



MAHOLA

A local health care system

Environmental Protection Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and direction regarding environmental protection aspects throughout the Mahola project, and the entire life cycle of the local health care system that the Mahola project aims to develop.

This ‘Mahola’ system is a complex and integrated system in the sense that it contains multiple system elements such as People (e.g. ambulance drivers, nurses and/or mid-wives, first aiders and cleaners), Hardware (e.g. ambulance vehicle and buildings), Processes (e.g. how to deal with a patient from an administrative viewpoint), Information (e.g. policies such as an environmental protection policy and a child protection and safeguarding policy, procedures, job descriptions, templates for checklists and contracts), as well as the related Equipment and Supplies to operate and maintain the system over time (see Figure 1).

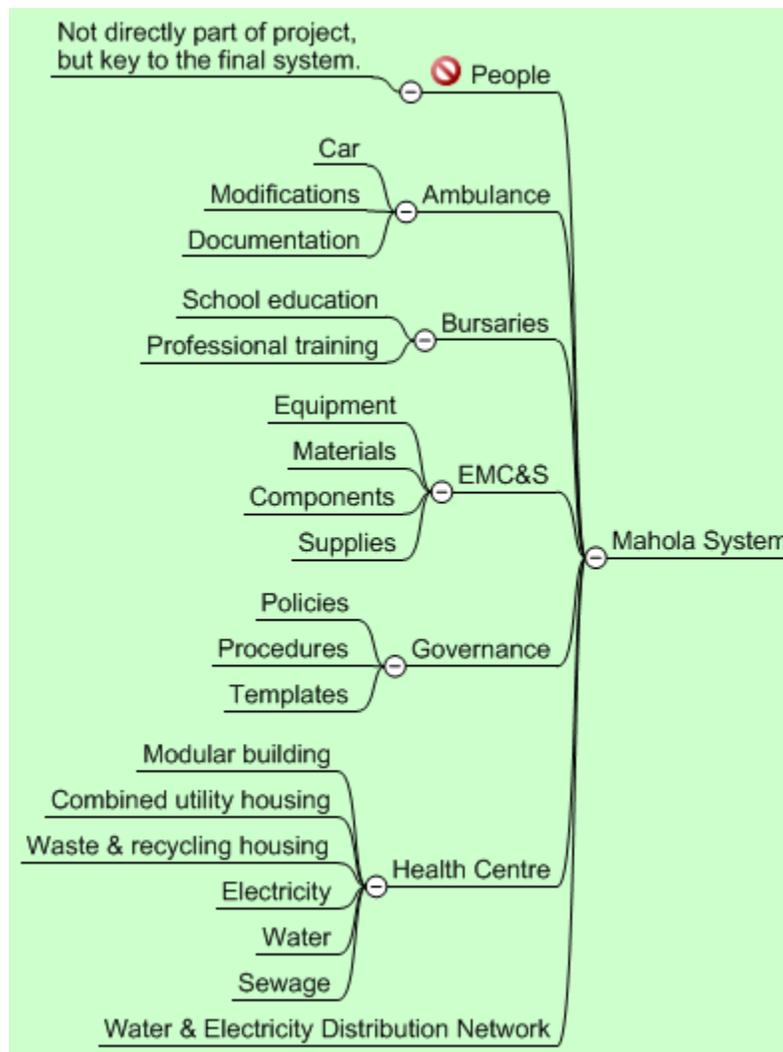


Figure 1: Elements of the local health care system

Mahola – a local health care system

Therefore, questions regarding environmental protection aspects during all project phases, i.e. the system development; the operation and maintenance of the local health care system; as well as in case of the disposal of certain components thereof, have to be anticipated, investigated and answered in order to minimise negative impacts on the environment; both directly (e.g. low water and electricity consumption of the health centre) and indirectly (e.g. via increased awareness among the local population in general).

