

## OCIC ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP POLICY

Approved by the Board of Directors June 2018 and May 2021

### Preamble

OCIC's work, both internally and as a collective of members, is grounded in our shared vision of global social justice, human dignity and participation for all. Our policies are designed to meet OCIC's internal needs as an organization, however they are guided by ideals about anti-oppression, human rights, international cooperation, and the appropriate meeting of human needs articulated in a multitude of places by multilateral bodies, states, and civil society groups.

All OCIC policies and activities are informed by our Vision, Mission, Mandate, and Strategic Directions. Mindfulness of the spirit and letter of these documents is central to the integrity of the Council, as is compliance with the Cooperation Canada (formerly Canadian Council for International Co-operation) Code of Ethics, the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and OCIC's Anti-Oppression Policy and Women's Rights and Gender Equality Policy.

### 1. Policy Principle

This policy is a living document that is meant to be re-examined and updated as part of an evolving process which will reflect changes in thinking surrounding environmental stewardship. This policy aims to inform and increase our commitment to incorporating environmental stewardship into our decision-making and behaviour systems.

OCIC commits to minimizing its environmental footprint and to reducing the environmental impact of its operations. OCIC will strive to ensure that all programs and activities are designed, implemented and monitored in a manner that integrates environmental stewardship best practices and considerations. OCIC members are encouraged to use this policy as a starting point to create and adopt environmental policies and practices for their own organizations.

### 2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

**Environmental Sustainability** is the long-term maintenance of ecological well-being through responsible use of natural resources.

**Environmental Stewardship** is the informed and responsible actions and behaviours required to ensure that environmental quality is maintained locally, regionally, and globally.

### **3. Review**

As per OCIC's 3-year review policy, this policy is to be reviewed and/or updated by the Governance Committee by April 2024.

### **4. Strategies**

To ensure compliance with this policy, OCIC staff, Board Directors and volunteers will strive to meet the following recommendations when implementing OCIC programs and activities:

#### **a. Event Planning & Programming**

- Prioritize technology to minimize total environmental impact of face-to-face events (e.g. offer webinars and online events on a regular basis to minimize excessive travel emissions, food-related waste and printing).
- Use reusable and/or biodegradable dishware and cutlery wherever possible, with the ultimate goal of eliminating use of single-use/disposable products (i.e. plastic water bottles, plastic straws).
- Communicate with and encourage event partners to adhere to environmental best practices.
- Circulate and share documents electronically to minimize excessive printing.
- Minimize excessive 'swag' at events.

#### **b. Travel**

- Prioritize sustainable travel options whenever possible, including public transit, carpooling, train, walking, cycling, etc.
- Coordinate travel dates within regions to minimize the number of individual trips, especially those that involve air travel.

#### **c. Purchasing**

- Eliminate unnecessary purchases, reduce purchases of products with excessive packaging, and minimize purchases of disposable or single-use products.
- Purchase energy-efficient goods (e.g. computer monitors, printers, LED bulbs, etc.).
- Purchase fair trade, organic, local and/or in-season food/catering, whenever feasible/possible.
- Purchase earth-friendly office supplies and cleaning products (e.g. recycled-content paper, biodegradable cleaners).

#### **d. Energy & Waste**

- Minimize energy consumption through daily practice (turn lights and monitors off, use natural light, utilize programmable thermostats to minimize heating and cooling, encourage seasonal clothing).
- Reduce waste, and recycle and compost whenever possible.
- Dispose of non-traditional waste safely (batteries, toner, electronic goods).
- Utilize scrap paper and double-sided printing to its fullest capacity, and minimize unnecessary printing (minimize colour printing).

#### **e. Embedding Environmental Culture**

- Ensure that all OCIC staff, Board Directors and volunteers are aware of this policy and understand how it relates to their organizational roles and responsibilities.

- Give weight to environmental impact as a key factor in operational decision-making (collaborate with partners and suppliers who share similar environmental stewardship values).
- Support the development and implementation of management and operation guidelines which enable the principles of this policy (e.g. factoring environmental considerations into procurement processes; promoting good practices such as recycling, minimizing waste and conserving electricity, wherever possible).
- Create a supportive environment that encourages good environmental decision-making (making reusable dishes available to staff and at OCIC initiatives).
- Promote and encourage environmental educational opportunities for staff, Board Directors, volunteers, members and stakeholders (make time for environmental assessments and discussions; offer webinars or other awareness and capacity building sessions).
- Make use of partnerships, networks and coalitions to support the process of documenting and disseminating information and best practices on the impact of climate change, natural resource degradation and extreme weather events, in Canada and globally.

#### **5. Resources:**

- <http://www.globalreporting.org/Home>
- <http://www.sustainabilityreporting.ca/>