

TRUST POLICIES

(Circa 2016)

(Revision 2)



Environics Trust

to evolve innovative solutions to the problems of community development





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1. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES

Environics Trust defines **Sustainable Development** as the '**set of processes that enables the local and global systems to be in ecological harmony**'. The four non-orthogonal attributes of sustainable development, which are crucial to the state of being in ecological harmony, can be described in the form of the state of these attributes; Equity and Justice; Environmental Soundness; Endogeneity or Self Reliance; Economic Efficiency. **Environics** means the study of the influence of the environment on human behaviour. In its mission **to evolve innovative solutions to the problems of sustainable community development**, we interpret it more comprehensively as the mutual influences of environment and social behaviour.

Environics Trust aims at contributing to long-term transitions and has a process-oriented model. Its consistent ability to foresee the demands and offer inputs to diverse range of institutions from local community based initiatives to international institutions for several initiatives is an important strength. This has been and will need to be continually nurtured. Its organisational structure has flexibility and the process of democratic decision-making involving the entire Executive is unique. It has evolved a mechanism of nurturing networks and other institutions with sectoral or geographic focus enable the core to be lean and effective. These networks enable us a very wide outreach, particularly into the vast rural interior of India and the diverse institutional and community structures across from the Himalayan region into the South East Asia.

Environics Trust is a not for profit research and community development organisation and an enabling institution. Environics conducts participatory research on issues of environmental and human behavior and uses these outcomes for innovative community development programmes. Environics anchors several networks and partnerships and is currently the Secretariat for The Access Initiative Coalition (TAI) and the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI). Environics is a co-founder and promoter of the mines minerals and PEOPLE alliance (mm&P), the Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change (INECC), the EIA Resource and Response Centre (eRc). Environics promotes and mentors environmentally sound enterprises and among these is the Biodiversity Conservation India Limited (BCIL), the largest Sustainable Built environment enterprise in India. Environics provides research and evaluatory services to International, National, State and Local Institutions and directly works with marginalised communities such as those in the mountain regions, tribals and communities adversely affected by mining and industrialisation.

The delivery of these innovations are channelled through the following processes: **Participative Research**, which enables documentation of existing conditions and the changes aspired; **Community Based Action** to demonstrate the possibility of transforming innovations into a physical and social reality; **Enterprise Development and Servicing** to respond to the current reality of the economic world and identify sustainable entrepreneurial and occupational niches and Communications to interface with a larger universe, to mutually learn and contribute. **Environics Trust evolved from Academy for Mountain Environics and particularly reaches out to marginalized communities.**



2. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

This policy lays down the conditions, rights, subject to performing of the duties and responsibilities in their respective task descriptions. In its evolution and decision making, it endeavours to be democratic and believes in the saying “policy lies in practice”. Thus over the years, team is involved in the change. The policies may be subject to modifications whenever deemed necessary.

PEOPLE

People engaged with the organisation are individuals who are classed as core team members and associates. Core team members function at various levels and work for the organization with or without remuneration. Those remunerated after probationary period are absorbed with full time honoraria or on contract and paid on monthly basis. Those compensated for full-time are not allowed to undertake outside employment. They will have the responsibility towards the day to day functioning of the organization and engaged in any one or more ongoing and prospective activities of the organisation. They could be

- Mentors
 - Professionals
 - Researchers
 - Interns
 - Program Coordinator /Officer
 - Administrative and Finance Officer
 - Administrative Assistants.
 - Network Members
- **Consultants** are professional experts hired by the Organisation on short term basis only for specific tasks and assignments related to one or more projects. Separate contracts defining their job description, timeline, deliverables reporting requirements and payment details are therein enumerated. They are paid depending upon the nature of the assignment. They are not considered as core team member or associate of Environics Trust.
- **Volunteers** are individuals who work with Environics Trust out of their choice or have been deputed by other agencies or Organisations. They are assigned tasks time to time as deemed necessary. They have a limited contract and will not be provided with any compensation except under special conditions.



