

# Environmental Sustainability Policy

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy outlines Beyond Barriers Association's (BBA) commitment to minimise our environmental footprint and to embed sustainability across all programmes, operations and partnerships in line with EU green principles and Albanian legislation.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, consultants, suppliers, and partners engaged in BBA activities, including office operations, events and trainings (on-site and online), travel, procurement, and use of the Mobile Youth Center.

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

### ABOUT BEYOND BARRIERS ASSOCIATION

Beyond Barriers Association (BBA) is a dynamic non-profit organization founded in June 2004, dedicated to empowering young people through non-formal education. Operating at national, regional, and European levels, BBA focuses on promoting inclusion, equal opportunities, and a better quality of life for all youth. We place special emphasis on marginalized groups such as those from rural areas, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and those facing social and economic challenges. Our programs cover human rights education, inclusion and diversity, youth work, volunteering, employability and entrepreneurship, digitalization and innovation, and youth participation and active citizenship.

### OUR VALUES

Beyond Barriers' work is grounded in respect for human rights, inclusion and diversity, democracy and the rule of law, environmental protection, gender equality and equal opportunities, and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups. We put these values into practice by respecting people and planet, being accountable to the communities we serve, and working transparently and pragmatically with a commitment to continuous improvement in every aspect of our work.

### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is grounded in Albanian environmental legislation and aligned, where relevant, with EU environmental and climate frameworks (e.g., EU Green Deal principles), ISO 14001 good practice and the waste hierarchy.

## 3. KEY PRINCIPLES

At Beyond Barriers Association, we care for the environment by first preventing and reducing our impacts, then reusing and recycling before disposal. We prioritise low-carbon travel through a clear hierarchy, rail/bus first, shared car where needed, and flights only when essential and we design events and offices to be resource-light, paper-light, and plastic-free. We choose affordable, practical actions with measurable benefits, such as local/seasonal and vegetarian-first catering, buying less and repairing more, and preferring eco-labelled, recycled, or refurbished products when we must purchase. We equip staff and volunteers with simple checklists and training, set annual reduction targets per participant per event. We also ask suppliers and venues to meet minimum environmental standards so our efforts extend across our partnerships. When impacts cannot be avoided, we consider high-quality carbon offsets as a last resort. Staff of BBA make sure our sustainable choices



are inclusive and accessible to all participants, so caring for the planet always goes hand-in-hand with caring for people.

## 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### ORGANIZATION'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Approve and resource the policy and annual action plan.
- Designate a Green Officer to coordinate implementation and reporting.
- Integrate sustainability criteria into travel, events and procurement decisions.
- Provide staff/volunteer briefings and tools (checklists, templates).

### STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Follow the policy in daily work and during events/trainings.
- Choose low-carbon travel options and reduce resource use where possible.
- Use the provided checklists and submit basic data (e.g., travel mode, waste notes).
- Report incidents, barriers and improvement ideas to the Green Officer.

## 5. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

### PROCUREMENT PROCESS

- Buy less; repair, borrow or share before buying new.
- Prioritise eco-labelled, recycled, reusable or refurbished products (especially IT and stationery).
- Avoid non-recyclable and single-use items when alternatives exist.
- Prefer local suppliers and durable goods to cut transport and waste.

### SUPPLIER REQUIREMENTS

- Compliance with local environmental rules and responsible waste management.
- No single-use plastics at BBA-funded events; water stations over bottled water.
- Invoices or specifications indicating eco-labels/refurbishment where applicable.

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT

### APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

- Plan activities to minimise emissions and waste (e.g., digital-first materials).
- Use public transport or shared vehicles; prefer walking/cycling for short distances.
- Switch off lights/devices; use energy-saving settings; print only when necessary.

### INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

- Unnecessary flights or single-occupancy car travel where alternatives exist.
- Using single-use plastics and disposable event materials without justification.
- Improper disposal of waste or e-waste; contamination of recycling streams.

