



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

JUNE 2015

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FOREWORD

The University of Nairobi is committed to environment protection as an integral part of good institutional practice. The university has both a duty to ensure that all its operations are conducted with an appropriate regard for the environment and a responsibility to manage its activities in a way that reduces negative environmental impact and enhances positive environmental impact.

To this end, this document presents the university's environmental policy, which acknowledges and recognises that the nature and the scale of the activities of the university can impact on the environment, locally, nationally and globally. The policy has overarching guidelines and provides directions of achieving the environmental objectives of the university.

The implementation of the policy should enable the university to manage the effects of its activities on its internal and external environment and improve its environmental performance.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EMS – Environmental Management System.

EMCA – Environmental Management & Coordination Act

EH&S – Environmental Health and Safety.

UoN – University of Nairobi.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Environmental Management System: a process that helps the university to identify its environmental priorities, establish plans to reach its environmental goals and make environmental understanding and responsibility part of the university community's daily business

Environment: a broad term representing the totality of the surrounding such as plants, animals, microorganisms, socio-economic and cultural factors including physical factors of the surroundings of human beings such as land, water, atmosphere, sound, odour, taste, the biological factors of animals and plants and the social factors of aesthetics and includes both the natural and the built environment.

Sustainability: using, developing and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enable people to meet their current needs, ensuring that future generations meet their own needs

Environmental Impact: any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from the activities of the university

Staff: any person employed by the University of Nairobi on contractual or on permanent and pensionable terms

Student: any person registered for an academic programme of the University of Nairobi

University Community: the Council, the Senate, staff and students of the University of Nairobi

Premises: the grounds, including land and buildings, owned, rented, or leased by the University of Nairobi

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The University of Nairobi is committed to conserving and managing the environment as well as reducing the negative environmental impact that its activities may have to the environment. It recognises the important role it has to play in not only developing a sound environmental management system but also encouraging its staff and students to take up a leadership role to promote environmental awareness, education and action.

Consequently, this policy serves as the cornerstone of the university's environmental management system and provides a clear unifying plan and vision in environmental management by the university. This is because the university recognizes that the environment is vital to sustenance of life and is cognizant that its activities may adversely impact on the environment. It therefore deems it necessary to have a policy that incorporates continuous environmental improvement into its business model and ethos.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

Applying to staff and students in university premises in Kenya and to activities under the control of the university, the policy covers but is not limited to these areas:

- a. land use,
- b. water management,
- c. energy management,
- d. tree cover,
- e. solid and liquid waste disposal,
- f. electronic waste disposal,
- g. gaseous emissions,
- h. radioactive materials,
- i. noise pollution, and
- j. built environment.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

3.1 Goal

The goal of this policy is to provide a better quality of life for the present and the future generations of the university community and to ensure a commitment by the university to strive for the environmental health and safety of its staff, students, visitors, neighbours and the physical environment.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- a. provide a framework for an integrated approach towards the management of the university's environment and resources,
- b. ensure sustainable exploitation and utilization of the environment,
- c. promote participation of the wider university community in the management and the protection of the environment, and
- d. mainstream environmental impact assessment standards at all the stages of proposed projects, developments and activities in the university.

4.0 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The policy is to be interpreted in accordance with these policy and legal documents:-

- a. the Constitution of Kenya, 2010,
- b. the National Land Policy
- c. the Land Act,
- d. the County Governments Act,
- e. the National Environmental Policy,
- f. the Environmental Management and Coordination Act,
- g. the Maintenance Bill,
- h. the Built Environment Bill,
- i. the Public Officer Ethics Act,
- j. the Leadership and Integrity Act,
- k. labour laws, and
- l. the NEMA Guidelines on Environmental Management.

5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Article 42 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, provides that every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment which includes the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through legislative and related measures. To implement the environmental policy, staff and students will be guided by these principles: (1) continuous improvement, (2) reduce, reuse, recycle, (3) environmental compliance, (4) stewardship, and (5) training and education—hereinafter referred to as **"The CREST."**

C: Continuous Improvement: To enhance the environmental management system through checking of the environment, taking corrective action and undertaking management review to achieve improvements in overall environmental performance.

