

Code of Conduct



Investing in rural people

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Preamble

IFAD's Code of Conduct is intended to support staff in upholding the Fund's ideals of ethics and to protect them while carrying out their duties as international civil servants. Holding high ethical standards in our daily work is essential to maintaining a healthy organization.

The information presented in this booklet has been extracted from IFAD's *Human Resources Implementing Procedures, Chapter 1: Duties, obligations, and privileges* to provide staff with an easily accessible reference tool. In addition to it being a reference tool, we invite staff to look at the Code as a window into the culture we wish to maintain and a roadmap in seeking assistance, when needed.

While management has full confidence in the integrity of staff, our Code of Conduct is meant to provide guiding principles for day-to-day interactions and decision-making. The Code of Conduct cannot provide staff with answers or guidance for every ethical issue that may arise in the course of the Fund's activities, and should never be used as a substitute for good judgement. In case of doubt, staff should seek guidance from the Ethics Office (ETH).

Note: In this document, the generic masculine is used for the sole purpose of simplifying the text: it applies to both women and men. In case of discrepancies between this document and the IFAD Human Resources Implementing Procedures, Chapter 1, the latter shall prevail.

1.7 Code of conduct

1.7.1 Introduction

(i) The Fund's mission statement, guiding principles and core values articulate what the Fund stands for and how staff members shall work with clients, partners and each other. IFAD's mission requires institutional excellence in every respect.

(ii) The conduct and actions of IFAD staff members must always be motivated by the highest ethical standards. Staff members must observe and comply with the obligations of the Human Resources Policy, the Code of Conduct, and the Staff Rules and Implementing Procedures.

(iii) The Code of Conduct shall serve as a source of guiding principles even in situations that are not specifically addressed. The letter and spirit of the provisions set out in the Code of Conduct shall apply equally to all staff members unless otherwise specified in their terms of appointment. Staff members who have questions about the application of ethical rules and procedures in specific circumstances should seek the guidance of the Director, ETH.

(iv) The provisions in this section and those of the Code of Conduct are intended to serve as a guide for staff members and managers in day-to-day interactions and decision-making, but do not address every ethical issue that staff members may face. Similarly, the Code is not a substitute for good judgement. Discussion of possible violations of the Code of Conduct will be treated as confidential. No reprisal will be tolerated against anyone who, in good faith, provides information on possible violations of the Code of Conduct.

(v) To foster and maintain a positive work environment that supports the ethical conduct of its staff, the Fund shall actively provide guidance for staff members through programmes, training materials and other resources. Managers shall make clear in their communications and actions that inequitable treatment and discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

(vi) Staff members are responsible for obtaining approval from the President for any activity for which approval may be required under the Code of Conduct and for reporting conflicts of interest or failures to follow the Code to the relevant supervisor or to the Director, ETH. Failure to seek approval where applicable may result in corrective or disciplinary measures.

(vii) The Director, ETH has the overall authority to monitor the compliance of the Code of Conduct.

1.7.2 Privacy

(i) The Fund respects the privacy of staff. All confidential information, including but not limited to the staff member's Human Resource (HR) files, medical records, investigations and disciplinary actions, shall not be inappropriately disclosed, and will only be accessed for authorized and legitimate business needs.

(ii) The Fund will not regulate private conduct, unless such conduct impairs a staff member's ability to perform work satisfactorily or is otherwise incompatible with the Staff Rules, Code of Conduct, or Implementing Procedures. Staff members shall remove themselves from any activities that involve the hiring, advancement, promotion or evaluation of other staff members with whom they have a close personal relationship.

(iii) IFAD staff must always remember that their status as international civil servants carries certain obligations with respect to their conduct, both at work and outside IFAD. The organization attaches great importance to the observance of legal obligations and local laws by staff members, as well as to the avoidance of actions that could be perceived as an abuse of the privileges and immunities granted to staff.

1.7.3 Exercise of authority

(i) Staff members shall exercise their authority in a fair and consistent manner, in accordance with the proper discharge of their official duties. Respect for the rights and needs of individual staff members, non-staff, clients, governments, contractors and suppliers must be demonstrated at all times, with the full awareness that any misuse of authority will damage the Fund's community as a whole.

(ii) All managers shall be responsible and accountable for carrying out their duties and responsibilities in compliance with all IFAD policies and procedures and with the Code of Conduct.