PROCESS

1. Vacant Positions or new appointments

As a general rule a selection of a new member is based on recommendation of two existing core team members who identify the person with the right temperament and attitude and the best qualifications for the activities being performed by the organisation. We evaluate each candidate's application with help of existing members and the Trustees. Candidates are interviewed by the team and deliberations on the abilities based on the following criteria recommend the person;

- Duties and responsibilities.
- Position Privileges
- Conditions of work.
- Qualification and Training Needs

The Board has a final say on the process of Interview and Selection.

2. Appointment Letter and Orientation at Environics Trust

The selected candidates are issued an appointment letter specifying the job description, terms of reference, salary benefits and other relevant terms of employments. The probation period will be as specified in appointment letter. The new members are appraised about Environics Trust's mission, strategies, objectives, policies internal rules and regulations.

3. Remuneration

Environics trust believes in retaining a qualified and effective workforce through a system of payment that is fair. All employees are entitled to a basic salary depending upon their skills, qualification and experience. Salary Increment is based on position and performance. Increment is based on the periodic evaluation of performance.

4. Working Days and Hours

Environics Trust works Six days a week from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. from Monday to Saturday with Sunday being a weekly off. Employees are expected to complete Eight (8) working hours daily with lunch break. The Public holidays are those prescribed by the Government and Environics Trust maintains a Calendar of Holidays as per the requirement.

5. Mode of Transport and Reimbursements

Members need to travel to different locations and stay for varying periods for completing their tasks. Only stay in appropriate locations and travel by an appropriate mode of



transport with proper documentation is paid. The Vehicle owned by the organisation will be charged according to the mileage to the specific activity. Person making an expense claim shall use the appropriate forms available. The expenses are not reimbursed if not supported with original receipts and supporting documents. It also applies to Consultants.

6. Leave and Holidays

Every person is entitled to an earn leave of 30 days per year. Sick Leave is granted as per need. Holidays are announced according to the Negotiable Instruments Act. 'Half day (P/2)' will be marked for those who are delayed from the scheduled office timing by an hour

7. Severing of Relationship

- ***Voluntary Resignation:*** - Any employee wishing to resign may do so by giving a resignation letter stating the reasons for resignation and effective date of the same. One month prior notice is required for resignation. The date on which the resignation letter is received by the office is considered the date on which notice of resignation was given. Failure to provide sufficient notice may be ground for forfeiture of all accrued employee benefits.
- ***Redundancy of the Position:*** - Depending on the nature and volume of operation of the organisation, Environics Trust may declare certain positions redundant. Persons occupying those positions will therefore be given a sufficient notice of two months in advance.
- ***Termination with Cause Grounds***
 - a. Continuing inefficiency and gross negligence of duty.
 - b. Fund Embezzlement.
 - c. Misuse of Office Equipment and other properties.
 - d. Repeated unauthorized absences and leaves.
 - e. Intoxication while on official premises.
 - f. Unauthorized disclosure of official information.
 - g. Violation of Trust policies

8. Procedure for Termination /Disciplinary Action: -

- a. Environics Trust will ask the concerned person for an explanation on the offence deemed committed by employee concerned, identifying the charges against and particulars of the fact relied upon for support the same.
- b. The person is given three (3) working days to submit explanations.
- c. Based on the written explanations submitted and strength of evidence presented, Environics may choose to decide on charges or pursue further investigation of the case.



9. Performance Evaluation System Policy

- a. **Performance Planning:** - The performance planning enables the employees to come to an agreement on what is to be accomplished during the year and how it will be carried out. Individual and collective calendar of tasks are evolved.
- b. **Setting of Objectives:** - For each key responsibility associated with a position the objective is established for a particular period with clear quantifiable and assessment criteria.
- c. **Individual Action Plan:** - The individual action plan is a planning tool used to specify steps taken to achieve the objectives. The action is prepared jointly with the help of experienced and senior employees. It also involves new initiatives facilitating productivity, capacity building and development.

