the daily use of all members of the Accountable Now Secretariat are ordered through an eco-friendly provider (e.g. MEMO) by the International Civil Society Centre, where the Accountable Now secretariat is currently hosted.

- All other products and services used for events, conferences or project-related initiatives should be sustainable, using recycled materials and minimize waste.
- When purchasing products or services from providers, ensure that providers use recycled and sustainable materials and demonstrate a commitment to reduce their negative impact upon the environment.
- Procuring products and supplies that use excessive plastic and styrofoam packaging must be avoided.

### 1.2 Energy

The International Civil Society Centre obtains its electricity from Greenpeace Energy (Germany's largest national, independent energy cooperative). To save energy and costs the Accountable Now Secretariat must follow the directions below:

- Turn off lights and heating in rooms you do not use, especially in meeting rooms;
- Set your computer's setting on 'energy saver' mode to waste less energy when you do not use it for a certain amount of time;
- Ensure all extension cords are switched off at the end of the day;
- Use the dishwasher's eco-cycle;
- During winter when the heating is on, instead of keeping windows half-opened all day, opt to fully open the windows for several minutes several times a day.

### 1.3 Technology

When purchasing laptops or any other technology, staff must seek out refurbished, secondhand items. With many companies offering new technology refurbished to a high-standard, there is wide range of options to explore for any future procurement of computers or other hardware:

- [www.greenpanda.de](http://www.greenpanda.de)
- [www.iused.eu](http://www.iused.eu)
- [www.notebook.de](http://www.notebook.de)
- [www.refurbed.de](http://www.refurbed.de)

#### 1.4 Printing & Paper

Accountable Now, its Secretariat, Independent Review Panel (IRP) and Board should aim for a **paperless operation**:

- No printing of documents, prep papers or any other materials for meetings held with the Secretariat, IRP and Board. Instead, the Secretariat must ensure and encourage that any necessary documents needed are downloaded onto laptops prior to meetings;
- There will be no printing of agendas, presentations or documents during events held by the Secretariat. This must be clearly communicated to all attendees prior to events, ensuring that we stress that we aim for paperless operation.
- When designing and developing communication materials for events or for the promotion of Accountable Now, these materials should be designed for digital use/distribution and any printing of these materials should be avoided.

During workshops, events and the AGM, Accountable Now should strive to reduce the amount of paper used by:

- Using whiteboards rather than flipcharts;
- Rethinking the design of breakout sessions to reduce the use of sticky-notes and paper.
- Ask anyone presenting or working with us at the event to not print out any prep-materials.

**In the case where printing is absolutely necessary** (e.g. papers relating to finances, legal documents, reimbursements):

The International Civil Society Centre, who is the host of Accountable Now's Secretariat, only buys recycled paper for office printing. When printing for internal use Accountable Now prints in black and white (unless colour printing is necessary for readability) and double-sided. All Secretariat members should change their printers' setting accordingly.

#### 1.5 Banking

Accountable Now has all its accounts and Accountable Now reserves at GLS bank – a German ethical and social bank.

#### 1.6 Waste

All staff of Accountable Now should ensure they recycle the waste they produce:

- Full recycling facilities should be provided at the office of the Secretariat, including paper, plastic and biological waste.
- All staff of Accountable Now have access to re-usable coffee cups to be used when buying coffee from outside of the office.
- When out at cafes or restaurants courtesy of Accountable Now, staff should request drinks come without straws.
- In order to centralize waste separation, there should be no personal desk bins for employees. All waste can be disposed of in main office bins.

### 1.7 Awarded holidays for travel on trains

To promote and make travel by train easier and more appealing for Accountable Now staff travelling for **personal holidays**, awarded holidays will be given if the train is used rather than plane.

For each return train journey, holiday will be awarded if:

- The train journey takes 5+ hours
- All tickets are provided as evidence for train journey
- Amount of days awarded is based on the length of the train journey, e.g. for a return journey amounting in 12 hours of total travel, one day of holiday is awarded. For return journeys amounting in 24 + hours of total travel, two days are awarded.
- This is permitted once per year

## 2. Travel, conferences and events

### 2.1 Travel

This policy applies to staff and those we fund for travel to and from our office, events or conferences.

*Think before you fly!*

We encourage train travel to be prioritized over flights, with at least either the outgoing or returning journey being done by train. This means that for journeys taking place within Europe, train connections must be researched prior to researching possible flights.

- No domestic flights are to be taken.
- Train journeys of 6 hours or less are to be taken instead of flights, with trains that provide WiFi so work can be done during the travel if necessary. This may require first class tickets to be booked (+ flexible approach to working as WiFi may not always function properly).
- If train journeys take longer than 6 hours or require more than 3 changes, then it is reasonable to consider taking a flight due to time restrictions.
- If a train journey should take 11 hours or more, then it is acceptable to take a flight. In this case, use [Atmosfair's flight index](#) as an indication of which airlines to avoid based upon their environmental impact. Page 9 gives indication for the best and worst performing Low Cost Carriers; airlines which Accountable Now is likely to use more often.

It is expected that these journeys will take up more time and resources and therefore will affect the way in which Accountable Now prioritises events that are attended.

### 2.2 Atmosfair

All flights paid by Accountable Now must be environmentally compensated through [Atmosfair](#) once the trip has been taken. All flights and their compensation can be tracked through this [Excel sheet](#).