1.7.4 Supervisory relationships

(i) Supervisory relationships should be guided by mutual respect. Supervisors shall, at all times, treat staff members in a professional, fair and unbiased manner. Such treatment shall not be influenced by personal ties between the supervisor and the staff member, nor shall it be influenced by the gender, nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation or culture of the supervisor or staff member. Relations among staff members should be cooperative, professional and characterized by mutual respect. Failure to comply with these provisions may lead to action, taken either through the Performance Management Process or through misconduct procedures.

(ii) A sexual relationship between a staff member and anyone reporting directly or indirectly to that staff member is considered a de facto conflict of interest. While both staff members in the relationship bear ethical responsibility for the de facto conflict of interest, the manager or supervisor shall be responsible for seeking a resolution of that conflict, if need be in consultation with management, the Director, Human Resources Division (HRD) and the Director, ETH.

1.7.5 Hiring and advancement of close relatives

The hiring of staff members' close relatives is subject to the provisions of *Chapter 2: Staff recruitment and appointment*, and any other applicable rules. All staff members shall complete a declaration listing any close relatives¹ currently working at IFAD and send it to the Director, ETH. In consultation with the Director, ETH and other relevant divisions, staff members shall remove themselves from any activities that involve the hiring, advancement, promotion or evaluation of close relatives.

1.7.6 Dress requirements

To maintain the professional image of the Fund, staff members shall ensure conformity to a standard of dress and grooming generally accepted in the business community at various duty stations. This is particularly important when representing the Fund in an official capacity, as for example when receiving official visitors, travelling on official mission, presenting a seminar, or attending a conference or official function.

1.7.7 Relations with external parties

(i) Relations with governments, Member States and Candidates for IFAD's Presidency

(a) Staff members shall serve only the interests of the Fund. They shall not lobby or seek support from government representatives or members of legislative organs to obtain advancement, either for themselves or for others, or to block or reverse unfavourable decisions regarding their status.

(b) Staff members shall remain impartial at all times in the performance

¹ Close relatives are defined as spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, granddaughter, grandson, aunt, uncle, first cousin, niece, nephew, step-mother, step-father, step-brother, step-sister, step-son, step-daughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law.

of their duties and shall avoid providing any direct or indirect assistance in connection with a candidacy (presumptive or actual) for the Presidency of IFAD. Any failure to comply with these obligations may result in the imposition of corrective or disciplinary measures as provided for in Chapter 8: Discipline.

(c) Staff members shall maintain the best possible relations with governments and avoid any action that might damage those relations. They shall not attempt to interfere in the affairs of governments, and only influence country's policies within the scope of IFAD's policies, programmes and projects and of the official duties and responsibilities of staff. Staff members, either individually or collectively, shall not criticize or try to discredit a government. At the same time, it is understood that staff members may speak freely in support of the Fund's policies. Any activity, direct or indirect, to undermine a government constitutes a violation of the Code of Conduct, which may be subject to corrective or disciplinary actions (see Chapter 8: Discipline).

(d) Staff members are normally not representatives of their countries, nor do they have authority to act as liaison agents between international organizations and their governments. Exceptionally, the Vice-President may, in the interest of the Fund, authorize activities of political or other nature and request a staff member to undertake such duties outside of the scope of their duties, in which case this unique role demands international loyalty and integrity. Staff members shall immediately report to their supervisor any undue pressure exercised by any government or its agents. Relations between staff members and their government representatives should be restricted to citizenship issues.

(ii) Contacts with the media

(a) The Director of the Communications Division (COM) serves as the

principal spokesperson of the organization and has authority to make determinations on all IFAD contacts with the media. In accordance with the guidelines issued by COM in this regard, staff members who have obtained general authorization from their supervisor to speak to journalists should strictly adhere to these guidelines. Staff members are responsible for the technical content of media interviews and should limit their comments to their areas of expertise. COM will support them by helping to ensure that they are familiar with the techniques and skills required to interact effectively with the media.

(b) Staff members who are contacted directly by journalists, who have not received the above-mentioned general authorization and have no opportunity to seek permission from their supervisor, should follow the media guidelines developed by COM and respond to queries if this falls within their area of authority and professional expertise. Subsequently, they shall inform their immediate supervisor and the COM Strategic Communication Team Leader, providing the journalist's name and media affiliation and a summary of questions asked and information provided, as well as requests for further information or interviews, if any. Queries of this kind from professional news organizations at national, regional and global levels should always be responded to promptly and professionally.

(c) When speaking to the press on IFAD's behalf, staff members shall give precise and factual comments and be courteous, avoiding personal observations and conducting themselves in a manner consistent with their status as international civil servants.

