

## ***Climate and Environmental Policy***



Responsible	Caritas Denmark's Management team
Version	May 2025
Approved by – Date of approval meeting	22 May 2025 by Caritas Dk Board
Audience	Caritas Denmark employees, volunteers, donors, partners, programme participants
Communicated to Caritas Denmark Team	
Next review due	May 2030 & when necessary

## Indhold

1. Care for Creation and our Common Home.....	2
2. Our commitments .....	3
3. Environmental considerations in our programmes .....	4

### 1. Care for Creation and our Common Home

Caritas Denmark's commitment to promoting dignity, solidarity, support families and communities and poverty eradication is unwavering. We recognise that these principles extend beyond human interactions, reaching into our relationship with the environment that sustains us. We believe protecting the environment is a moral obligation and a strategic imperative. Our collective efforts aim to lead by example and inspire positive change in the broader community.



This document reflects our deep concern for the environment and outlines our dedication to exercise good stewardship, not only over the resources entrusted to us but also over Creation as a whole, our 'common home'. At Caritas Denmark, we recognise that environmental stewardship is integral to our mission of promoting global justice and alleviating poverty. We are dedicated to inspiring positive change within our organisation and the communities we serve.

Our Environmental Policy is firmly rooted in the principles of the Catholic Social Teaching, reflected in *Laudato Si*<sup>1</sup> (Pope Francis' encyclical letter about our Common Home),

and the subsequent apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum*<sup>2</sup> (about the current Climate crisis). These documents underscore the profound interconnectedness of environmental and social issues, calling for responsible and holistic approaches to caring for our common home. Climate change, as recognized by Pope Francis, is a global problem with profound implications for the environment, society, economics, politics, and the equitable distribution of resources. It is one of humanity's paramount challenges, necessitating an integrated approach that addresses poverty alleviation, social justice, and environmental protection. *Laudato Si* illuminates our collective responsibility to protect and nurture the Earth, particularly concerning marginalised communities who often bear the brunt of environmental changes.

<sup>1</sup> *Laudato Si*, published in 2015, addresses the profound interconnectedness of environmental and social issues. It calls for a responsible and holistic approach to safeguarding our planet's diverse ecosystems, including cities, oceans, forests, and agricultural lands. The encyclical places particular concern on marginalized communities which often bear the brunt of environmental changes. It calls for universal solidarity, emphasising our collective responsibility to protect and nurture the Earth. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

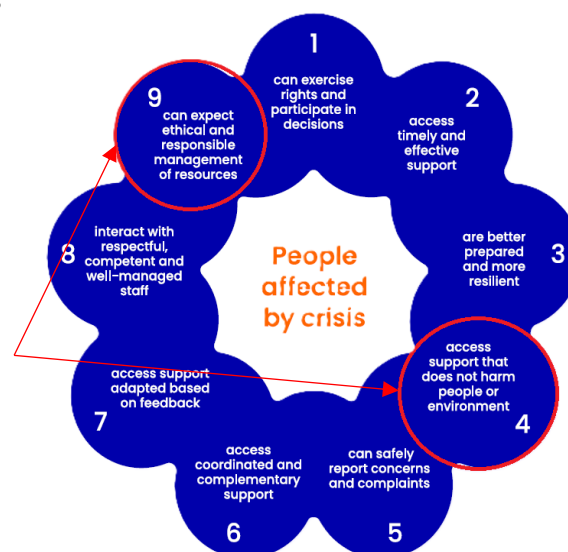
<sup>2</sup> *Laudate Deum*, published in October 2023, emphasises the urgent need for collective action to protect our planet and foster a sense of global solidarity while highlighting the moral imperative to care for our common home: renewed commitment to environmental stewardship, recognising the interconnectedness of all living creatures and the Earth's ecosystems, adopt more sustainable lifestyles and practices. "*Laudate Deum*" serves as a call to action and an inspirational guide for people of all faiths and backgrounds to work together in safeguarding the planet and securing a more just and sustainable future for all. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html)

## 2. Our commitments

Caritas Denmark is committed to continuous improvement. Climate considerations are based on the standards we commit to. Caritas Denmark accountability framework is mainly composed of the Core humanitarian standards (CHS)<sup>3</sup> and the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CIMS)<sup>4</sup>. Based on these standards and the reporting requirements of our various donors, we regularly update our environmental objectives and indicators to ensure that we remain on the path to sustainability.