### 2.3 Hotels and accommodation

When possible, seeking hotels and accommodation with lower environmental impact will help reduce staff's environmental impact whilst travelling. Hotels awarded with eco or green certificates are listed on various accredited and reputable sites:

- EU certification initiative '[EU Ecolabel](#)' lists hotels around Europe awarded with their certification.
- [Green Key](#) lists hotels as well as restaurants and conference centres awarded with their prestigious ecolabel.
- [Green Globe](#) is another highly regarded certification scheme with Member hotels from all over the world.

As well as availability, hotel costs will greatly influence whether one of these hotels can be booked. As guidance, [Trivago hotel pricing index](#) can be used as a tool to understand average hotel prices per city during different times of the year and hence an average price that Accountable Now can expect to pay.

When developing logistic sheets for events hosted by Accountable Now, hotels awarded with EU Ecolabel/Green Key or Green Globe should be included to give participants information on 'environmentally friendly' options.

## 2.4 Events, logistics and preparation\*

*Let's aim for plastic-free!*

- When buying food and drinks for events, biological, organic and products that are not wrapped in plastic should be prioritised.
- At all of our events where catering is used, there should be a full vegetarian menu that considers other dietary requirements of attendees.
- Reusable cutlery and plates should be used and if this is not possible, bamboo/wooden cutlery and plates. Bottled water at events must be avoided unless there is no safe alternative. For venues that provide bottled water as standard practice, ensure that they provide glass bottles instead of plastic.
- Ensure full recycling facilities are made available at the venue and signpost/make participants aware of these facilities and encourage reuse of materials.
- When eating out at restaurants, all people who have their meal paid by Accountable Now must choose vegetarian options. This has to be clearly communicated prior to and at the event.
- Seek out charities or organisations that accept donated food from events to reduce food waste or donate to food to staff of the venue.
- Ensure participants are made aware of the efforts made by Accountable Now to reduce the environmental impact of the event. For example, during welcoming speeches or presentations, set aside one minute to announce the various steps taken.

\*Accountable Now acknowledges that in some countries it may not be possible to fulfil all policy requirements listed here, e.g. full vegetarian menus and full recycling facilities.

## 3. Projects & partnerships

Accountable Now, in its capacity as partner to various projects and Secretariat to the Global Standard for CSO Accountability, can promote awareness of the environment to partners throughout decision-making processes. During the design, implementation and reporting periods

of a project or initiative, we should raise awareness to the fact we need to consider the environment as a stakeholder

#### 4. Review and checklists

To monitor adherence to this environmental policy an evaluation must be carried out with participation of all Secretariat staff during Accountable Now's strategy days at the end of each year. This evaluation will contribute to the yearly review and update of this environmental policy. (See evaluation below.)

Checklists that will help implement this environmental policy have been provided to be used when organising events.

#### 5. Implementation

To implement this policy, particularly in regards to office and day-to-day operations, an Environmental Officer will be nominated every month. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month, the new Officer will be responsible for reminding the team to implement the environmental policy, e.g. turning off electrical appliances at the end of the day; following event checklists set out in this policy; implementing travel policy etc.

This policy will be fully implemented throughout 2020, with full implementation achieved by the end of 2020.

Relevant checklists for events/meetings:\*

Travel and Mobility	Yes	No
To examine alternatives to face-to-face meetings, i.e. virtual meetings		
Select event venues which can be reached conveniently using public transport, with information on public transport links communicated with participants		
Offsetting of unavoidable emissions by Accountable Now or participants		
Choose direct flights where possible and within budget limitations		
Consider the age of the aircraft (new aircraft are more efficient)		
Fly economy class (business class has higher emissions per seat)		
Choose airlines with higher load factors (ratios available) (see Atmosfair report)		
Choose airlines that are active in their green policy		

Venue and catering	Yes	No
Ask for recycling facilities at the location where event is being held		
Ensure no plastic bottled-water is served, with tap water as a safe and secure alternative		
Find an organisation that accepts donated left-over food or donate food to staff at the venue		
Use sustainable, local caterers		
Ask participants and presenters to go paperless		
Food and drinks bought are organic, biological, locally sourced where possible and it has been ensured to reduce plastic packaging		
Communicate sustainable efforts to participants		
Sign post, educate and encourage event reuse and recycling policies, thereby extending the life of resources and products		
Monitor RSVP and attendance numbers to ensure supply is tailored to the numbers thereby avoiding waste		
After the event monitor consumption of food and drinks and keep note of the portions order to give guidance on how much to order for future events		
Buy products made from recycled materials		
Prioritise and consider sustainable purchases – refurbished items and reuse rather than replace or discard		
Reduce use of packaging material, or where required ensure the material is reused or recycled		

\*Accountable Now acknowledges that it may not be possible to fulfil all aspects of these checklists when hosting events or meetings in countries with limited public transport or full recycling facilities inter alia.

Procurement	Yes	No
Is the purchase really necessary?		
Is there an opportunity to buy less?		
Have checks been run to ensure that no comparable product is available internally?		
Has the feasibility of short-term rental or sharing the product been investigated as alternatives to purchasing?		
Is the quantity requested appropriate and sure to be used?		
Will the product be used to the end of its useful life? If not, can it be easily reallocated?		
Is it produced locally, utilising local labour?		
Is it designed to minimise waste?		
Is it manufactured from recycled materials?		

Can it be returned to the supplier for reuse, recycling or recovery?		
Can it be recycled locally?		



Evaluation of implementation of environmental policy:

Policy	Was it implemented as intended	Where is there need for further implementation	How does the policy need to be adapted to fit our context
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			
1.4			
1.5			
1.6			
1.7			
2.1			
2.2			
2.3			
2.4			
3			
4			
5			