(iii) Relations with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the public

(a) Staff members shall avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest or impropriety in all interactions with any authority external to IFAD, with that authority's officials and staff, as well as with the public.

(b) Staff members may occasionally be subject to criticism from outside the Fund. In keeping with their responsibilities as international

civil servants, staff members shall respond with tact and restraint and conduct themselves in a manner befitting their status.

(iv) Instructions from outside sources

Except as otherwise specified in their terms and conditions of employment or authorized by the President, staff members owe their duty entirely to IFAD and to no other authority. Thus staff members shall maintain their independence by not accepting instructions relating to the performance of their duties with the Fund from any governments or other entities or persons external to the Fund, unless otherwise specified in their terms and conditions of employment or authorized by the President. These provisions apply equally to staff members on loan from other organizations.

1.7.8 Remuneration from outside sources

(i) Except when on authorized external assignment, staff members may not accept any remuneration from governments or other external entities or persons in connection with their appointment to or service with the Fund.

(ii) Gifts

(a) Gifts include any tangible goods or services, honour, decoration, remuneration, perishable goods, alcoholic beverages, favours or economic benefits offered to any staff member by any source external to the Fund, including governments, commercial firms and other entities. This includes invitations to trips, entertainment events, or any other form of tangible benefit. To protect the Fund from any appearance of impropriety, any gifts offered to staff members in relation to the proper discharge of their duties shall not be accepted. In addition, gifts must not influence, or appear to influence, the recipient's judgement.

(b) Exceptionally, gifts may be accepted in the following cases:

- If the nominal value of the gift does not exceed US\$100 and the

gift does not compromise or appear to compromise in any way the integrity of the staff member or that of the Fund;

- In the case of an honour or decoration, if declining would be perceived as offensive. In such cases, the staff member may accept the honour or decoration on behalf of the Fund; or
- If an authorization has been received from the Director, ETH in accordance with section 1.7.8(iii)(a).

(iii) Obligation to declare gifts and request for authorization

(a) Staff members shall promptly declare to the Director, ETH gifts of a nominal value in excess of US\$100 and shall surrender the gift to the Administrative Services Division for disposition in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures. In cases where the staff member wishes to keep the gift, the staff member may include a request for authorization to retain the gift in the declaration and indicate the reasons justifying such request. The Director, ETH shall decide on the request, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, where appropriate.

(b) Any failure to declare these gifts may result in corrective or disciplinary measures.

(iv) Custody of gifts

Gifts of a nominal value exceeding US\$100 shall be considered property of the Fund and shall be disposed of in accordance with the applicable provisions set out in the IFAD Manual.

1.7.9 Information required of staff members

(i) Staff members are responsible for supplying the Fund and/or for ensuring that an eligible dependent provides to the Fund truthful and verifiable information and documentation may be required for the purpose of establishing remuneration or benefits, for monitoring conflicts of interest, including information of a personal nature or for the recognition of a benefit enjoyed by the eligible dependent by virtue of the staff member's

employment with the Fund. These obligations remain during the staff member's appointment and at all times during their employment by the Fund.

(ii) In particular, staff members shall provide the following information to the Fund:

- (a) Their nationality (or all nationalities, if more than one);
- (b) Marital or dependency status of spouses, domestic partners and other dependents;
- (c) Evidence of marriage or domestic partnership, or documentation required for other family members;
- (d) Original or certified copies of degrees, diplomas, certificates and any other academic documents referred to on the personal history form;
- (e) Medical certificates;
- (f) Names of any family members employed by the Fund.

(iii) Staff members are also responsible for promptly notifying HRD, in writing, of changes in their status for items listed in section 1.7.9(ii). All staff members are expected to report any changes in their personal situation (including financial and non-financial) that may lead to a possible conflict of interest in the course of carrying out their duties, or which might lead to a change in benefits or remuneration.

(iv) Staff members shall inform the Director, ETH of their involvement in any legal proceedings likely to compromise the Fund or the dignity of their functions, such as arrest or being charged for an offence, being summoned before a court as a defendant in a legal proceeding, conviction, or being fined or imprisoned for any offence other than minor traffic violations.

(v) Conflicts of interest

- (a) Staff members should avoid any situation that is liable to give rise to a conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest arise where private or personal interests of the staff member may influence or appear

to influence the impartial and objective performance of their duties. Private or personal interests include situations where a staff member appears to benefit improperly, directly or indirectly, or allows a third party to benefit improperly, from their association with an enterprise or organization that engages in business directly or indirectly with the Fund.