## 7. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT

The following guidelines operationalise the policy across common activities:

- Travel: Remote first where feasible; travel hierarchy, train/bus → car-share → plane (only when essential); combine meetings into one trip; prefer direct routes and economy class.

- Events & Trainings: Paper-light; plastic-free; accessible venues near public transport; local/seasonal, vegetarian-first catering; recycling bins with clear signage.
- Office & Digital: Efficient lighting and equipment; avoid duplicate cloud storage; default double-sided printing if printing is essential.
- Waste & Materials: Follow waste hierarchy; separate recyclables; certified e-waste disposal.
- Nature & Inclusion: 'Leave no trace' outdoors; ensure sustainable choices remain inclusive and affordable.

## 8. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Event organisers must apply the Event Sustainability Checklist (Annex I) and brief suppliers/venues accordingly. Contracts with venues/caterers should include BBA's minimum environmental standards (Section 5).

## 9. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENTS

### REPORTING MECHANISMS

- Internal: Report incidents (e.g., spills, improper disposal, significant deviations) to the Project Manager and Green Officer; escalate to the Executive Director as needed.
- Confidentiality: Reports are handled on a need-to-know basis; data are used for learning and prevention.

### RESPONSE PROCEDURES

- Immediate actions to ensure safety and prevent further impact (e.g., isolate area, use absorbents).
- Record and investigate root causes; document corrective and preventive actions.
- Inform relevant authorities when legally required; update procedures/checklists if needed.

## 10. COMMUNICATIONS AND GREEN CLAIMS GUIDELINES

- Be accurate and specific when communicating environmental achievements; avoid vague or misleading 'green' claims.
- Use official BBA channels for sustainability communications; retain consent/records for images of activities showcasing green practices.
- Publish concise annual updates on key indicators (see Section 11).

## 11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### REGULAR REVIEWS

- The Green Officer compiles quarterly notes and an annual summary for leadership and publication.
- Targets are reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

### FEEDBACK MECHANISM

Staff, volunteers, partners and participants may submit suggestions to improve implementation; BBA encourages open feedback to enhance outcomes.

## 12. ORGANISATIONS DETAILS AND SIGNATURE

Beyond Barriers Association is dedicated to Beyond Barriers Association is committed to environmental stewardship across all programmes and operations. We prevent and reduce negative impacts at the source, prioritising low-carbon mobility, resource-light events and offices, and responsible procurement.

Organisations details and signature:

<b>Association Name</b>	<b>Beyond Barriers</b>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Ana Mullanji</b>
<b>General Secretary</b>	<b>Monika Hasani</b>
<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Dritan Ziu, Taulant Naco, Xhensila Luka, Monika Hasani, Saimir Boseta</b>
<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Place</b>	<b>Tirana, Albania</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>01 December 2023</b>
<b>Signature &amp; Stamp of legal representative</b>	<b>Ana Mullanji</b>

### 13. ANNEX I- SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLISTS

#### A) EVENT SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST

- Digital agenda and handouts; registration via QR or email.
- No single-use plastics; provide water stations and reusable cups.
- Local/seasonal, vegetarian-first catering; plan portions to reduce leftovers.
- Venue accessible by public transport; share route information.
- Clearly labelled recycling bins; brief venue/catering staff.
- Collect simple data: number of participants; waste notes; issues and improvements.

#### B) TRAVEL DECISION GUIDE

- Can this be a video meeting? If yes, prefer remote.
- If travel is needed: choose train/bus first; if car, share seats; flights only if essential.
- Combine multiple meetings into one trip; prefer direct routes; economy class.

#### C) PROCUREMENT CHECKLIST

- Can we repair, borrow, or reuse? If not, buy only what is needed.
- Prefer eco-labelled/recycled/refurbished products; durable, repairable items.
- Avoid items that become waste quickly; require supplier confirmations where applicable.