



# ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SAFEGAURDS POLICY





## **SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc**

### **Environmental and Social Safeguards**

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc, as a company operating virtually, is aware that there is a need to ensure that staff and associates are operating in a way that has minimum negative impact on the environment and provides a healthy virtual environment for the engagement of the SAEDI Consulting Team, as well as clients and other stakeholders.

As a company, SAEDI Consulting, as it works in the nexus of gender and climate, desires not only to guide our clients in mitigating, and reversing the impacts of gender discrimination and climate change, and function as green institutions, but to also to develop SAEDI Consulting itself as a green company, practicing daily, in whatever small way, the values and principles of gender, social and climate justice.

#### **A. Purpose & Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all SAEDI Consulting employees and associates, while operating in the virtual space, or in face-to-face engagements with each other, clients, and other stakeholders, work to create positive impacts socially and environmentally in what, how and with whom we do our work.

The policy seeks to guide employees and associates in adopting ways of engaging within their work-from-home (WFH) spaces, in keeping with the social and environmental safeguards principles and policy statement of the company which are further set out in the subsequent sections of this document.

#### **B. Social and Environmental Safeguard Policy Statement**

*SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. is committed to ensuring that as it works in the nexus of gender and the environment, climate change, and natural resource management, to improve the agency of women, people with disabilities (PWD), indigenous and tribal people (ITP), youth, the elderly and other disadvantaged or marginalised groups, the company will endeavour to work in a manner that creates healthy, inclusive and meaningful social interactions, and minimizes negative impacts on the environment.*

#### **C. Guiding Principles**

1. Support for the health and well-being of all employees and associates.
2. No discrimination based on age, race, religion, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.
3. Equal pay for equal work.
4. Zero Tolerance for cyber bullying, gender-based violence (GBV) or sexual exploitation abuse and harassment (including virtual sexual harassment and stalking) in the virtual workplace or in physical workspaces or project sites.
5. Respect for the use of resources, including electricity, water, and waste disposal and the impact on climate change and the environment.
6. Personal responsibility is necessary to support collective action.

## **D. Application of the Policy**

The policy will be applied at two levels, first at the organisational level, where the policy will guide how proposals, budgets, workplans, and implementation activities are developed, and second, at the level of each individual team member as they execute tasks, e.g. engaging stakeholders, managing resources, and working in a manner that supports climate change adaptation, climate and risk mitigation as well as environmental sustainability.

### **Organisational level**

From proposal to close out of activities, SAEDI Consulting will apply the environmental and social safeguarding policy by ensuring that:

1. Proposals and workplans clearly identify risks, including GBV and SEAH, associated with the execution of a project, and outline a plan for mitigation,
2. There is adequate and appropriate stakeholder engagement for inclusive decision-making, transparency and accountability,
3. Monitoring and evaluation include indicators for safeguarding both people and the environment,
4. There is a clear grievance redress mechanism (GRM), with guidelines and methods of access clearly defined and shared with all stakeholders, and
5. Project budgets are adequate for effective and successful implementation of the project, including to adequately address environmental and social safeguards

### **Individual Team Member Level**

Each team member is responsible for ensuring that the ESS policy guides their actions as they execute tasks alone, engage with the team, and work with clients and other stakeholders. It is incumbent on all team members that they read and understand this policy.

1. Team members must be clear on the content of the policy and how it applies to her/his daily activities in the execution of tasks, such that attention is paid to the use of resources such as electricity, water, waste, and how these impact health and safety, as well as the environment,
2. As a Project Manager, a team member must coordinate with other team members to ensure that ESS are being followed in general, and specifically in relations to M&E indicators at project level,
3. Each member of a project team, must be aware of how the ESS is linked to HR policy and GRM, and access methods for the GRM, to be able to guide stakeholders through the process.

Our current GRM as outlined in the HR Policy applies to working from home. In the case of Stakeholders, SAEDI Consulting will develop and implement a specific GRM that guides that engagement. In so doing, it will be important that access to redress is defined within the context of each project, and this will be available also to clients through whom project stakeholders might complain versus coming to us directly.

## **E. Safeguarding the Environment**

SAEDI Consulting will seek to ensure that in all of our work we assess and mitigate against potential and likely harmful environmental impacts (water and air pollution, biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions, the use of energy etc) by identifying and promoting sustainable practices, and ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation of practices, and the implementation of adjustments for improved effectiveness in our actions and those of our clients.

### **Environmental Safeguards**

SAEDI Consulting recognises, that even as it operates as a virtual company, the use of technology, individual and collectively, impacts the environment in significant ways:

1. Electricity and energy sources to operate equipment is still generally produced by non-renewable sources, which have direct and indirect impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, air pollution, and habitat destruction,
2. The manufacturing of digital devices and equipment for virtual work involves resource extraction which can also lead to air and water pollution, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss,
3. Working from home concentrates work-related resource use and waste generation,
4. Working from home in an era of intensifying climatic variability including heatwaves which create more energy demand through the use of fans and air conditioners and
5. Streaming of high-definition video can increase carbon, water and land footprints, virtual and otherwise.

