

AFRICARICE
OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH AND SAFETY
POLICY

Introduction

The AfricaRice Center (AfricaRice) is a leading pan African research organization with the mission to contribute to poverty alleviation and food security in Africa through research, development and partnership activities.

AfricaRice is a member of the CGIAR Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers. It is also an autonomous intergovernmental research association of currently 25 member countries covering West, Central, East and North African regions. The current total workforce of AfricaRice in the temporary Headquarters in Benin and in the six outstations in Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Tanzania, Madagascar, Liberia and Sierra Leone is 337 employees.

Purpose

As a publicly funded international research organization, AfricaRice is required to exercise competent and socially responsible stewardship of its staff. AfricaRice draws its values, directions, and criteria that guide its protection of its personnel from imperatives rooted in current international best practices. The nature of its activities demands the need for a clear and comprehensive set of policies to guide the Center's Health and safety responsibilities and decisions.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for a prudent and responsible management of the health of the staff and safeguard the security of the Center and outstations.

The policy sets out:

- **The Philosophy of the policy**
- **The objectives of the Center's OHS activities**
- **The areas of responsibility.**

The policy is intended to guide the day-to-day work of all staff, inside and outside the Center, who are involved in the laboratories, fields, operational, technical and administration activities of AfricaRice.

Philosophy

As part of its Risk management policy and Business Continuity Plan (BCP), the Africa Rice Center is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for its employees and others who may be affected by its activities by embracing the following practices:

- ❖ Compliance with Headquarters and all host country regulatory legislations and internationally accepted OHS standards and practice.
- ❖ Integrate OHS as part of AfricaRice Institutional culture and as a driver of sustainable research.
- ❖ Integrating OHS management in all planning processes and decision making.
- ❖ Strive to continuously enhance the awareness of OHS by developing and attaining OHS targets and objectives.
- ❖ Adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach to research that exerts positive influence on collaborators, stakeholders, communities and donors.

- ❖ Mainstream OHS education and healthy lifestyle programs that assist employees make healthy and informed choices, and provide effective occupational health programs.
- ❖ Provide appropriate information, guidance and instruction on OHS to enable staff, contractors, collaborators and visitors carry out their duties safely without harm to themselves.
- ❖ Adopt numerous strategies that minimize waste of resources and ensure that this is done in a responsible and acceptable manner.
- ❖ Adopt, maintain and test procedures, evacuation plan, contingency plans and resources for dealing with OHS emergencies.
- ❖ Involve employees in decision making on OHS matters.
- ❖ Recognize members of staff who make outstanding contributions to the efforts on OHS in the quest of AfricaRice to achieve its objectives.
- ❖ Conduct research and operations in a socially responsible manner, to contribute positively to the communities in which AfricaRice operates and to respect the needs of all stakeholders.

Areas of responsibility

1. The Director General

The Director General of AfricaRice has overall responsibility for OHS and s/he has the following responsibilities:

- ❖ Overall responsibility for OHS matters in AfricaRice.
- ❖ Overall responsibility for ensuring that the OHS Policy and the OHS Manual are kept under review.
- ❖ Overall responsibility for ensuring that the objectives of the OHS Policy are achieved.

- ❖ Allocates the resources required and advises the OHS Management Committee (OHSMC) of the resources required to comply with statutory requirements or any difficulties that might arise if resources are not available.
- ❖ Ensures proper management procedures exist to secure the implementation of detailed OHS arrangements for AfricaRice.
- ❖ Ensures that suitable arrangements are in place for consultation with members of staff.
- ❖ Ensures that the OHS Policy, the OHS Manual and the detailed arrangements concerning health, safety and welfare of all members of staff and students are made known and implemented.
- ❖ Ensures that the detailed OHS arrangements are reviewed regularly and/or when required and that the organizational or legislative changes occur.
- ❖ Ensures that suitable and sufficient OHS risk assessments have been carried out for all members of staff and students whilst they are engaged in AfricaRice business.
- ❖ Be proactive in stimulating interest and enthusiasm for OHS throughout AfricaRice.

2. The Executive Management Committee (EMC)

The responsibilities of EMC are as follows:

- ❖ To establish an OHS Committee at Managerial level called the Occupational Health and Safety Management Committee (OHSMC) and any other framework, should the need arise.

- ❖ To ensure compliance by approving the manuals, OHS work plans, validate the terms of reference of the members of the OHSMC, regularly monitor the performance of the OHS policy, and propose other policies to support the OHS policy.
- ❖ To ensure that job safety requirements are established for all jobs, roles and duties, and that these and other safety requirements are made known to members of staff by effective information, instruction, training and supervision.

3. The OHS Management Committee (OHSMC)

The responsibilities of the OHSMC are as follows:

- ❖ Responsible for achieving the objectives of AfricaRice OHS Policy in their areas of individual responsibility and ensuring that the OHS Manuals and the detailed arrangements concerning the health, safety and welfare of all members of staff and students are made known and implemented within their areas of responsibility.
- ❖ Aim to achieve a progressive reduction in accidents and incidents as an integral part of its management responsibility.
- ❖ Ensuring that they, and all staff in their areas of individual responsibility, know their responsibilities for OHS and that they are adequately trained to discharge those responsibilities.
- ❖ Establishing in their own areas of individual responsibility an adequate program to seek the elimination of potential accidents.
- ❖ Ensuring conformity of AfricaRice with host country OHS statutes and Codes of Practice, also ensuring that suitable procedures to

identify report and eliminate hazards and suitable risk management procedures exist and are implemented.

- ❖ Ensuring that all facilities and equipment in their areas of responsibility are maintained as far as reasonably practicable in a condition, which is safe, and without risk to health.
- ❖ Arranging consultations to ensure that progressive and positive methods are adopted for promoting health, safety and welfare at work and that there are arrangements for the participation of all stakeholders in the development of such measures.
- ❖ Ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out. This will not be confined to risk assessment of physical locations but will also include modes of working and activities. Where hazards are identified which cannot be eliminated, that safe systems of work are designed, implemented, recorded, monitored and reviewed as necessary.
- ❖ Ensuring that workplace inspections are carried out in accordance with statutory and AfricaRice policy requirements and that actions arising are addressed.
- ❖ Ensuring the provision of such information, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of members of staff and students in their areas of responsibility.
- ❖ Ensuring that job safety requirements are established for all jobs, roles and duties, and that these and other safety requirements are made known to members of staff by effective information, instruction, training and supervision.

Final Statement

The policy is subject to review by the Board of Trustees every two years to keep it abreast with international best practices. The manuals are approved by EMC and reviewed by the EMC every three years.