10. Performance Evaluation

The performance evaluation does not have any financial impact on the salaries. It is not necessarily a comparison of one employee's performance with that of another. The performance evaluation also allows assessing the quality of human resource. The performance evaluation is based on performance of employee work record.

The evaluation addresses the fundamental questions.

- The first relates to verifying what was accomplished qualitatively and quantitatively during the year.
- The second relates to future of identifying means to be considered to ensure the person continues to grow and develop.
- Promote communication among the employees.
- Clarify expectations concerning objectives and performance.
- Improve employee performance through monitoring and feedback.
- Allow employees to express their career aspirations and enable transition.

11. Skill Training and Professional Development

As a part of staff and organizational development activities Environics Trust sends its staff for workshops and trainings and provides help to equip themselves with more and better skills to perform better.

12. Gender and Sexual Harassment Policy

Environics Trust will endeavour to provide a working environment that allows all staff / contract holder to work effectively, competently and confidently, where there is respect for the dignity of each individual person, free from harassment, discrimination and intimidation. We believe that all staff / contract holder have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect while at work and that early resolution of problems is essential to good



employee relations. As per the guidelines given in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, any organization with 10 or more employees is required to establish an internal complaints committee to deal with and handle cases of sexual harassment. The Trust has an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) for handling any complaints regarding harassment abiding by the Visaka guidelines. The ICC consists of the following

1. Presiding officer – A woman employed at the senior level from among the employees and holds this position for three years
2. Not less than two members from among the employees preferably committed to the cause of women or have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge
3. One member from an NGO or other women's organisation or someone who is familiar with issues relating to sexual harassment.

Any aggrieved woman employee can make, in writing, a complaint within three months of incident to the ICC.

13. Equal Opportunities Policy

Environics Trust upholds the principle of equal opportunity and aims to ensure that all job applicants, staff and volunteers, do not suffer unfair discrimination by virtue of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief, social class, caste, age, special ability, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation or gender. The Trust aims to ensure that all people with whom we work are valued for their contributions and are given the same opportunity to realise their full potential within the organization

14. Protection Policy

All Environics Trust operations abide by the principles of protecting rights of children, women, disabled and the elderly people. The Trust is committed to the well-being of children and has zero tolerance to any form of child abuse or exploitation. The Trust provides an effective procedure for people to raise their concerns when they believe that abuse, serious malpractice or professional misconduct has taken place and strives to protect the identity of any whistleblower to the extent possible.

3. AUDITING

Annual Balance Sheet and Statement of Income and Expenditure is prepared for each Fiscal year. Books of Accounts of the Organisation are audited annually by independent auditor appointed by Environics Trust. All Foreign Contribution Accounts are audited individually as required by law and reports are submitted to the Home Ministry well before the due date.



4. BOOK KEEPING & RECORDS

Environics has designed its own programme to record transactions using Visual Basic and Microsoft Access which allows monitoring Bank Balances, Status of Funds Receipts, Expenditure and comparative statement of budget vs actual expenditure on regular basis. The Organisation also maintains records of fixed assets, petty cash disbursements, and supplies inventory the use and maintenance of office equipment. The following financial records are prepared by the Organisation - Monthly Trial Balances, Bank Reconciliation Statement, Separate books of accounts for each project and Periodic Quarterly reports for individual/specific project are prepared which are reviewed by the Board and made available to donors.

5. COLLABORATIONS

Environics collaborates with a number of organisations and individuals to further its mission. These collaborations are guided by the need of the society and the specific skills or other exchange of knowledge and resources with collaborators.

6. COMMUNICATION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is consistency and to reduce redundancy in communication in an effective way. Internal meetings enable each person to understand and appreciate the fact that their communication can raise expectations in the community. Physically, telephones are the most convenient and fastest mode of communication but for long distance communication they are expensive. The other modes of communication used are courier, fax and e-mail. Out of these e-mail is encouraged as it is fast and affordable. Copies of incoming and outgoing official communications (fax, letters sent or received) are filed in their respective files and register is maintained to record the same.

