



CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

DOCUMENT PROCESS

STATE IF NEW POLICY OR AN UPDATE OF EXISTING POLICY (TITLE OF POLICY)	Update of Climate Change Policy (3 year review)
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VERSION MANAGEMENT

LIST OF VERSIONS	POLICY MANAGER	REVIEW GROUP	DATE
1	ERM – EMD – ENRP	ExCo	June 2019
2	ERM – EMD – ENRP	ENRP	August 2023
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4			
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This document sets out Policy on Climate Change.

Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900 in 2011-2020. Global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase, with unequal historical and ongoing contributions arising from unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production across regions, between and within countries, and among individuals.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. The IPCC prepares comprehensive Assessment Reports about the state of scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge on climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for reducing the rate at which climate change is taking place. Their latest report; *CLIMATE CHANGE 2023 Synthesis Report* states; *widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred. Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people. Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected.*

St Helena is distinctive for its unique and isolated position in the South Atlantic. It has many characteristic environmental features but a limited supply of natural resources, leaving it more vulnerable to Climate Change than larger countries. St Helena Government (SHG) acknowledged the need to create a Climate Change policy with a view to planning for short, medium and long term environmental changes that are likely to impact on the quality of island life if left unmanaged.

There is an increased global appetite for action on Climate Change, which provides an opportunity for St Helena, as a small and isolated territory, to show global leadership in planting climate action at the heart of economic development on the Island.

1.2 Climate Change Reports for St Helena

Several reports have been written about Climate Change in the UK Overseas Territories, including St Helena and all support the need for an effective Climate Change Policy in the territories and St Helena.

- *Brown, N. 2008. Climate Change in the UK Overseas Territories: An overview of the science, policy and you. Peterborough, UK: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.*
- *IMC Worldwide Ltd. 2012. Addressing Climate Change by promoting low carbon-climate resilient development in UK Overseas Territories. East Kilbride: DFID.*
- *IMC Worldwide Ltd. 2014. Climate Change Factsheet: Climate data and requirements for St Helena. St Helena: Environment and Natural Resources Directorate.*
- *Wade, S et al. 2015. Assessing Climate Change and its likely impact on selected UK Overseas Territories: Inception report. UK: Met Office.*

1.3 Identification of the Problem, Challenge or Opportunity

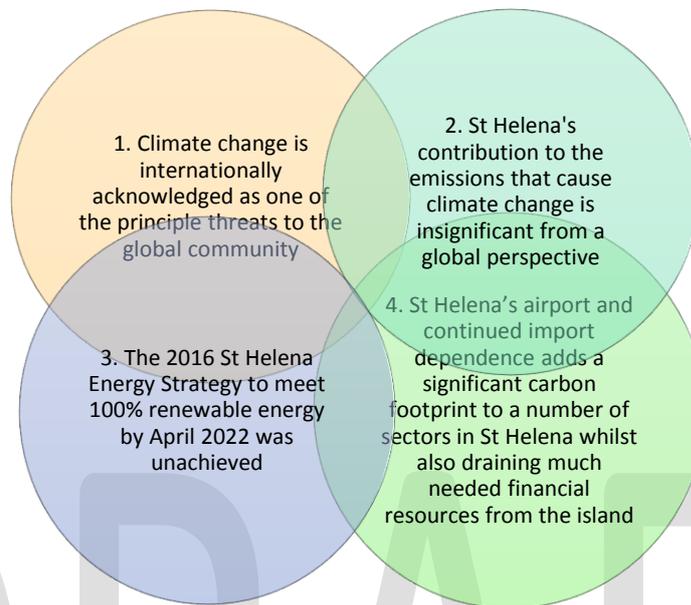


Figure 1 Key Issues Identified with the current situation

Key Issue 1

Climate change is internationally acknowledged as one of the principle threats to the global community and there is also widespread recognition that climate change will impact disproportionately on both island nations and countries with weak economies, therefore on this basis St Helena potentially risks significant impacts.

Key Issue 2

Whilst St Helena's contribution to the emissions that cause climate change is insignificant from a global perspective, there are still opportunities to achieve emission reductions that will have local environmental, health or economic benefits. The small and isolated nature of the nation also means that it may be possible to achieve significant change in a short period of time.

Key Issue 3

It was the intention of the St Helena Energy Strategy of 2016 to meet 100% of electricity demand of all consumers connected to the national mini grid through renewable energy by 1st April 2022. This was unachieved and a more realistic target now is to have a resilient and flexible energy system that allows at least 80% of demand on the Island to be served by on-grid renewable energy.

Key Issue 4

St Helena's airport and continued import dependence adds a significant carbon footprint to a number of sectors in St Helena whilst also draining much needed financial resources from the island. Overreliance on the import of fossil fuels, food and construction materials are areas in particular that impact both on the island's climate footprint and contribute to significant outflows of revenue.

