
CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct defines basic ethical principles, attitudes and behavior which are binding for all employees of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation¹. It is based on the Mission Statement, the Human Resource policy and our Personnel Regulations, reflecting the foundational values and principles of our organization, which must be upheld irrespective of cultural contexts. The Code of Conduct expresses the commitment of each collaborator to adhere to and to promote high ethical standards in our work and as part of our working culture. It constitutes a compulsory and signed annex to the employment contract.

The individual and collective conduct of employees is of specific relevance to HELVETAS. First, the intercultural context in which collaborators of HELVETAS operate makes their conduct particularly exposed and sensitive. Unethical conduct of a collaborator can, beyond its direct consequences, have far reaching negative impacts on the effectiveness of our work and on our reputation. Second, as a development and humanitarian organization receiving donations from thousands of individual and funding from institutional donors, our organization and its employees are accountable to these donors and subject to a high degree of scrutiny by the public and the media.

This Code of Conduct is binding for all employees worldwide in any contractual relationship with HELVETAS (including interns & volunteers, Board of Directors and its Advisory Panel as well as consultants) at all times during their assignment with HELVETAS. It is expected that principles of this Code of Conduct are also respected outside the workplace and working time. Furthermore, all partners HELVETAS collaborates with must commit to follow the key principles of this Code of Conduct.

2. Loyalty, confidentiality and civic duties

My actions are consistent with the goals, the values and principles of HELVETAS as expressed in its mission statement and strategy; I have received a copy of both documents, and I am aware of their content.

Particularly, I commit to

- contributing positively to the implementation of HELVETAS' policies and strategies.
- reflecting regularly upon my actions and behavior, those of my colleagues and those of my environment.
- handling all information received through my employment with the necessary discretion; never using it to the detriment of HELVETAS including after termination of my contract.
- abiding by the national laws, as a citizen or resident of a specific country or as a short-term visitor.

¹ In the following HELVETAS

3. Commitment & respect towards organizational culture & integrity

I am aware of my contractual obligations with HELVETAS and strive to fulfil them to the best of my ability, knowledge and capacity.

In particular, I commit to

- contributing actively with my work and through my behavior to the strengthening and to the public trust of our organization.
- contributing to our objectives not only as an individual professional, but as a member of the team(s) to which I belong.
- using my competences and capacities to support colleagues, partners and primary stakeholders.
- making use of the means and assets of HELVETAS and its partners effectively and efficiently, according to legal stipulations, internal regulations, contractual agreements and in conformity with project goals.
- treating the material entrusted to me with diligence and due care, using it and the official logo only for professional purposes.
- actively supporting knowledge sharing within our organization and with our partners and primary stakeholders.

4. Culturally sensitive behavior

I am aware that even as a private person I am subject to public interest and that I have to consider this in my behavior and in my statements.

In particular, I commit to

- respecting local norms and conventions in contacts with authorities, partners and local people as long as they don't contravene HELVETAS policy.
- taking into account in my appearance, my manner of dress, my behavior and my style of communication the customs and culture of the country and the function that I perform.
- avoiding indecent or offensive behavior, insulting or accusing statements, or spreading rumors.
- avoiding giving information to the media, policy makers and donors or the public, without an explicit assignment to do so.

5. Highest standards in inter-personal relations & professional conduct

My relations with all persons irrespective of their sex, age, origin, cultural background, religion, social position, physical ability or sexual orientation are characterized by respect, fairness and equity. I am aware that as an employee of HELVETAS I have a privileged and often powerful status vis-à-vis partners and primary stakeholder.

In particular, I commit to

- behave and represent the organization at all times in such a way that the reputation of HELVETAS is not damaged.
- never request any service or favor from primary stakeholders, partners or other persons of concern in return for support or protection.
- never engage in any exploitative relationships – sexual, emotional, financial or employment-related – with primary stakeholders, partners or other persons of concern; using my competences in the interest of the people for and with whom we work.
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- rejecting any form of disrespectful social interaction and abstaining from anything that could be interpreted as degrading or putting others down.
- ensuring that all interactions are free from coercion, exploitation, abuse of power, and harassment.