7. COMPUTER POLICY

Environics Trust to effectively use and manage the system the employees are responsible for ensuring that the procedures and policies are followed.

- In order to safeguard the computers against the viruses the external drives (CDs/DVDs/ Pen drives) that belong to the Environics are only used.
The external drives other than the organisation are first scanned with antivirus software.
- In order to safeguard the computers from viruses antivirus software has been installed in all computers.
- As a backup of documents one copy is kept in the hard drive and another copied to CDs/DVDs and mailed to designated staff.



8. FINANCE POLICY

1. Environics Trust receives funds from different sources

- Grants, Donations and Contracts.
- From short term professional and consultancy services.
- Foreign contributions (FCRA) funded activities and Projects.

2. Organisation Core Fund

Environics allocates some funds from different project and donations meant to support core activities.

3. Signatory to Cheque Books

The cheques are signed by Director Finance on the approval of the Managing Trustee and/or of the President. The cheques books and stamps are kept under lock and key with responsible persons.

4. Types of Accounts

The Organisation has two Accounts

1. The General Fund Account to receive domestic funds.
2. FCRA Account to receive funds from foreign contribution.

Petty Cash is kept to conduct day to day activities which are kept by the office Assistant/administrator. Periodic checks are conducted to ensure proper handling of petty cash by President/Director Finance.

5. Payment Procedures

- I. Fund Disbursement: - All Payments are made through cheque, bank transfers or cash.
- II. Payments by cheque / Bank Transfer: - Usually most of the payments are tendered through Cheques / bank transfers for accuracy and safety purposes for services rendered.
- III. Payment to Members
 - Payment Calendar: - Remunerations are usually paid by 7th of every month. Individual cheques are issued to the concerned or bank transfers are made.
 - Payroll: - A pay roll sheet is prepared by the Accounts person with a note on basis of the payment. The pay roll contains information on the basic payment for the month allowances/advances if any deducted and net payable. The Salary sheet is checked by the chief functionary and on the approval of the same paid by the Director Finance.
 - Advances: - The employees are allowed to take advances after the completion of the probation period of three months if urgently required and reason being genuine. The advances taken are deducted from their monthly salary.



- Travel Advance: - For travel purposes the employees are given cash advances for expenses for official trips. Request for the same is made by the project co-ordinator which is approved by the President and the Finance Director.
- Tax Deducted at source: - Environics has a TAN number and deducts Tax at Source wherever applicable as per the Government rules.
- Payment for Contractual Services: - Payments for contractual services is done through cheques. The schedule of payment depends on the Terms of Reference (TOR) agreed upon by the personnel concerned and Environics. Payments are made by a request for payment form which is finally approved by the Chief Functionary.

9. FIXED ASSETS POLICY

An Assets Inventory Register is maintained to record all the details which is periodically updated by responsible staff members on rotation basis and aims at:

- Precise identification of goods that are part of the asset base.
- Sensible use of goods.
- Periodic verifying of physical inventory.
- Effective maintenance of goods.
- Replenishment of goods as and when required.

10. PROCUREMENT POLICY

To carry out its activities the organisation needs material resources and services of various kinds. The purchase of goods and services is necessary for smooth functioning of the organisation. The methodology that Environics follows is it gets quotations from the suppliers. Whosoever offers the best deal, further negotiations are held with the supplier. The purchase file contains all documents relating to the transaction.

11. LOOKING AHEAD

While our research activities have been pro-active in some areas, in several areas we believe our efforts are still reactive and we are making efforts to change this situation. We need to build programmes which will enable us to respond to these demands more effectively. There are certain other areas where we need organisational restructuring to enable better roll-out. We have a lean infrastructure, which is by both design and implication of limited resources. We have been using IT in our operations but the scope for more aggressive and effective use is large and we have been contemplating and discussing on the various options but have to be firmly put in place. These changes will have implications to some of the policies enunciated herein.



12 and a half rules to be a good

12. DO WHAT YOU LOVE: Be passionate about what you choose to do. Remember: If there's no love in the kitchen, there is no taste on the table. Never reject the impulses of your youth. Be responsible for your life, don't blame others for what you become or don't become.