1.4 Policy Rationale

We need to adjust our approach to energy production, emissions management, and our economy to meet these changing expectations. It is about long-term sustainability of our environment and economy.

The challenge is complex and to achieve the objectives on adaptation and mitigation requires a coordinated, robust national policy that supports development. St Helena has the potential to become a test-bed for up-scaling new climate-impact-limiting economic development that can inspire action in larger nations across the globe.

2. OVERARCHING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Strategic Objectives

The Climate Change Policy supports the National Goal; *Altogether Greener* in the St Helena Island 10-Year Plan 2017 – 2027.

The Climate Change Policy is aligned with the following Strategic Outcomes within St Helena’s Vision and Strategy:

- a) *Effective Infrastructure: we live in well-designed sustainable places where we can all access the amenities and services we need.*
- b) *Altogether Greener: we value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations.*

The Climate Change Policy supports St Helena’s Sustainable Economic Development Plan (2018-2028) Goal 6; *Sustain and improve our Natural Capital by maintaining and enhancing St Helena’s exceptional environment, landscape, heritage and cultural qualities for this generation and the next.*

The Climate Change Policy supports ENRP Strategic Priority 1: *Protect the natural environment by conserving biodiversity, preventing, minimizing or mitigating against any negative activity and/or impact, to conserve and enhance the Island’s natural capital.*

2.2 Policy Objectives and Principles

The Climate Change Policy aims to reduce the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions created on Island by making better use of natural resources, reducing the risks from weather-related hazards, ensuring that the protection and enhancement of the Island’s natural and cultural heritage is at the heart of economic development, in order to maintain a good quality of life for residents now and in the future. The policy identifies Climate Change as an opportunity to develop the ecology, infrastructure and economy of St Helena, and also an opportunity to strengthen the branding of the sustainable island.

The Policy objectives are to;

- Establishing coordination and leadership for effective decision making and action at all levels to ensure the Climate Change Policy is mainstreamed throughout the Island.
- Determine the current and future risks to St Helena from Climate Change through metrics and quantifiable environmental monitoring data.

- Develop a risk register to identify mitigation and adaptation opportunities for risks to St Helena from Climate Change.
- Embed sustainability in the exploitation or use of our ecosystems and natural resources, as a driver for economic development.
- Ensure that at least 80% of energy demand on the Island is served by renewable energy by 2027/28.
- Ensure we work collaboratively with the international and local community, to increase awareness and advocacy and share the responsibility of delivering the Climate Change solution, for present and future generations.

Implementation of this Policy will be guided by the following principles:

- **Precautionary principle:** Where evidence is inconclusive, or non-existent, SHG will make reasonable efforts to fill evidence gaps but will also need to as far as is reasonably practicable and proportionate, apply precaution within an overall risk-based approach. This would need to be considered based on risk, which will be made upon the best available techniques and evidence, combined with knowledge, information and/or expertise from elsewhere in the world.
- **Collaborative:** A range of different activities taking place have the potential to result in negative environmental impacts. Therefore, in order to minimise the risks of environmental impact occurring, it is essential for the different Portfolios within SHG and other relevant organisations to work together.

2.3 Scope

This Policy is the planning instrument that defines a long-term vision while guiding planning frameworks through a path that sets priorities for action.

Climate Change Action Plans will be developed by all Portfolios for their respective areas of responsibility and with territorial and international stakeholders as appropriate.

Climate Change Action Plans will comprise accelerating island-wide programmes and educational campaigns to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation for key sectors of island life including;

- Sustainable buildings, homes and lifestyles;
- Sustainable energy generation;
- Sustainable planning and land use;
- Sustainable agriculture;
- Sustainable transport system; and
- Sustainable waste management.

3. POLICY OUTLINE

The Policy is to ensure that SHG understands and addresses climate change impacts in a local and international context. In order to properly assess and address climate change implications, SHG will

need to include climate change in its strategic planning framework. Climate change has a range of implications, - legal, budgetary, infrastructure, planning and environmental, all which need to be actioned at both political and operational levels.

4. POLICY OWNERSHIP

This Policy will be owned by the Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Portfolio (ENRP) and is approved by Executive Council.

This Policy will be issued to all SHG Portfolios and made available along with annexes and supporting documents online on the SHG website. Copies are available upon request from Environmental Management Division.

The EMD will monitor work towards the policy objectives and provide publicly available information on their progress every two years through an SHG State of the Environment report. While certain objectives may be achievable relatively quickly, others may only be achieved in the longer term.

This policy will be reviewed every three years in order for evolution of the policy and to accomplish the long term objectives set out in the Climate Change Policy for St Helena.

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