

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PREVENTION AND COMBATING OF ABUSE OF POWER AND MISMANAGEMENT

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

As the umbrella organisation for some 60 development organisations, the Geneva Federation for Cooperation (FGC) has adopted a *Code of Conduct for the prevention of abuse of power and mismanagement*. Through this document, FGC undertakes to respect and enforce high standards of conduct and integrity in various areas, as set out below. The adoption of this Code of Conduct reflects the ethical values held by FGC, which is committed to acting with integrity and responsibility and in accordance with the legal standards in force in Switzerland and in partner countries. It is proactive in that it communicates the expected minimum standards to FGC's stakeholders, and it addresses accountability by assuring donors that these standards are being met.

The Code sets out the conduct expected of all persons working for or with FGC (whether employed or voluntary), as well as of all member organisations, in accordance with the standards and good practices prevailing in the international cooperation sector. FGC condemns abuse of power and mismanagement in all their forms.

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all individuals or organisations that have a contractual relationship with FGC, regardless of their role or mandate. It is therefore an integral part of all partnership agreements, employment contracts, all other contracts and mandates entered into by FGC. It is applicable at all times and in all places.

All persons working on behalf of FGC are expected to act with tolerance, sensitivity and respect for diversity and to not seek personal advantage or privileges on the basis of their position.

The *Code of Conduct* defines two distinct areas of responsibility: the first concerns FGC as an employer and an umbrella organisation, and the second concerns member organisations both as employers and as actors and/or funders. Member organisations that do not operate under a code of conduct that includes the minimum standards must/should refer to FGC's *Code of Conduct*, to which they are contractually bound.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Geneva Federation for Cooperation and its member organisations shall respect the dignity, integrity and value of each individual. They shall promote and practice understanding, tolerance and respect, and exercise discretion and confidentiality.

All collaborators must support and adhere to the values and regulations of the FGC/member organisation. At the same time they are entitled to fair, courteous and respectful treatment from their colleagues, superiors and subordinates. All managers have clear responsibilities in terms of preventing and combating abuse of power and mismanagement. They must maintain an institutional culture of zero tolerance.

The zero-tolerance policy requires that an entity will not remain silent or passive in the face of reported incidents, regardless of who is responsible. FGC and its member organisations will therefore make every effort to prevent incidents of abuse of power or mismanagement, in particular through training, awareness-raising, the implementation of procedures, etc.

In the workplaces of FGC and its member organisations, collaborators must be able to work in an environment that is respectful, and that promotes well-being, resilience, health and productivity. It is the responsibility of the governing bodies of these entities to establish and cultivate such an environment.

FGC and its member organisations will treat all people fairly, with dignity and kindness. The Federation and its member organisations are committed to equality and stand against discrimination or gender inequality, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda.

The *Code of Conduct* promotes a certain number of clearly stated standards with the aim of protecting project beneficiaries and employees of FGC and its member organisations. This document demonstrates the institution's responsibility and ensures that any situations reported are followed up.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This *Code of Conduct* defines two areas of responsibility:

1. FGC is responsible for managing alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct that arise within its sphere of responsibility, i.e. within the Secretariat and in its bodies, in relation to its collaborators. FGC will also ensure that member organisations with which it has a contractual relationship are aware of and comply with the standards set out in the Code.
2. Member organisations are responsible for alleged breaches concerning the people they employ, their volunteers and their consultants. They must also ensure that partners in the field with whom they have contractual relationships are aware of, and comply with, the standards set out in the Code.

Scope of responsibilities for the Geneva Federation for Cooperation

CANTONAL FEDERATION (FC)	FEDERATION AS EMPLOYER	FEDERATION AS NGO UMBRELLA
Relevant entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed and voluntary collaborators • External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Organisations (MOs)
Means of Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to the collaborators • Guidelines/policy • Internal regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MO selection (membership criteria) • Code of conduct • Project funding agreements

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all persons employed by the Geneva Federation for Cooperation, volunteer experts who are members of the Federation's bodies, interns and civil servants, as well as consultants under contract with FGC. In this Code of Conduct, the term "collaborators" will be used to refer to all of these persons. Consequently, whether signed or unsigned, the Code forms an integral part of all employment contracts, agreements and mandates entered into by FGC. It is applicable at all times.

Any proven breach of the *Code of Conduct* by an FGC collaborator may, after investigation and in accordance with the contract, result in disciplinary sanctions being applied; the sanctions will depend on the nature of the breach and will be applied in accordance with the scale provided for in FGC's Staff Regulations. If the breach of the *Code of Conduct* is of a criminal nature, FGC may also be required to report the situation to the competent prosecuting authorities.