R: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: To use processes, practices, materials or products that avoid or reduce pollution which may include process changes, efficient use of resources, material substitution and recycling.

E: Environmental Compliance: To meet the requirements of relevant and current environmental laws and legislation.

S: Stewardship: To empower the management, staff and students to identify significant environmental aspects of university activities, products and services and to implement programmes with targets and objectives that protect the health and the safety of people and the ecosystem.

T: Training and Education: To provide appropriate training to staff and students to ensure their awareness of the university's environmental policy and procedures, significant environmental impacts of their work or activities, their roles and responsibilities in the support of the environmental management system and the potential consequences of departing from specific procedures.

6.0 OBLIGATIONS

The university management will ensure that:

- a. there is strong and effective environmental management leadership in the university,
- b. decisions made reflect the intentions of this policy,
- c. active participation in improvement of the environment is encouraged and recognized,
- d. there are effective routes for consultation with staff and students on environmental matters, and
- e. environmental performance is continually reviewed and assessed at least annually.

Heads of departments will be responsible for developing and documenting procedures to control activities which may impact on the environment and will ensure that these procedures and their implementation are monitored and audited regularly.

Staff and students will commit themselves to protect and conserve the environment and ensure that resources in the university are developed and used ecologically sustainable

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

As a public institution of higher education, the university is committed to being a model of environmental health and safety in teaching and research and in partnerships with the community. It therefore will develop and sustain an environmental management system based on the International Standard ISO 14001, which will:

- a. provide the coordinates of achieving the objectives of the policy and will ensure that the university keeps in line with **"the CREST"** principle,
- b. take into account the commitments embodied in this environmental policy when setting aims and objectives in all its areas of operation,
- c. improve the university's environmental reputation and performance, and
- d. endeavour to protect and enhance intellectual property in and indigenous knowledge of, biodiversity and the genetic resources in line with Article 69 (c) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

A lack of full scientific certainty will not be used as a reason of postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

7.1 Water Management

The university not only recognizes that water is fast becoming a scarce resource in Kenya but also recognizes its potential impact on the Nairobi River Basin. Further to this, Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, stipulates that every person has the right to clean and safe water in adequate quantities and to reasonable standards of sanitation. This right can only be realized through proper management and conservation of water. To conserve water and to minimize impact on Nairobi's surface and underground water, the university will:

- reduce the quantity of water used and waste water produced; some of the measures that can be put in place to realize this include the strict use of only water efficient fixtures in the university,
- apply water harvesting techniques where appropriate to augment municipal and groundwater supplies,
- identify and minimize sources of water contamination, and
- use appropriate water recycling technologies.

7.2 Energy Management

Energy forms part of the environment and ensuring its sustainable exploitation and utilization is an obligation encapsulated in Article 69 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The university is committed to reducing its energy consumption, implementing energy conservation programmes and promoting energy efficiency. It has in mind the principle of intergenerational and intra-generational equity. To meet this goal, the university will:

- a. sensitize and encourage staff and students to practise energy efficiency,
- b. implement energy efficient systems in existing facilities and in new construction,
- c. endeavour to use renewable energy, and
- d. adopt sustainable energy-harvesting techniques.

7.3 Solid and Liquid Waste Management

The university is committed to minimizing the amount of solid and liquid waste generated in its campuses. To meet this goal, it will:

- a. minimize solid and liquid waste generation by adopting cleaner production methods such as the 3Rs of Reducing, Reusing and Recycling in particular,
- b. develop and implement effective programmes and practices that will support the 3Rs,
- c. ensure and facilitate the separation of waste at its source,
- d. encourage the use of biodegradable products, and
- e. encourage the use of digital platforms to minimise the use of paper.

7.4 Land Use

The university recognizes the importance of land as an economic asset, a social value, a cultural value and a factor of production. It therefore is committed to embedding sustainable practices in the management of its land. To this end, it will make reasonable efforts to:

- a. have a construction plan taking into account principles of sustainable construction including internal densification,
- b. manage the university grounds in a manner that promotes soil conservation by preventing soil erosion,
- c. prevent an occurrence of floods and mudslides within the vicinity of the university during wet seasons,
- d. combat a desertification of the land in the university, and
- e. protect and maintain wetlands found in any of the campuses.

