ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Acknowledging the institutional obligations to the principles of the King III Code and Report and, as a signatory member to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and accordingly espousing the values of the UNGC, UNISA commits itself to environmentally sustainable practices as an intrinsic investment in the future of the University, the country, the continent and the world.

1.2 UNISA's commitment towards environmental sustainability will be realised through awareness of more sustainable living practices and by addressing environmental challenges in every facet of our activities, insofar as is reasonably possible.

2. AIM

The aim of this policy is to:

2.1 foster a culture and understanding of environmental sustainability among employees, students and other stakeholders;

2.2 infuse identified environmental risks and opportunities into teaching, learning, research and community engagement activities of UNISA;

2.3 ensure the alignment, integration and promotion of the principles and practices of environmental sustainability, with all institutional policies, procedures, processes, systems, technology requirements and platforms and the provision of facilities; and

2.4 promote sensitivity and responsiveness to environmental issues through constructive communication and dedicated institutional initiatives.

3. DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity — refers to the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems;[1]

Environment — for the purpose of this policy, refers to the surroundings (natural and built) within which the University exists and comprises:

i) the land, water and atmosphere of the earth,
ii) micro-organisms, plant and animal life,
iii) any part or combination of (i) and (ii) and the inter-relationships among and between them, and
iv) the physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties and conditions of the foregoing that influence human health and wellbeing;[2]

[1] National Environmental Management, Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004
[2] Section 1 of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998

Environmentally Sound Technologies (EST)	mean technologies that are considered to be those that are 'environmentally sound' and which protect the environment, are less polluting, use all resources in a more sustainable manner, recycle more of their wastes and products, and handle residual wastes in a more acceptable manner than the technologies for which they were substitutes. ESTs are not just individual technologies, but total systems which include know-how, procedures, goods and services and equipment as well as organizational and managerial processes;[3]
Pollution	means any change in the environment caused by: i) substances, ii) radioactive or other waves, iii) noise, odours, dust or heat emitted from any activity, that has or will have an adverse effect on human health or well being or on material useful to people or will have such an effect on the future;[4]
Stakeholder(s)	refer(s) to any group(s) or individual(s) who may affect or be affected by the University's activities, decisions, changes and/or improvements;
Technology	is a broad concept that deals with human usage and knowledge of tools and crafts, and how it affects a human's ability to control and adapt to its environment. A strict definition is elusive; "technology" can refer to material objects of use to humanity, such as machines, hardware or utensils, but can also encompass broader themes, including systems, methods of organization and techniques. The term can either be applied generally or to a specific area;
Waste	refers to any substance, whether or not that substance can be reduced, re-used, recycled and recovered: (i) that is surplus, unwanted, rejected, discarded, abandoned or disposed of; (ii) which the University has no further use of for the purposes of production; or (iii) that must be treated or disposed of;[5]

4. PRINCIPLES

UNISA underscores the following principles as outlined by the UNGC:

4.1 Environmental precautionary approach

UNISA takes a risk averse and cautious approach to environmental sustainability, and this approach takes into account the limits of current knowledge about consequences of decisions and actions.[6] Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation[7]. UNISA has a precautionary approach towards environmental sustainability.

[3] UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre: 2003
[4] National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998
[5] According to the new Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC); National Environmental Management, Waste Act 59 of 2008
[6] Section 2(4)(a)(vii) of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998
[7] Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration

4.2 Environmental responsibility

UNISA undertakes initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility through identified focus areas.

4.3 Environmentally sound technologies (EST)

UNISA encourages the development, implementation of and reporting on environmentally sound technologies.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABLE FOCUS AREAS

These focus areas give effect to the principles indicated in paragraph 4 and are addressed through teaching, learning, research and community engagement and alignment with UNISA's policies, procedures, processes, systems, technological requirements and in the facilities it provides.

In the implementation of this Policy, UNISA emphasis the following key areas of performance and management:

5.1 Environmental performance

UNISA promotes the reduction of its carbon footprint while also promoting eco-friendly environments and green business, as well as green building practices and principles.

5.2 Waste management plan

UNISA minimizes waste by reducing, re-using, recycling, repairing and recovering waste wherever economically and practically possible. Hazardous waste and non-hazardous waste are disposed of in compliance with all legal requirements and in a manner that is ethically responsible.

5.3 Water consumption

UNISA develops a water consumption management system which closely monitors water usage. Storm and rain water are managed by means of appropriate technologies and for the benefit of the University.

5.4 Energy

UNISA considers and adopts technologies and ways that enhance energy efficiency and the use of appropriate renewable and law carbon energy. Measures are also put in place to measure, report and verify the utilization of total energy consumption for all existing and new buildings on an annual basis.

5.5 Pollution

Pollution is managed by means of projects and technologies which reduce all forms of pollution.

5.6 Biodiversity

UNISA manages biodiversity which entails the protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural habitats and indigenous species within the sphere of influence of the University.

5.7 Environmental capacity building, awareness and promotion of sustainable living

UNISA ensures that the capacity of employees, students and other stakeholders is

enhanced as well as raising their awareness in terms of this Policy by engaging them in promotional activities and by developing partnerships with local communities, government and the private sector. UNISA also endeavors to instill environmental awareness in its employees, students and other stakeholders through various other means which includes events greening.

5.8 Transport

UNISA promotes sustainable transport through the introduction of alternate technologies, procedures and alternate travel options for employees, students and members of Council.

5.9 Sustainable procurement

UNISA ensures that all procurement processes actively support the University's Environmental Sustainability Policy and that service providers are made aware of this commitment so that they can adhere to the institutional commitments to environmentally friendly best practices insofar as is reasonable possible .

5.10 Estates and development

UNISA introduces and follows sustainable construction principles, policies, procedures, processes, systems, technologies and best environmental practices in all new buildings, extensions and refurbishment of buildings. UNISA reviews its current building infrastructure for adherence to the standards and best practices of environmental sustainability.

5.11 Stakeholder involvement

UNISA ensures that the University community is aware of the environmental policy and develops partnerships with its stakeholders, including the local community, government and the private sector to foster the commitment to environmentally friendly best practices.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be implemented by means of a comprehensive implementation plan with clear targets, objectives and responsibilities (including proper budget allocations for implementation).

7. MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

The Vice Principal: Advisory and Assurance Services through the Risk, Ethics and Controls Committee oversees the implementation of the Policy.

All members of the Management and Extended Management Committees are accountable for the implementation, monitoring of and reporting on the environmental sustainability policy within their respective areas of responsibility and spheres of influence.

8. REVIEWS AND REVISIONS

The Environmental Sustainability Policy will be reviewed annually through the Risk, ethics and Controls Committee and/or the Management and Extended Management Committees.