

Sustainability Policy

The mSupply Foundation

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Purpose

This policy sets out how the mSupply Foundation (TMF) manages the environmental, social and economic effects of its operations, its procurement, and the software and services it provides.

Related Policies

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Code of Ethics, in particular its Environment section, and with the Child Protection Policy, the Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, the Diversity Policy and the Fraud and Corruption Policy.

Where this policy and another Foundation policy address the same matter, the more specific policy governs.

Scope

This is a Foundation-wide policy, applying to all Board members, staff and contractors of the Foundation.

It applies to the Foundation's procurement and to the specification of equipment for programs and projects. Where stated, requirements flow down into partnership and sub-contractor agreements.

Background

The Foundation is a software organisation. Its offices and direct energy use are small in absolute terms.

The Foundation's material environmental effect arises through the health supply chains its software manages. Medicines and vaccines are lost through expiry, poor stock visibility, cold chain failure, and emergency freight to cover stockouts. Each loss carries an environmental cost: manufacture and shipping repeated unnecessarily, refrigeration energy spent on stock that is later discarded, air freight substituted for sea freight, and pharmaceutical waste requiring disposal in settings where disposal infrastructure is limited.

The Code of Ethics commits the Foundation to advocating for practices that minimise the need to air freight emergency purchases of medicines. This policy expands on that commitment and sets out the decisions through which it is applied.

We also take our own emissions seriously, but are clear-eyed about the scale of impact we can have in each realm.

Policy

1. Environmental

1.1 Product design

Design decisions that reduce wastage in the supply chains the Foundation's software manages are treated as environmental decisions. This applies to stock visibility, expiry management, forecasting and cold chain monitoring.

The Foundation's software will continue to be supported on older and lower-specification devices for as long as security patching allows, so that equipment already held by ministries remains in service.

The Foundation's software will be designed to operate without continuous connectivity and to run on modest hardware.

1.2 Equipment

For our own hardware and equipment, these rules apply:

- **Minimum service life:** Field hardware we specify or procure (tablets, cold chain sensors, servers) is specified for a minimum five-year service life, with spare parts and replacement batteries available for that period.
- **Repair before replace:** Damaged devices are assessed for repair first before considering replacement.
- **Backwards compatibility as a design requirement:** mSupply Mobile is supported on older and lower-specification Android devices for as long as security patching allows. This keeps ministry-owned devices in service for longer, which avoids both cost and e-waste.
- **End of life:** Devices we own are routed to certified e-waste recycling where available in-country.

1.3 Climate change and mitigation of travel

International travel is our largest direct emission source. We minimise international travel as feasible, but do need to balance this with the fact that deploying a new system nation-wide is at best impractical to do over a video call, and at worst adds further inefficiencies by causing failed projects.

We manage this tension with three standing rules:

- Remote support is the default for any work that doesn't require physical presence.
- Where travel is required, we consolidate into fewer and longer visits rather than repeated short trips.
- Growing in-country teams is our main structural lever - our training model is train-the-trainers by default. This allows for in-country staff to extend the work begun in our requirements gathering and initial training phases.

On energy and computing:

- mSupply is built to run on modest hardware, including on-premise in-country servers where data sovereignty requires it. Low compute requirements mean lower energy use across every deployment, and they're a functional requirement in settings with unreliable grid power.
- Where we procure cloud hosting, we prefer providers with published renewable energy commitments.

1.4 Protection of the environment and biodiversity

Our direct land use and biodiversity footprint is negligible. The relevant contribution is the one described above: reducing the volume of expired pharmaceuticals entering waste streams and mitigating plane travel.

2. Social

2.1 Matters governed by other policies

Conduct, safeguarding, gender equality and non-discrimination are governed by the Code of Ethics, the Child Protection Policy, the Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy and the Diversity Policy. This policy does not restate them.

2.2 Sustainable consumption

The Foundation will buy less, keep equipment longer, and specify for repair. This applies to the Foundation's own equipment and to what it recommends to the health systems it supports.

3. Economic

3.1 Whole of life costing

The Foundation's software is open source. There are no licence fees, no per-user charges and no escalation clauses. A ministry that deploys it holds its own data, may read, modify and fork the source code, and may engage a different implementer without replacing the system.

The Foundation will present cost information on a whole of life basis, and will encourage evaluation of alternatives on the same basis rather than on implementation cost alone.

3.2 Local capacity and small and medium enterprises

The Foundation will upskill (and where needed maintain and employ) in-country teams rather than delivering solely through visiting staff.

The Foundation will document its systems and train partners and ministry staff for handover. Knowledge will not be retained as a means of securing future work.

Where high quality local implementing firms exist, the Foundation will prefer to train and work through them.

3.3 Procurement

Procurement integrity is governed by the Fraud and Corruption Policy.

Hardware will not be selected on the lowest price alone. Price is to be weighed against expected service life.

Limitations

The Foundation does not currently hold ISO 14001 certification and does not operate a formal environmental management system.

The Foundation does not publish a greenhouse gas inventory, and will not present modelled estimates as measured data.

The commitments in this policy are decision rules. They can be checked against the Foundation's travel records, product and project decisions and partner agreements.

Implementation

This policy is applied at the points where decisions are made: procurement approval, travel approval, product design review, and the negotiation of partnership and sub-contractor agreements.

This policy forms part of the induction of all new staff and contractors. The Foundation's environmental commitments are also contained in the Code of Ethics, to which every employee records their assent before beginning work.

The Operations Manager, in conjunction with the Leadership Team, is responsible for the administration, interpretation and application of this policy.

Policy Compliance and Review

Any of the Foundation's funding agencies may audit compliance with this policy.

The Foundation shall review this policy every three years, or earlier if warranted.

Appendices

None

Approval Agency

The mSupply Foundation Board

Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Dhanya Herath: Operations Manager

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