In addition to this *Code of Conduct*, collaborators of FGC Secretariat may call on the services of a trusted person in complete confidentiality.

As an umbrella organisation, FGC has strict membership criteria that analyse the good governance of the organisation, the consideration of potential conflicts of interest and the existence of a *code of conduct*. If the latter is not in force, the Association will be subject to the standards set out in this Code of Conduct.

Scope of responsibilities for member organisations

MEMBER ORGANISATION (MO)	MEMBER ORGANISATION AS EMPLOYER	MEMBER ORGANISATION ACTOR/DONOR
Relevant entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed or voluntary collaborators • External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field partners
Means of Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to the collaborators • Guidelines/policy • Internal regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks analyses in the projects • Development of a Code of conduct • Prevention and discussions with the partners' communities • Establishment of a system for the management of reported cases of alleged breach of a code of conduct

FIELD PARTNER	
Relevant entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries

Member organisations are required to inform FGC only of cases that represent a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct* or their own codes of conduct¹, taking into account the protection of personal data.

If, in a particular case, another code of conduct also applies, for example that of a donor, this does not replace FGC *Code of Conduct* but supplements it. In this case, all the rules must be complied with.

4. STANDARDS TO BE OBSERVED²

Every collaborator of the Geneva Federation for Cooperation and its member organisations is required to adhere to the highest standards of conduct and integrity.

Mobbing, threats and psychological harassment – Conduct to adopt

All collaborators of FGC and its member organisations shall treat all persons fairly, with respect and dignity, without distinction based on race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, political orientation or any other distinguishing feature.

In an international context or when travelling abroad on behalf of FGC or a member organisation, every collaborator shall respect local laws, customs, cultures and traditions. He or she shall not engage in behaviour

¹ Any case of corruption or serious fraud involving FGC funds, any case of sexual exploitation or abuse involving beneficiaries of FGC-funded projects

² See the legal provisions and glossary for the precise definition of the terms used.

that is unacceptable in a particular cultural context and shall ensure that his or her conduct does not discredit the work of international cooperation organisations.

Alcohol consumption is tolerated in the course of professional activities. It must be moderate and must not alter the behaviour of collaborators in any way. When working abroad, drinking alcohol in public may be very poorly perceived or may result in prosecution.

Sexual harassment

All collaborators must behave in a manner that is free from any form of harassment that could cause physical or psychological suffering to their colleagues. Any type of close contact must be based on mutual agreement between the two people involved.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

No collaborator may engage in sexual relations with direct beneficiaries of aid or members of communities in which FGC or member organisation are involved, as these relationships are based on an inherently unequal power dynamic. Similarly, any sexual act involving a person under the age of 18 is strictly prohibited, regardless of the age of consent or legal age of sexual majority in the country concerned. Ignorance of the person's age cannot be invoked as a defence.

Collaborators are prohibited from exchanging money, employment, goods or services for sexual intercourse, including sexual favours, or for any form of humiliating, degrading or servile behaviour. This prohibition includes the procurement of services from sex workers.

Corruption, fraud

Every collaborator shall act with honesty, integrity and transparency. They shall not grant to a third party, directly or indirectly, or receive from a third party, any undue advantage of any kind or by any means whatsoever, with the aim of obtaining or maintaining favourable treatment. Such advantages or favourable treatments may include, but are not limited to, money, loans, gratuities, price reductions, valuable items or contracts.

The only exception permitted is the exchange of symbolic gifts of low value, in accordance with local customs of courtesy. Such gifts should always be declared to the employer in a transparent manner.

Conflicts of interest

All employees must declare any financial, personal, family or close personal interests in official business matters that could have an impact on the work of FGC or its member organisations. He or she shall therefore not participate in or seek to influence the awarding of benefits, contracts for goods or services, employment or promotion to any person with whom he or she has a financial, personal, family or close personal interest.

Health and safety

Each collaborator shall comply with all legal and organisational health and safety requirements in force at their workplace. He or she shall behave in such a way as to avoid any risk that could jeopardise his or her physical or psychological safety or that of others.

Use of resources and assets

Each collaborator of FGC or member organisation uses the resources and assets entrusted to them in a responsible manner.