(b) Staff members should avoid assisting public or private bodies or persons in their dealings with the Fund where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment. This is particularly important in procurement matters or when negotiating prospective employment.

(c) Staff members shall disclose any personal business, membership, positions on boards of organizations, firms or non-governmental organizations or any interests, including financial, in organizations or firms doing business with the Fund, as well as those of their immediate family members, that might give rise to a conflict of interest or reflect unfavourably on or cause embarrassment to the Fund. If in doubt about disclosing information, staff members should consult the Director, ETH.

(vi) Declaration and Financial Disclosure Statements from staff members

(a) To reflect the importance of the Code of Conduct and its obligations, staff members will be required on a yearly basis to declare the following:

- That they have read, understood and will ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct;
- All conflicts of interest, including the appearance thereof; and
- All sources of non-IFAD income, goods, services or assets.

(b) In addition, the following categories of staff members are required to complete, on a confidential basis, an annual Financial Disclosure Statement that will contain detailed information on financial assets and liabilities including information on selected financial transactions that

occurred during a specified filing period in order to determine potential conflicts of interest, including the appearance thereof, arising from staff members' financial holdings, private affiliations or outside activities:

- all staff members at the P3 grade level and above;
- all staff members involved in the investment of IFAD's assets, procurement activities, or the operation and/or administration of any IFAD accounts; and,
- all professional staff members working in IFAD Country Offices, including all international staff posted outside of IFAD headquarters.

(c) The yearly declaration shall be forwarded to the Director, ETH who shall be responsible for the receipt, management, access and confidentiality of the information provided by staff. Declarations and financial disclosure statements shall be retained for a maximum period of 10 years or until separation from IFAD, whichever comes first, and be destroyed thereafter.

(d) Failure by concerned staff to comply with the above-mentioned obligations may result in corrective or disciplinary measures.

1.7.10 Activities outside IFAD

(i) Staff members' primary responsibility is to devote their energies to the work of the Fund. Accordingly, staff members are restricted in the degree to which they may engage in outside activities, whether remunerated or not, or otherwise provide services to another organization during their employment with the Fund. If a staff member has any doubt as to whether they can perform outside activities, they shall seek guidance from the Director, ETH. The Director, ETH shall make a recommendation, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel where appropriate, to the relevant Head of Department who shall decide whether to authorize the outside activities.

(ii) Any authorized activity, or preparation for such activity, undertaken in a private capacity must take place outside IFAD office hours or while the staff member is on leave. Similarly, the staff member must not make use of IFAD services, supplies, facilities or information not publicly available.

(iii) Staff members may not accept honoraria or compensation for any allowed activity, or its preparation, undertaken in an official capacity, or accept reimbursement for expenses unless so authorized by their manager. Honoraria or compensation received for such outside employment should be contributed in its entirety to a social welfare activity within the Fund, the IFAD Staff Help Fund, or a non-profit charitable organization to be determined by the relevant Head of Department in consultation with the Director, ETH.

(iv) Staff members on leave, with or without pay, shall bear in mind that they remain staff of IFAD and are still subject to its rules. Thus staff members may only accept paid or unpaid employment during leave if authorized by the President.

(v) Outside activities for which prior authorization may be required

(a) Some outside activities may be beneficial to both staff members and the Fund. Staff members are encouraged to participate in professional activities that foster contacts with private and public bodies and thus serve to maintain and enhance their professional and technical competencies.

(b) For matters related to teaching, lecturing, writing and publishing on issues that do not refer or relate to the Fund's activities or policies, and that do not affect their status as international civil servants or IFAD's relations with the public or member countries, staff members shall first consult ETH and their supervisor. The Division Director shall decide whether to authorize the outside activities of his/her respective staff members in consultation with the Director, ETH. For staff members

in the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE), the Director of IOE shall decide whether to authorize the outside activities in consultation with the Director ETH.

(c) For matters related to teaching, lecturing, writing and publishing on issues that refer or relate to IFAD activities or policies or may affect their status as international civil servants or IFAD's relations with the public or member countries, staff members shall first consult with ETH and his/her supervisors. The Vice-President/relevant Associate Vice-President, after consultation with the Director ETH, the relevant Division Director (for technical content) and after endorsement from the Director, COM (for reputational matters) shall decide whether to authorize the outside activities. For staff members in the Independent Office of Evaluation, the President, in consultation with the Director IOE, Director ETH and with the endorsement of the Director COM (for reputational matters), shall decide whether to authorize the outside activities.

