



Sustainability Strategy of the Austrian Development Agency

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 Austrian
Development
Agency

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1 Introduction



Reducing poverty, building peace and protecting the environment – as the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation, we advance sustainable development in our partner countries under the 2030 Agenda. Together with public institutions, civil-society organisations, companies and scientists, the projects and programmes we promote improve the long-term conditions of life for people in developing countries. This means taking on special responsibility – both inside and outside the agency.

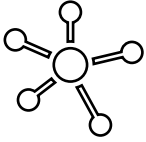
With the present policy document, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) reaffirms its commitment to bearing this responsibility. We are not just looking to take account of sustainability; we seek to put it into everyday practice in all our operations, so that we can make our contribution as a company to attaining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our prime concern here is to gear our operations to the environmental and social aspects of sustainability. A catalogue of specific measures helps us to make our organisation fit for the future. This includes making sustainable use of the environment – from economical resource consumption and the reduction of our carbon footprint to sustainable waste management – as well as protecting the health and developing the skills of our personnel.

As an organisation, then, we attach importance to corporate social and environmental responsibility. That is why we have also established sustainability as a cross-cutting issue in our business strategy. So, we are already preparing ourselves today for the challenges of tomorrow.

Over the last few years, we have accordingly already upgraded our capabilities as a company in this direction. Our intention with this sustainability strategy is to institutionalise sustainable practices. We start with setting objectives at company level and defining fields of activity for our different office locations. The actual implementation of specific activities is set out in individual action plans with defined time schedules and resource allocations (see Chapter 4).

2 Corporate goals



Besides poverty reduction and peacebuilding, protecting the environment is one of the three overall objectives of the Austrian Development Agency. From an environmental standpoint, we put sustainability into everyday practice in direct keeping with the ADA mission statement, by promoting environmental and climate protection projects and programmes in the partner countries of Austrian Development Cooperation, for example. Regardless of whether they have a pronounced environmental focus or not, we appraise each individual initiative applying our cross-cutting criteria of environment, gender and social inclusion. This way, we look to avoid adverse impacts on local ecosystems and the people that depend on them, because the poorest and most vulnerable population groups in developing countries are the ones that suffer most from the destruction of the environment.

Taking an integral view of environmental and social sustainability, however, also means looking inwards. It is not enough to just support developing countries in adapting to climate change and taking measures for greater social inclusion. As an agency, we must also put sustainability into everyday practice as a whole. This principle should be the guideline for all our operations. We make economical and responsible use of natural resources – so we have already taken an initial step towards environmental sustainability. From a social perspective, we also already attach an enormous priority to sustainability today. For example, our flexitime schemes enable our personnel to balance family, leisure and working life. Multifaceted further training courses motivate ADA staff and upgrade their skills.

The present strategy attests to our recognition of the need for even more focussed measures to give practical shape to the promising potential already available for greater sustainability at all levels and in all our procedures.

Regular, company-wide reports will be made on the following goals:

- Corporate environmental goal
Reducing CO₂ emissions (ADA's corporate carbon footprint)
- Corporate social goal
Assuring good working conditions and equal opportunities
- Corporate organisational goal
Drafting action plans with implementation schedules for each individual location

3 Objectives at office locations



To attain our corporate goals, we need to devise strategies that are tailored to the respective office locations and cater for local conditions. Objectives in the fields of activity listed below are defined for the individual locations and set out in specific plans with schedules.

Fields of activity in environmental sustainability

To achieve the SDGs, we adhere to the principle of environmental sustainability and will seek to take it into account in all of ADA's procedures and operations. For us, environmental sustainability means resource conservation and renewal. It requires us to adopt a long-term, multifaceted approach to networked thinking and problem-solving. We therefore think that all levels of the organisation must take responsibility for implementation – starting with the operational and management levels up to and including each individual employee.

Incorporating environmental sustainability into all of ADA's operational areas calls for efforts and measures in the following fields of activity:

- Waste avoidance/disposal
- Energy supply
- Resource consumption/use
- Procurement
- Business travel
- Events

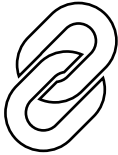
Fields of activity in social sustainability

A measure of our social footprint is how we treat our staff on the one hand and on the other the way we influence our partner organisations. Our aim is socially sustainable and responsible corporate governance. In full accord with the SDG leitmotif of leaving no-one behind, we want to take care of all our personnel, neglecting no-one and to ensure them a meaningful and decent workplace in a secure environment.

We therefore take specific measures geared to the following fields of activity:

- Putting corporate ethics into practice
- Health of personnel, workplace safety
- Ergonomics at the workplace and a healthy working environment
- Compatibility of private and working life
- Participation of staff in procedures for organisational development and knowledge exchange
- Equal opportunities
- Upgrading social and professional skills

4 Organisational mainstreaming of sustainability



The sustainability strategy lays a major foundation for our work and is embodied in the business strategy. Its implementation is an organisation-wide objective that is embedded in key business operations - such as procurement and waste and human resource management.

Our sustainability activities are directed and updated by the Sustainability Task Force, which assigns the implementation of individual sustainability measures to the respective competent organisational units and monitors subsequent execution. The members of the Sustainability Task Force also contribute their specific professional expertise and support ADA as an organisation to achieve its sustainability goals at all levels. It also draws on other specific in-house or external experts.

The Sustainability Task Force is made up of representatives of the Units Themes & Quality, Private Sector & Development, Human Resources & Organisational Management, IT & Facility-Management, and of the Organisational Risk and Innovation Management Executive Unit, as well as a representative from the Works Council and the ADA Compliance Officer. One representative each from a coordination office in the Africa Region and South-East Europe/South Caucasus Region are also engaged. The ADA Management appoints the members of the Sustainability Task Force, which is coordinated by the ADA Management Adviser.

In close consultation with the respective organisational unit, the Sustainability Task Force devises action plans to carry out the sustainability strategy. These define the specific implementation activities, the planned time frame and the requisite resources and responsibilities. The priorities of the individual measures are depicted using a traffic light system. Where needed, different action plans can be drawn up for individual ADA locations (Headquarters in Vienna and field offices), where this is expedient to take better account of specific conditions and needs in the field.

Action plans, including time schedules, are approved by the ADA Management and monitored continuously. Depending on the priority and progress made, the requisite financial and human resources for implementation are provided by the Management. The approved documents are available to all ADA personnel.

The individual organisational units are responsible for carrying out the measures and are supervised by the Sustainability Task Force. Current progress in objective achievement is reported every half-year to the ADA Supervisory Board and forms part of annual company reporting.