Digital integrity

No collaborator of FGC nor a member organisation shall use FGC's or a member organisation's IT equipment, software, email, or social media platforms, to engage in activities that are illegal under Swiss law or that

encourage behaviour that would constitute a criminal offence. This includes using IT equipment to intimidate or harass any vulnerable group or individual, or to encourage extremism.

No collaborator shall use computer equipment to display, download, create, distribute or record in any format inappropriate or abusive material, including, but not limited to, pornography or depictions of abuse of children or vulnerable persons.

Respect for the environment

In order to promote sustainable development, every collaborator of FGC or member organisation undertakes to conduct their activities with the utmost respect for the environment and in accordance with the organisation's social responsibility. All employees of FGC or member organisations therefore undertake to minimise their carbon footprint. It is essential to ensure that natural resources are not overused, to reduce environmental impacts and to minimise the use of compounds and substances that are harmful to the environment. In addition, particular attention is paid to the selection of suppliers and partners in order to guarantee the ethical use of resources and respect for people.

Confidentiality

Every collaborator should exercise discretion when handling sensitive or confidential information.

They exercise due diligence in all official business matters. They should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information relating to colleagues, work-related matters or sensitive issues, unless they are legally required to do so and after obtaining the express authorisation of their employer.

5. METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The *Code of Conduct* must not be limited to a simple statement of intent. It is a living, dynamic document that must be widely distributed to all collaborators and member organisations of the Federation to ensure widespread application of the standards set out therein.

At the individual level

Collaborators of FGC or member organisations must read, understand and comply with the *Code of Conduct*. If they have any questions or concerns, collaborators should contact their line manager or human resources manager.

At the entity level

FGC /each member organisation is required to take action in response to suspected or proven mismanagement or abuse of power.

6. REPORTING

The establishment of safe and reliable reporting mechanisms is essential. These mechanisms are designed to give FGC or member organisation collaborators the means to report abuse of power and mismanagement and to guarantee that their reports are handled in accordance with established rights and procedures.

All FGC or member organisation collaborators must report any allegations, rumours or suspicions of abuse of power or mismanagement. They may do so verbally or in writing. Collaborators must not collect information or conduct investigations on their own initiative beforehand.

Failure to report abuse of power or mismanagement will result in legal and criminal liability for collaborators. The same applies to false accusations or misleading information. This may result in dismissal or termination of the employment contract.

Collaborators who report concerns are protected. If reprisals are taken as a result of a report, the person responsible for the reprisals will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Anyone who

believes they have been the victim of reprisals should inform FGC or the member organisation using the reporting options listed below.

Reporting system for the Geneva Federation for Cooperation

FGC collaborators may contact FGC's trusted representative.

If a member organisation identifies a breach of this *Code of Conduct*, FGC employees must immediately inform the Secretary General, who is required to act diligently or relay the report or complaint immediately.

Reporting system for member organisations

Member organisations and their local partners are required to set up appropriate and contextualised reporting systems to enable beneficiary communities to report any abuse of power or mismanagement and to ensure that such reports are handled in accordance with applicable law and their internal procedures. These reporting systems must also follow best practices in terms of confidentiality, non-retaliation and follow-up.

Member organisations may join existing reporting platforms that have a whistleblowing hotline, such as:

- Safecall (<https://www.safecall.co.uk/fr/>) or
- Whispli (<https://www.whispli.com/fr/>)

In addition, and taking into account the protection of personal data, the member organisation is required to inform FGC of any cases reported that concern allegations of corruption or fraud in relation to FGC funding, or allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse against beneficiaries of their FGC-funded projects. It must also demonstrate the measures taken to remedy the situation.

7. SANCTIONS

Any breach of the Code of Conduct by a collaborator of the Geneva Federation for Cooperation or a member organisation may, after investigation and in accordance with the contract, result in the application of graduated disciplinary measures determined according to the nature of the actions. The Federation's internal procedures and policies, contracts, where applicable, legal basis and decisions of the governing body are the sources used to determine these measures. When investigating a case, the rights of the alleged perpetrator or offender to be heard shall be ensured.

Disciplinary sanctions against a collaborator of the Geneva Federation for Cooperation

The extent of any disciplinary sanctions depends on the nature of the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct actions and follow the scale published in FGC's Staff Regulations. If the violation of the *Code of Conduct* is of a criminal nature, FGC may also be required to report the situation to the competent legal authorities.

Disciplinary sanctions against a member organisation

In the event of serious violations or breaches of the *Code of Conduct*, FGC Council may implement the measures set out in FGC Manual, which may include the exclusion of the member organisation (FGC Manual, Section 3.1.3).

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