SAEDI Consulting therefore promotes among staff, associates, clients and other stakeholders, the adoption of actions that can counter the above impacts, such as:

1. Choosing work hours and working models that require the least amount of use of electricity, such as working in daylight hours as far as possible or working later at night when it might be cooler,
2. Employing the use of LED and other renewable and energy efficient technologies that reduce both energy consumption and knock-on effects on GHGs and pollution as well as reduce the generation and disposal of nonbiodegradable waste such as plastics and microplastics,
3. Sharing workspaces where viable or using shared workspaces i.e. cafes, libraries, etc that provide a comfortable work environment for groups, allowing for sharing of resources and also share environmental costs,
4. Keeping digital devices and equipment for as long as possible, working with upgrades in software rather than new equipment, thus reducing the generation of e-waste that goes into landfills, and
5. Reducing the quality of streaming video during virtual meetings to *standard definition* to reduce the carbon footprint of the company.

## **F. Safeguarding People**

In safeguarding staff, associates, clients and other stakeholders, in the virtual workplace, as well as physical workspaces and in stakeholder engagements, SAEDI Consulting will respect the human rights, dignity, health and wellbeing of staff, associates, clients and other stakeholders by providing an environment free of physical harm, gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation abuse and harassment, and discrimination.

SAEDI Consulting will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying or sexual harassment in its virtual working space nor on its social media platforms. It will also seek to ensure that it is proactive in guarding against risk of harm or harassment and provide a grievance response and reporting system (link to GRM?) that is transparent.

### **Social Safeguards**

INTERNAL (employees and associates)

In the workspace, safeguarding measures include:

1. An HR policy that ensures every staff member and associate is given the space, and time needed to address family and other social and emotional needs, such as births, deaths, and

illness. While SAEDI Consulting, as a virtual company, cannot yet provide paid sick and maternity/paternity leave, it does provide small grants/allowances that may allow time off,

2. An HR policy which clearly stipulates equal opportunities for engagement regardless of sex, gender, race, religion or any similar social construct,
3. A grievance redress mechanism that ensures each staff member or associate has an equal chance to fair hearing of any complaint, and above all,
4. Project tracking of project activities and deliverables that can help the team to avoid an overproduction of work and the overconsumption of scarce human resources and talents,
5. Specific channels for projects that allow for management to track and manage team assignments and workload,
6. A weekly forum at Team Meetings to allow for sharing of views on how the team works, and with whom the team engages as well as any issues that may arise, and
7. Alternative channels for sharing concerns and any sense of overwhelm that staff may be feeling.

For example, on 5 and 6 in this section, working on weekends is generally at the discretion of the associate and also based on discussion and agreement with the MD or the project manager. There is no strict requirement for working or not working on the weekend, given that some associates may prefer to work on the weekends if they had to take time out during the work for personal matters and or if there is a specific deadline that needs to be met. It is the position of SAEDI Consulting that only the Managing Director works on weekends explicitly and clients cannot require working on the weekends. Associates must agree including when a project is based in a Muslim practising country where Saturday is usually a workday.

EXTERNAL (clients and other stakeholders)

A work approach that

1. Respects the rights and dignity of all regardless of race, religion, gender, marital status or geographic location,
2. Looks for strength in diversity, and
3. Ensures equity and equality for all parties,

### **G. Safeguarding Mechanisms**

To effectively implement this policy, and to ensure the safety of employees, associates, clients and other stakeholders, and for effective project execution and impact, SAEDI Consulting will use the following mechanisms, as well as any other appropriate and applicable mechanisms:

1. Environmental, social and environmental Impact Assessments,
2. Stakeholder Engagement,
3. Risk Management Plans
4. Health and Safety, to include, but not limited to:
  - i. Personal Protective Equipment – PPE (helmets, gloves, masks, boots, etc)
  - ii. Emergency Response Planning (evacuation plans, first aid, emergency contact information)
  - iii. Ergonomics (promote the use of proper workplace equipment/furniture, regular breaks, etc)
  - iv. Training and education (regular sessions/discussions on health and safety)

## H. Understanding our Commitment

Though SAEDI Consulting is currently a small company with a small footprint, we think it is important to practice these simple steps to ensure that our clients and other stakeholders understand the reason for the work that we do. In this way, we walk our talk.

<i>Policy Development and Process:</i>	
Actions	Dates
Available for comment:	December 2024
Approved:	<u>December 2024</u>
Signed/Initialled with seal:	<u>December 2024</u>
Due for revision	December 2026

**Approved and implemented**

**December 2024**

*Revisions: This policy is subject to review 24 months after implementation.*