(d) With the prior authorization of the relevant Division Director, in consultation with the Director ETH, staff members may accept or serve in a non-compensated position in a non-profit corporation, unless the organization directly or indirectly has a business or fundraising relationship with IFAD, or intends to have such a relationship. In that latter case, the staff member shall first consult Director ETH and their Division Director. The relevant Associate Vice-President, in consultation with the relevant Division Director and Director, ETH, shall decide whether to authorize the outside activity.

(vi) Political and civic activities

(a) It is recognized that staff members have a legitimate interest in the civic and political affairs of the country of which they are citizens. Staff members retain the right to vote, but the degree to which they become actively involved in politics must necessarily be limited by their status as international civil servants.

(b) Staff members may participate in local community or civic activities, provided that such participation is consistent with the oath of service in IFAD and with IFAD's Code of Conduct.

(c) Staff members may be members of any political party, provided that its prevailing views and the obligations imposed on its members are consistent with IFAD's oath of service, Code of Conduct and core values. Staff members should exercise discretion in their support for a political party or campaign and should not accept or solicit funds, write articles or make public speeches or statements to the press for this purpose. These cases require the exercise of judgement and, where there is any doubt, should be referred to the Director, ETH.

(vii) Public office

(a) A staff member may not be a candidate for, or accept appointment to, any public office.

(b) A staff member who evidences intent, or undertakes by conduct or stated decision, to become a candidate for or accept an appointment to local and national public office shall immediately resign from the service of the Fund.

(c) Failure to comply with the above will be considered misconduct and may result in corrective or disciplinary measures.

1.7.11 Personal legal obligations, including obligations to spouses or domestic partners, separation, divorce, and child support

(i) Staff members must comply with their personal legal obligations and observe applicable law, including all obligations involving financial support to family members, including through spouse or domestic partner support or child support, or both. Failure to comply may be considered misconduct and may result in corrective or disciplinary measures.

(ii) Upon receipt by the Fund of a court order or request from a judicial or administrative authority regarding a staff member, the matter will be forwarded to the Director, ETH and to the Office of the General Counsel. The staff member will be notified of any need for action in dealing with personal legal obligations. If upon such notification the staff member does not provide the Director, ETH and the Office of the General Counsel, within a reasonable amount of time, a satisfactory explanation of how the staff member plans to deal with the personal legal obligation, the matter may be referred to the President for further action.

1.7.12 Information and assets

(i) Confidential information

(a) The disclosure of confidential information may seriously jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of the Fund. Staff members are responsible for exercising discretion in all matters concerning official business. They should not divulge confidential information without authorization, nor should they use it to gain private advantage or allow the use of information that has not been made public and is known to them by virtue of their official position. These obligations do not cease upon separation from service.

(b) The HR file is the confidential repository for papers pertinent to a staff member's service with the Fund (with the exception of medical data, which is contained in a medical file maintained by the IFAD nurse). The Director, HRD is responsible for the custody of the HR files.

(c) All confidential information, including personnel information, may be disclosed only for authorized and legitimate business needs.

(d) Staff members may at all times consult their own personnel and medical file by sending a request to the Director, HRD. Requests for access to confidential personnel information based on legitimate

business needs shall be sent to the Director, HRD. Such request shall provide the justification for access to the confidential information. The Director, HRD shall decide on the request. In case of dispute, the Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department (CSD), shall take the final decision. Access to other confidential information based on legitimate business needs shall be authorized by the Director whose office holds the confidential information. In case of a dispute, the relevant Associate Vice-President shall make the decision. For offices and Divisions whose Directors are not supervised by an Associate Vice-President, the decision shall be made by the President.

(ii) Copyright and patent rights

All intellectual property rights, including but not limited to title, copyright, trademarks with regard to products or documents or other materials, and patent rights of any work produced by staff members as part of official duties with IFAD, shall belong to IFAD unless such rights are explicitly relinquished by the Director, COM.

(iii) Accuracy of information and records

Staff members are responsible for providing accurate information to the Fund, and for the use of IFAD's information systems and assets, in accordance with established business processes and IFAD policies and accounting principles. Time records are a specialized form of accounting records. All accounting, time recordings and other records pertaining to the Fund shall truthfully and accurately convey the information they claim to represent.

(iv) Use of IFAD's assets

Staff members shall use and maintain assets such as cash, facilities, equipment, software, hardware and supplies with the utmost care and respect, guarding these against waste and abuse, and shall be liable for their negligent loss or destruction. IFAD assets should be used solely for purposes directly related to conducting IFAD business or for purposes authorized by management.

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