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# CODE OF CONDUCT

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## 1. Introduction

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This Code of Conduct defines basic ethical principles, attitudes and behaviour which are binding for all collaborators of HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation. It is based on the Mission Statement, the Human Resource policy and our Personnel regulations. It thereby reflects founding values and principles of our organisation, to be applied 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, together with the job description, a compulsory annex to the employment contract.

The individual and collective conduct of the employees is of specific relevance to HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation. First, the intercultural context in which collaborators of HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation 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 organisation receiving donations from thousands of individual and institutional donors, our organisation and its employees are accountable to these donors and subject to a high degree of scrutiny of the public and the media. For these reasons, it is expected that principles of this Code of Conduct are also respected outside the workplace and working time.

This Code of Conduct is binding for all employees of HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation as well as the members of its Board of Directors and its Advisory Council. Its spirit should also be respected and followed by consultants and contractual partners.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For collaborative partners, key principles will be agreed during the partnership negotiation.

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## 2. Loyalty, confidentiality and civic duties

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My actions are consistent with the goals, the values and principles of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation 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 the policies and strategies of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation;
- reflecting regularly upon my actions and behaviour, 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 Swiss Intercooperation 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.

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## 3. Commitment and respect towards organizational culture and integrity

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I am aware of my contractual obligations with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and strive to fulfil them to the best of my knowledge and capacities.

In particular I commit to

- contributing actively with my work and through my behaviour to the strengthening and to the public trust of our organisation;
- contributing to our objectives not only as an individual professional, but as a member of the I team(s) to which I belong;
- using my competences and capacities to support my colleagues;
- making use of the means and assets of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation 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 care, using it and the official logo only for professional purposes;
- actively supporting knowledge sharing within our organisation and with our partners.

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## 4. Culturally sensitive behaviour

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

In particular, I commit to

- respecting local norms and conventions in contacts with authorities, partners and local people;

- taking into account in my appearance, my manner of dress, my behaviour and my style of communication the customs and culture of the country and the function that I perform;
- avoiding indecent or offensive behaviour, insulting or accusing statements, or spreading rumours;
- avoiding giving information to the media, policy makers and donors or the public, without an explicit assignment to do so.

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## 5. Highest standards in inter-personal relations and professional conduct

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

In particular, I commit to

- using my competences in the interest of the people for and with whom we work;
- rejecting any form of disrespectful social interaction and abstaining from anything that could be interpreted as degrading or putting others down;
- refraining from abusing my hierarchical, material, or social position in any way;
- shying away 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 HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation

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## 6. Mobbing and Sexual Harassment

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I abstain from mobbing<sup>2</sup>, sexual or sexist harassment<sup>3</sup> of colleagues, partners or beneficiaries.

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<sup>2</sup> **Mobbing** means to pick on, pester or exclude a person or a group systematically at work in verbal or non-verbal attacks which affect the physical or mental health as well as the self-esteem of the person(s) concerned

<sup>3</sup> **Sexual or sexist harassment** is an action with sexual reference or undertones unwelcome to the person addressed. Sexual or sexist harassment can be expressed in the following ways: suggestive remarks; remarks about physical advantages or weaknesses or about sexual orientation; sexist talk and jokes including e-mails and text messages; obtrusive and scrutinising looks; showing pornographic material; ambiguous invitations; unwanted physical contacts or obstructions; making bodily advances; making advances together with promises or threats of advantages or disadvantages at work.

In particular, I commit to

- refraining from any form of sexual or other type of exploitation, and striving to counter such behaviour in a decisive manner, in particular in situations involving children, young or handicapped people;
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- countering observed and confirmed mobbing, sexual or sexist harassment of colleagues by other employees, taking appropriate action and/or informing my supervisors immediately on becoming aware of it;
- informing a person designated by the organisation for this purpose should I feel uncomfortable to disclose suffered or observed infringements to my supervisor.;

The implementation of this clause is further developed in the internal guidelines *Mobbing and Sexual Harassment*

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## 7. Conflicts of interest

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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 behaviour which could be or could be perceived as biased towards 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 organisation: this applies in particular to relationships with relatives and friends and refers to matters such as recruitment, consultancy and procurement 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 HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation, unless it has been specifically permitted.

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## 8. Honesty, gifts and favours

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

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 organisations, beneficiaries ,
- 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 Swiss Intercooperation;

Further explanations and details can be found in the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation *Anti-Corruption Guidelines*

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## 9. Final remarks

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The breach of this Code of Conduct, in its letter or its spirit, leads to disciplinary actions as specified in the personal regulations, including warnings, dismissal with contractual notice and in severe cases dismissal without notice and withholding of terminal benefits. Additionally, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation may take further legal action according to the respective national law.

The responsibility to follow this Code of Conduct rests with each employee. All supervisors are responsible for promoting and enforcing it.

This Code of Conduct can be complemented and further detailed by a country specific Code of Conduct. In case of contradictions, this organisational Code of Conduct prevails.

The Code of Conduct is issued in German, French, English and Spanish. In case of doubts, the German version prevails.

Read and agreed:

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Employee

(Name.....)

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Place and date