7.5 Tree Cover

The university will strive to be recognized as an institution with green spaces and as a model for environmentally sustainable living, balancing physical and economic development, social vibrancy and protecting the green environment in its campuses. To this end, it will make reasonable efforts to:

- a. protect the existing tree cover in all of its campuses from tree cutting,
- b. promote the planting of trees to progressively achieve tree cover of at least 10% in its campuses in line with Article 69 (1) (b) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010,
- c. initiate and maintain more green spaces in its campuses,
- d. promote the planting and maintenance of aesthetic vegetation in its campuses, and
- e. label (name) all the trees planted in campuses.

7.6 Acquisition and Disposal of Plants and Equipment

7.6.1 Acquisition

The university is committed to purchasing products which balance quality and cost, and which promote environmental sustainability. It will encourage its suppliers and contractors to provide environmental data about and on their products and to develop products that are environmentally friendly. To adhere to this principle, it will:

- a. establish a policy that as far as practical encourages the purchase of more environmentally friendly products or services,
- b. communicate this policy to its suppliers and contractors,
- c. purchase, where appropriate, products that are produced from re-cycled material, can be re-cycled or re-used, reduce waste or conserve natural resources

- d. purchase, as far as possible, products and services from suppliers and contractors who use environmentally friendly procedures and have environmental policies.

7.6.2 Disposal

The university regularly acquires equipment and there arises a need to dispose of old plants and equipment. It adopt cost effective measures to ensure that obsolete plants and equipment are collected and disposed of in an environmentally sustainable manner in line with the Environmental Management and Coordination Act.

7.7 Air Pollution

In a bid to maintain the air quality, the university will:

- a. identify potential causes of air pollution in the university and implement appropriate measures to reduce air pollution and mitigate its negative effects,
- b. continuously review actions to reduce a depletion of natural resources and reduce gaseous emissions into the air caused directly or indirectly by university operations,
- c. ensure that in its premises air quality is maintained by putting in place appropriate ventilation measures, and
- d. endeavour to engage its immediate neighbours to mitigate noise pollution and its effects.

7.8 Noise Pollution

The university will employ all measures possible to ensure that in all its premises and campuses, noise levels are kept and maintained within the national guidelines.

7.9 Electronic Waste

The university will adopt cost-effective measures to ensure that all electronic waste is disposed of in an environmentally sustainable manner in line with the Environmental Management and Coordination Act.

7.10 Built Environment

The university will endeavour to maintain and manage its built environment in line with the applicable laws, rules and regulations.

8.0 COMMITMENT

The university affirms its belief that its staff and students have a responsibility to take up leadership roles in both conducting their activities as responsible stewards of the physical environment and using educational activities to promote environmental awareness. As a result, it commits itself to:

- a. conserve natural resources and support their sustainable use,
- b. conduct affairs in a manner that safeguards the environmental health and safety of staff, students, and neighbouring communities,
- c. reduce the use of toxic substances and the generation of wastes and promote strategies to reuse and recycle waste that cannot be avoided,
- d. purchase environmentally friendly products or renewable, reusable and recycled products,
- e. conduct its business practices in accordance with this policy,
- f. undertake a baseline environmental assessment in order to identify objectives and priorities in planning and implementation, and
- g. undertake regular environmental audits in all its premises.

With regard to its education and research missions, the university commits itself to:

- a. foster an understanding of and a responsibility for the physical environment,
- b. ensure that individuals are knowledgeable about the environment and the health issues that affect their disciplines,
- c. encourage environmental research,
- d. conduct research and teaching in an environmentally responsible way, and
- e. provide a forum for the open flow of information among governments, international organizations, industry and academia to discuss and study environmental issues and their relationship to social issues.

9.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Vice Chancellor will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

10.0 FUNDING

The university management will allocate between 0.2% and 0.5% of the university recurrent budget for the implementation of this policy.

11.0 POLICY REVIEW

The university is committed to reviewing its environmental policy as well as the organization of and the arrangement for its implementation, to ensure that it remains both current and relevant. To this end, this policy will be reviewed every five years or as may be required.