11. WAKE UP ANGRY, AMBITIOUS: Get the fire in your belly to do something, set things right. Respond to injustice, inhumanity, corruption. Comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable. Don't think it is somebody else's job. Be the change you want to see.

10. DON'T BE A BLINDLY LOYAL MEMBER OF ANY PARTY, GROUP, CLUB, NGO: Credibility is everything. Retain your independence, be skeptical not cynical. Don't mortgage your integrity. It's like virginity—once you lose it, you have lost it forever.

9. BE CATHOLIC OF WRITERS AND WRITING: Read newspapers, magazines, books across the board. Admire writers/writing irrespective of ideology. In the age of the internet, you have no excuses for your ignorance.

8. FIND YOURSELF A ROLE-MODEL/MENTOR: Have a hero or heroine who has been there, done that. Keep in touch with people who will help you achieve your aims. Meet at least one new person every day.

7. BE A THRIVER, NOT A SURVIVOR: Don't coast along, don't be afraid to try out something new. Aim high, dream, have an ambition, set yourself a goal. Take a risk, think big, think differently, and don't be predictable.

6. NEVER WORK WITH SUCCESS/ REWARD IN MIND: Work for fun and the satisfaction, the rewards will come on their own. Don't fall for cheap praise and don't be stalled by even cheaper criticism.

5. WRITE, DRAW, ANALYSE, CREATE EVERY DAY: Eventually your habits become you. Practice makes you perfect. Develop the three Ds—discipline, dedication, determination—and reward and recognition will naturally follow.

4. KEEP LEARNING EVERY DAY: You cannot learn everything in the classroom or the newsroom. It's a constantly changing business, keep learning. Again, in the age of the internet, you have no excuse not to do so.

3. FEAR NOBODY, QUESTION EVERYTHING: You are in the business to get the answers. Don't be in awe of big names, power, reputations or status. These activities are all about meeting total strangers and asking them questions and seeking your answers.

2. NEVER BE EMBARRASSED TO ASK STUPID QUESTIONS: There are no stupid questions, only dumb answers. Talk less, listen more. Be humble of your ignorance.

1. CHASE YOUR DREAM: Stop living for others, avoid temptation, life is not all about money. Let your reputation never be under question. It's true—it's possible to earn decently and live honorably.

And this half-rule

½ If POSSIBLE MARRY OUTSIDE THE PROFESSION: There's nothing more boring and dreadful than waking up with somebody who goes through the same pangs and pangas as you.

(With grateful acknowledgement to Dr Ramachandra Guha, who delivered the convocation at the [Indian Institute of Journalism & New Media \(IIJNM\)](#), two years ago, from which this piece has been adapted and expanded by the blog sans serif and cloned by us at Environics Trust).



'Human Impact on the Earth'

A Conservationist's Lament

The world is finite, resources are scarce,
Things are bad and will be worse.
Coal is burned and gas exploded,
Forests cut and soils eroded.
Wells are dry and air's polluted,
Dust is blowing, trees uprooted,
Oil is going, ores depleted,
Drains receive what is excreted.
Land is sinking, seas are rising,
Man is far too enterprising.
Fire will rage with Man to fan it,
Soon we'll have a plundered planet.
People breed like fertile rabbits,
People have disgusting habits.

Moral:

*The evolutionary plan
Went astray by evolving Man.*

The Technologist's Reply

Man's potential is quite terrific,
You can't go back to the Neolithic.
The cream is there for us to skim it,
Knowledge is power, and the sky's the limit.
Every mouth has hands to feed it,
Food is found when people need it.
All we need is found in granite
Once we have the men to plan it.
Yeast and algae give us meat,
Soil is almost obsolete.
Men can grow to pastures greener
Till all the earth is Pasadena.

Moral:

*Man's a nuisance, Man's a crackpot.
But only Man can hit the jackpot.*

(Kenneth Boulding, 1956, page 1087)