The Mahola Project acknowledges a responsibility to the environment, and we express our commitment towards implementing operations, which will promote environmental sustainability. The Mahola Project is committed to minimising the negative environmental impact of its practices with the continual improvement in its environmental performance. The Mahola Project will consistently strive to raise awareness in the community, encourage participation and educate all concerned, even those who live locally but are not directly involved in environmental matters. In particular, the Mahola project makes reference to (and strives to follow where applicable) the recommendations of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (General Assembly, 2015) [1], the Papal Encyclical 'Laudate Si' (2015) [2], and the Sustainable Development Guidelines of the British National Health Service (NHS) [3]. The Mahola Project fully recognises the urgent need to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.

This policy governs the management of the environmental aspects of our project and the resulting health care system, with focus on the conservation of resources, the reduction of our carbon footprint, and the reduction of waste. This policy includes the continuous improvement in terms of environmental protection not only during the project itself, but throughout the entire life cycle of the healthcare system. The policy will be reviewed and updated regularly by a nominated Environmental Protection Officer and validated by the local Steering Committee.

2. SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

During the development of the local health care system from the system specification via the concept and detailed design, right to the implementation and integration of the system, decisions have to be guided by relevant environmental protection objectives.

The main environmental objectives during the system development are the following:

- Avoidance of toxic or harmful substances;
- Minimisation of transportation and noise;
- Preference for locally produced Equipment, Materials, Components and Supplies;
- Minimisation of drinking water and electricity consumption;
- Use of rain water where drinking water is not needed;
- Maximisation of renewable energy sources;
- Maximisation of recycling and composting;
- Reduction of non-recyclable and non-compostable waste;
- Respect of relevant international environmental standards.

3. SYSTEM OPERATION & MAINTENANCE

During the operation and maintenance of the local health care system throughout its entire life cycle, decisions have to be guided by relevant environmental protection objectives.

The main environmental objectives during the system operation and maintenance are the following:

- Creating advanced level Environmental Protection awareness among all people performing an active role as part of the health care system;
- Creating basic level Environmental Protection awareness among the entire population of the surrounding area, with a special focus on school children and patients with their families;
- Avoidance of toxic or harmful substances;
- Minimisation of transportation;
- Preference of locally produced Equipment and Supplies;
- Minimisation of drinking water and electricity consumption;
- Use of rain water where drinking water is not needed;
- Maximisation of renewable energy sources;
- Maximisation of recycling and composting;
- Reduction of non-recyclable and non-compostable waste;
- Respect of relevant international environmental standards.

4. DISPOSAL OF SYSTEM COMPONENTS

During the disposal of system components of the local health care system throughout its entire life cycle or at the end of the system life cycle, decisions have to be guided by relevant environmental protection objectives.

The main environmental objectives during the disposal of system components are the following:

- Existing equipment, materials, components and supplies, as well as buildings should be found a new use, or sold and the proceeds used for the common good of the local population;
- If existing equipment, materials, components or supplies cannot be re-used or sold, their disposal should be guided by the following objectives:
 - o Minimisation of transportation;
 - o Maximisation of recycling and composting;
 - o Respect of relevant international environmental standards.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER

The local Steering Committee will nominate a responsible Environmental Protection Officer. This office can be held in parallel with any other positions in the local health care system. The nominated focal point for environmental matters will drive the on-going continuous improvement efforts to reduce the environmental impact of the system.

In particular he/she will:

- Make local pupils and their families aware of the importance and proven approaches to protect our environment;
- Regularly review the local practice;
- Initiate related improvement actions and/or projects;
- Regularly review and update this policy as needed;
- Regularly report to the Steering Committee on all Environmental Protection matters;
- Support the Administrator by providing inputs for regular reporting;
- Support the Trainer by providing inputs for and actively participating in delivering related training and awareness sessions.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] United Nations General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org> (accessed 01/07/2016).
- [2] Pope Francis, Papal encyclical, On care for our common home, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed 01/07/2016).
- [3] British National Health Service (NHS), Sustainable Development Guidelines, <http://www.sduhealth.org.uk> (accessed 01/07/2016).