Caritas Denmark is CHS-certified for both its development and humanitarian engagements and complies to the 9 commitments. Commitment 4 and 9 have a special focus on positive impact on the environment and responsible use of resources.

Within the Caritas Confederation, the CIMS nurture a culture of care for creation and focus on climate change with high standards. This allows Caritas Denmark to ensure that its Caritas partners also have a focus on environmental issues, solutions and innovations.



### Daily Employee Engagement

In addition to staff responsibilities stated in the Code of Conduct, all staff have the following responsibilities: a. Read and understand this environmental policy; b. Act in accordance with the overarching principles of this policy; c. Mainstream environmental aspects into the project management cycles within their control; d. Perform their duties in an environmentally responsible manner; and e. Equip themselves, with support from management, with skills and knowledge relevant to undertake above-mentioned responsibilities.

The management is responsible for ensuring that the staff handbook “Personalehåndbog” and other manuals and policies constantly reflects our highest possible commitments regarding energy and water efficiency, responsible use of resources (e.g. printing, cleaning products), sustainable procurement, recycling and transportation.

### Responsible Investments

Caritas Denmark ensures that its bank, insurance, and pension investments align with internationally recognised principles and guidelines for responsible investments (including the UN Global Compact, the UN supported Principles for Responsible Investments (PRI), the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Declaration), contributing to a sustainable future. Per default, every new staff pension will be invested in a green pension fund.

### Responsible Travel

We acknowledge that in-person and on-site visits is important to maintain a strong relation in our international partnerships. Therefore, we are aware that avoiding flights is not an option. For Caritas Denmark, an expression of good resources stewardship is to look at both the financial aspects as well as social and ecological aspects of travel. Therefore, with this policy, Caritas Denmark has updated our travel procedures in the staff handbook “Personalehåndbog”.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.caritas.org/who-we-are/management-standards/>

Prior to travelling, the added value of the travel must be clear, and it should contribute to more than one agenda. All travellers must consider additional tasks and requests by other staff members, particularly if such action contributes to reducing the number of staff travelling overall.

Travels undertaken as part of activities in Denmark are done by public transportation.

### **Our carbon footprint**

To counteract our emissions from unavoidable travelling, Caritas Denmark commits to select a project from one of our international partners and support it. We will seek CO<sub>2</sub> offset solutions such as establishing and protecting forested areas. We will consider projects that restore or protect natural carbon sinks, like forests and wetlands, which benefit biodiversity, as loss of biodiversity harms the natural world and has profound implications for human well-being.

### **Reporting and Transparency**

Caritas Denmark will communicate transparently regarding its environmental performance. Caritas Denmark's regular CHS audit reports, CIMS assessment and annual performance reports will inform about its environmental achievements, challenges, and goals.

## **3. Environmental considerations in our programmes**

As part of the Caritas confederation, Caritas Denmark is inspired by the late Pope Francis' dream of sustainable and integrated development to meet the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their full potential. Caritas Denmark's mission of serving the most vulnerable in dignity goes hand in hand with protecting and taking care of the planet, we share, both in our international and national activities. It is widely recognised that the most vulnerable and marginalised communities are more affected by the effects of climate change and environmental damage than economically rich communities and individuals.

Caritas Denmark's principle of subsidiarity means that we work with local leadership to accompany our partners and local communities to develop contextual-adapted capacities in environmental and climate related issues. Caritas Denmark engages with stakeholders to raise awareness about environmental issues, understand their concerns, collaborate on environmental initiatives and explore new technologies and practices to reduce our environmental impact.

Climate and environmental mainstreaming for Caritas Denmark means integrating environmental sustainability into our decision-making processes, see staff handbook "Personalehåndbog".

All our international engagements must have climate and environment mainstreamed to empower communities and build local capacity and resilience to address the problems faced due to environment and climate change. Our programmes can have other overall objectives, i.e. peace, health, education, livelihood, income generation etc., where environmental and climate change is not the main root cause to tackle.

As part of our risk assessment in our international programmes, we identify and mitigate local ecological risks, better address environmental incidents, reduce negative impacts, and promote climate change adaptation in vulnerable communities. Caritas Denmark recognises the importance of sustainable land use practices that protect natural habitats and biodiversity and ensure that procuring products and services also considers their impact on biodiversity, such as avoiding products that contribute to pollution, deforestation or harm to wildlife.