

Sustainable Development Policy

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Unit	International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia		
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Introduction

HFHA considers sustainability as the continuing benefit to the community project activities long after the completion of the project. HFHA is committed to reducing poverty by building simple, decent and affordable houses as well as water and sanitation facilities in partnership with those in need. HFHA projects aim to be efficient with resources and carefully planned to deliver both immediate and long-term benefits for people, and their communities. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that HFHA international program activities are guided by the principles of sustainable development and represents our organisation's commitment to sustainability in development assistance. It will also serve as a practical guide to enhance our relationship with partner organisations and local communities.

Policy Statement

HFHA believes the key elements for sustainability includes:

1. Quality of infrastructure built (materials, design and appropriatenes).
2. Community driven and owned activities and outputs.
3. Support structures (community and/or government) for maintenance of facilities.
4. A strong enabling environment for scalability and replication of project activities.

HFHA is dedicated to carrying out and supporting initiatives that implement and promote sustainable development. HFHA will:

- Encourage the active participation of families, communities and partner organisations in all stages of the project cycle - design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Identify and evaluate social and environmental risks and impacts of the project.
- Promote initiatives which are driven by real needs identified by local communities.
- Promote and provide means for adequate engagement with affected communities throughout the project cycle on issues that could potentially affect them and to ensure that relevant social and environmental information is disclosed and disseminated.

- Value the importance of local community knowledge.
- Promote capacity building and skills transfer.
- Promote the use of home partner contributions through ‘sweat equity’ and the formation of savings groups.
- Match the cost of a home (or housing solution) with a home partners ability to repay.
- Preserve the viability and integrity of Habitat’s housing finance programs by ensuring careful family selection based on ability to repay a housing loan and appropriate lending cost structures designed to ensure both affordability and sustainability.
- Use low-cost, sustainable and local building materials and appropriate technologies for the construction of adequate and secure housing for the poor, taking into account their culture, climate, specific social conditions and vulnerability to natural disasters.
- Improve access to land and property, to adequate shelter and to basic services for the poor.

Policy in Practice

HFHA will ensure that:

Pre-project

- Sustainable development will be encouraged by ensuring that projects submitted for funding are checked against sustainable development guiding principles, using HFHA’s proposal checklist and sustainability analysis framework.
- The environmental factors of the communities are considered in the development of infrastructure to minimise their negative impact on the livelihoods of families and communities and ensuring that they are durable to last generations.

During project

- The local people are trained as labourers and resilient building techniques are used to ensure that current and future buildings are durable and functional.
- Program staff and local counterparts understand and support the principles of sustainable development and seek expertise when required.
- All projects, whether an emergency response or a planned build engage the local communities and are aimed towards long-term sustainable development.
- The buildings are made of quality, locally sourced materials that are appropriate for the region to ensure that the infrastructure is durable.
- HFHA projects follow the *HFHI Minimum Housing Quality Standards* for guidance on the quality of housing and construction as well as guidance on incremental housing engagement with families.

Post-project

- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities include ongoing analysis of the sustainability of development outcomes.
- HFHA engages local partners, the private sector and the government to create a strong enabling environment for the scalability and replication of HFHA project objectives.

- The local communities and/or government are engaged in HFHA projects and provide maintenance of the infrastructure once the project is complete.
- Regularly review sustainability of projects and use lessons learnt to strengthen program approaches.
- The partner families fully participate in the project by providing labour assistance and/or a deposit for their homes. HFHA in return provides expertise, education and a no-profit loan.