

# Environment and Climate Justice Policy

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## Introduction and Definitions

The world is facing an accelerating environmental and climate crisis that threatens ecosystems, human rights, and democratic societies. These crises do not affect everyone equally. Marginalised communities, who have contributed the least to environmental degradation, are often the most severely impacted. The causes are deeply rooted in unjust power structures, extractivist economies, political exclusion, and limited access to decision-making. Responding to them requires more than technical solutions; it requires systemic change.

Environmental and climate justice means addressing the unequal distribution of both environmental harms and benefits. It means recognising the right of all people, regardless of background, gender, income, or location, to live in a healthy environment, access natural resources, and participate in decisions that affect their lives. Environmental justice focuses on fair treatment and meaningful involvement in environmental decision-making. Climate justice highlights how the impacts of climate change fall unequally and calls for the redistribution of power and resources, historical responsibility, and a just transition for future generations.

As one of ForumCiv's three Development Perspectives, the environmental and climate justice perspective enables us to analyse how ecological and climate-related issues intersect with marginalisation, rights violations, and structural inequality. It is always applied in combination with our Rights-Based Approach and the Do No Harm framework, which guide us to promote participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and the prevention of harm in all areas of our work.

ForumCiv recognises the leadership of civil society in driving transformative change. We support civil society actors to defend rights, protect biodiversity, and promote equitable access to land, water, and other natural resources. Our approach is grounded in intersectionality and respects Indigenous, local, and non-Western knowledge systems. This policy sets out how ForumCiv contributes to environmental and climate justice across programmes, partnerships, and internal operations.

## Purpose and Scope

This Environmental and Climate Justice Policy defines ForumCiv's organisational commitment to addressing environmental and climate justice as a cross-cutting priority across all areas of our work. It sets the strategic direction for how the perspective is embedded in our systems, organisational culture, and external engagement through partnerships, programmes, advocacy, and grant-making.

The policy affirms that environmental and climate justice is essential to fulfilling ForumCiv's purpose: to empower people living in marginalisation who organise to claim their rights and advocate for systemic change. It outlines how the organisation will align its daily practices and long-term strategies with this commitment.

The policy applies to both internal operations and external engagements. It is grounded in ForumCiv's Rights-Based Approach and Do No Harm framework, and is operationalised through the Development Perspectives tool and the Strategy for the Integration of the Rights-Based Approach and the Development Perspectives 2025–2027.

## Guiding Principles

ForumCiv's approach to environmental and climate justice is grounded in the Rights-Based Approach and the Do No Harm framework. These frameworks guide all of ForumCiv's work to promote

participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency, while identifying and mitigating unintended harm.

ForumCiv applies an integrated perspective, recognising that environmental and climate justice is inseparable from the dynamics of gender inequality and conflict. Intersectionality is essential to understanding how environmental harms and climate impacts affect people differently based on gender, ethnicity, income, location, and other factors. The perspective also centres the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and respects diverse worldviews, including non-Western knowledge systems.

ForumCiv recognises civil society as a key actor in achieving systemic change. Strengthening the voice, influence, and leadership of civil society – in contexts of shrinking civic space and heightened risks – is critical to ensuring that environmental and climate decisions are just, inclusive, and sustainable.

## Goals

ForumCiv's goals for environmental and climate justice reflect where the organisation can make the most meaningful contribution to transformative change. As a platform that supports civil society and promotes a rights-based and intersectional approach, ForumCiv works both internally and externally to advance environmental and climate justice. These goals set the direction for our work and guide how we integrate this perspective across all areas of the organisation.

1. Support the leadership and influence of civil society actors advancing environmental and climate justice, particularly those operating in high-risk contexts or facing restricted civic space.
2. Promote a just transition by contributing to global efforts to address the climate crisis in line with human rights standards, Agenda 2030, and international climate agreements.
3. Protect, restore, and sustain ecosystems and biodiversity, while upholding the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
4. Ensure environmental and climate justice is analysed and applied as a cross-cutting perspective in all ForumCiv roles and operations, alongside gender equality and conflict sensitivity.

## Commitments

These commitments define how environmental and climate justice is applied in practice and embedded in daily decision-making across the organisation:

- Support civil society actors advancing environmental and climate justice, particularly in high-risk or restricted contexts, by enabling their participation, resourcing their work, and amplifying their leadership.
- Strengthen the agency and influence of those most affected by environmental degradation and climate change.
- Integrate the environmental and climate justice perspective across programmes, partnerships, and funding processes, ensuring it informs design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Ensure that programme and partnership design reflects respect for biodiversity, ecosystem restoration, and the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- Apply the perspective, together with the Rights-Based Approach and Do No Harm framework, to advance a just transition and address the root causes of environmental injustice.
- Leverage ForumCiv's platform function to promote rights-based advocacy, peer learning, and strategic partnerships for just and sustainable change.
- Build the capacity of ForumCiv staff, member organisations, and partners to apply the environmental and climate justice perspective effectively.

- Promote awareness and learning on environmental and climate justice, including the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, across the organisation and its partnerships.
- Integrate the environmental and climate justice perspective into internal systems, procurement processes, and accountability mechanisms, guided by the precautionary principle.

## **Operationalisation**

This policy is operationalised through ForumCiv’s Strategy for Integrating and Mainstreaming its Development Perspectives (2025–2027), which outlines the strategic priorities, methods, and internal structures for mainstreaming environmental and climate justice across the organisation. It ensures this perspective is applied in an integrated way alongside gender equality and equity, and conflict sensitivity and transformation. All perspectives are grounded in the Rights-Based Approach and the Do No Harm framework, which guide all of ForumCiv’s work.

## **Related Policies, Codes and Guidelines**

This policy is aligned with and supported by the following internal documents and policies:

- Environmental & Climate Justice Development Perspective Tool – Defining Key Concepts (2024)
- Development Perspectives Tool – Defining Key Concepts (2024)
- Rights-Based Approach and Do No Harm Framework – Defining Key Concepts (2024)
- Strategy for Integrating and Mainstreaming Development Perspectives 2025–2027
- ForumCiv Programme Handbook
- ForumCiv Grant Administration Guidelines
- ForumCiv Capacity Development Handbook