- protect the rights and integrity of children and youth and refrain from all unacceptable behavior towards them.
- refraining from actions which may place me and/or others in a dangerous situation, as well as from those which may endanger our activities as a whole.
- respecting the physical and mental health of my colleagues.
- respecting the private sphere of my colleagues.
- providing explicit reference to the sources of my information/experiences, in any public communication.
- if in a decision-making position, applying decisions in a responsible, transparent, and unprejudiced manner that is not self-seeking, but in keeping with the mission of HELVETAS.

6. Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), Mobbing and Abuse of Authority

HELVETAS upholds a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), mobbing and abuse of authority and other forms of misconduct.

In particular, I commit to

- refraining from all forms of sexual exploitation or other type of SEAH, and mobbing of colleagues, partners, and primary stakeholders or other persons of concern.
- striving to counter such behavior in a decisive manner, in particular in situations involving children, young, elderly people or people living with limited mobility or disability.
- refraining from degrading or exploitative behavior such as exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex or sexual favors, or other forms of humiliation.
- countering observed and confirmed mobbing, sexual or sexist harassment of colleagues, partners, primary stakeholders by other employees, taking appropriate action according to our procedures, and/or informing my supervisors immediately on becoming aware of it.
- refraining from all forms of improper use of a position of influence and power or authority.
- reporting any incidents I experience or witness to the designated person within the organization if I feel uncomfortable disclosing them to my supervisor.

7. Conflicts of interest

I am aware that professional interests can conflict with personal interests.

In particular, I commit to

- striving to make my own interests transparent and to avoid any behavior which could be perceived as biased the benefit of my own interests.
- not using my position to obtain personal benefit or to provide advantage to third parties.
- in the case of professional interests conflicting, or being potentially perceived to conflict, with personal interests, to step back and to pass the decision to the next higher level in the organization: this applies in particular to relationships with relatives and friends and refers to matters such as recruitment, consultancy and procurement of contracts, purchase and lease agreements (also for personal purposes), or others.
- as a full-time employee, not engaging in paid professional activity outside my contract with HELVETAS, unless it has been specifically permitted.

8. Fraud and Corruption

I am honest in all my professional activities. I avoid and counter any kind of corruption or fraud. I abstain from abusing for personal gains or for third parties financial, material and intellectual assets to which I have access as an employee of HELVETAS.

In particular, I commit to

- not compromising my integrity, freedom of action and my impartial judgement through accepting or providing gifts or other advantages (like money, loans, invitations, rewards, reduced prices or fares etc.) from or to collaborators, officials, partner organizations, primary stakeholders.
- bringing to the attention of my supervisor if I am approached with demands or promises by collaborators, partners organization, consultants or officials.
- informing my supervisor in case of acceptance of a present and using it for business or humanitarian purposes or sharing it with other employees.
- If demands, gifts or advantages have to be declined, informing the person making the advances of the standards and practices applied in HELVETAS.

9. Final remarks

The breach of this Code of Conduct, in its letter or its spirit, leads to disciplinary actions as specified in the “Guidelines on Reporting of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), Mobbing, Child Abuse & Abuse of Authority” and the “Guidelines on Dealing with Corruption, Fraud and Conflict of Interest”, including warnings, dismissal with contractual notice and in severe cases dismissal without notice and withholding of terminal benefits. Additionally, HELVETAS may take further legal action according to the respective national law.

HELVETAS endeavors to ensure that employees can report suspicions without fear of reprisal and that individuals who express a suspicion are adequately protected (cf. Whistleblower Policy).

The responsibility to follow this Code of Conduct rests with each employee. All supervisors are responsible for promoting and enforcing it. The Code of Conduct is issued in German, French, English and Spanish. It is also made available in our partner country programs, in the national language. In case of any doubts, the English version prevails.

I hereby declare to acknowledge and abide to the:

- HELVETAS Regulations on Child Protection
- HELVETAS Regulations on Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), Mobbing and Abuse of Authority
- HELVETAS Regulations on Corruption, Fraud and Conflicts of Interest.
- HELVETAS Whistleblower Policy

Irrespective of employee signature, the Code of Conduct is binding.

Read and agreed:

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Name of the Employee

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Place and date

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Signature

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Owner (Function & Name): | People and Culture |
| Version (First/Latest): | 17.10.2018/25.06.2025 |