

Wetlands International Code of Conduct

I. INTRODUCTION

Wetlands International (WI) is a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) dedicated to sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity for future generations. We develop and manage multi-sectoral, global, regional and national programmes that are implemented through partnerships of locally based NGOs, governments, industry groups and scientific institutions. In this way, we are able to develop lasting local partnerships and act as catalyst for conservation and natural resource management.

To realise its mission, WI stimulates and supports projects aimed at improving the livelihoods of poor populations which depend upon wetlands, without regard to race, religion or political creed. Motivating and involving the local population is essential to our approach.

In performing its tasks, it is vital to WI that the organisation, and everyone that works for or on behalf of the organisation, adheres to the principles that constitute WI's foundation. These principles are described below. All employees have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to WI as an organisation and to all persons that work in, for, or on behalf of WI.

WI furthermore wishes to provide a positive, learning and stimulating environment for staff members, volunteers and partners, where equality and mutual respect are a matter of course and where everyone has a participative say in and is responsible for his or her own work and function.

In performing its work, WI deals with individual persons, groups and a wide range of agencies. On account of the nature and objective of WI as a non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation engaging in development cooperation, WI acknowledges responsibilities towards its funders, beneficiary target groups, staff and volunteers, partners and fellow institutions, and societies in which it works.

II. CORE VALUES and GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In carrying out our work through all our offices and with partners, we maintain the following core values:

- our work is globally relevant
- our work is based on sound science and incorporates traditional knowledge
- we work through partnerships and with a wide range of sectors
- we respect traditional values
- we work in a transparent and accountable way

To ensure the implementation of these core values WI holds that its activities must be governed by a number of guiding principles, which refer to respect, openness, reliability, quality and integrity:

- a) *Respect* means honouring human dignity and privacy, and the own identity of persons and groups; in addition, respect refers to the freedom of choice and voluntariness of persons and groups.
- b) *Openness* means that all stakeholders are provided with all information regarding matters of content and finance that is relevant to their interests.

- c) *Reliability* means that the stakeholders can count on the veracity of all information provided, that the institution operates professionally and efficiently towards achieving its set objective, and that the institution provides accurate and complete accountability.
- d) *Quality* refers to the permanent pursuit of skilful, resolute and cost-conscious operation.
- e) *Integrity* refers to the proper and prudent fulfilment of a position in observance of responsibilities and the applicable rules. If rules are absent or unclear, the person shall judge and act in a morally responsible manner, on the basis of generally accepted social and ethical norms. Integrity refers to taking responsibility for one's own actions, to which persons can appeal reciprocally.

III. ELABORATION OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles listed above govern what persons associated with WI will do and will not do. In practice, these principles concretely impact WI's relations with funders, with partner organisations and target groups, and WI's interaction with volunteers, fellow institutions and the societies in which WI operates.

Adhering to the Code of Conduct means that all persons involved can be confident that:

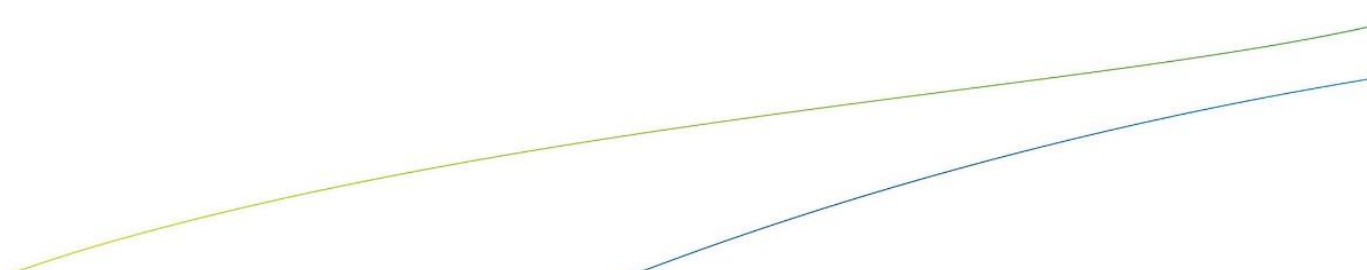
- a)
 - 1 they will be treated with respect and will equally be expected to treat others with respect;
 - 2 (following there from) they will not be subjected to undesirable conduct and will equally be expected to refrain from undesirable conduct, being:
 - *Sexual intimidation*: unsolicited attention in the form of requests for sexual favours or other verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour (including the unsolicited sending or overt viewing of pornographic images or texts, e.g. via internet).
 - *Aggression and violence*: subjecting others to harassment, psychological or physical bullying, intimidation or assault.
 - *Discrimination*: subjecting persons to statements, actions or decisions, in any shape or form, that are offensive to those persons on account of their race, religion, gender, personal persuasion and/or sexual orientation, or applying any distinctions on the grounds of these factors (race, religion, and so on).
- b) Funders can be confident that:
 - 1 all activities are performed with the aim of achieving maximum quality;
 - 2 complete, honest and comprehensible accountability is provided concerning the allocation of resources and the activities performed towards achieving the objective.
- c) Beneficiary target groups can be confident that:
 - 1 individual persons and the local culture and society are treated with respect;
 - 2 all activities towards realising the objective are performed with the aim of achieving optimal quality;
 - 3 no distinction is made with regard to race, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation in the selection of beneficiaries;
 - 4 WI's work will not promote any party-political or religious aims;
 - 5 their active participation in identifying needs and priorities and in implementation of WI's is sought;
 - 6 WI draws upon and aims to strengthen locally available capacities and resources.
- d) Staff members and volunteers can be confident that:
 - 1 generally accepted rules and standards of good employer ship are observed, insofar as these apply to their activities;
 - 2 proper conditions are created for their efforts;
 - 3 they are suitably appreciated for their efforts;
 - 4 WI acts as an equal opportunities employer.

- e) Partner organisations and fellow institutions can be confident that:
- 1 mutual respect is shown;
 - 2 there is a willingness to confer with regard to common interests;
 - 3 efforts are made to coordinate and to collaborate in campaigning and in project and partner support provided as well as monitoring & evaluation of partners;
- f) Every society where WI operates can be confident that:
- 1 WI seeks to employ the most environment friendly ways of working;
 - 2 at all times, the willingness exists and is expressed to confer and converse with relevant community and other groups about WI's functioning.

IV. CONCLUDING PROVISIONS¹

- a) WI shares in the responsibility for the social and political acceptance and perception of the development sector and the NGO sector as a whole.
- b) WI is committed to collaboration, both within the sector and with other parties involved.
- c) In the event of undesirable conduct or other practices that violate this Code of Conduct, please report this to WI's CEO and/or Chair person of the Supervisory Council.
- d) If necessary and applicable use can be made of WI's Complaints Procedure, available from its website www.wetlands.org.

¹ We gratefully acknowledge the kind provision of their Code of Conduct by our alliance partner Simavi, which was used in drafting the current document.



Colophon

Wetlands International
P.O. Box 471
6700 AL Wageningen
The Netherlands

Telephone number: +31 (0) 318 660 910
Telefax: +31 (0) 318 660 950
Email: post@wetlands.org
Website: www.wetlands.org

Document: Wetlands International Code of Conduct
Author: Frank van der Valk, Chief Operations Officer
Version: final version
Created: October 2009
Modified: 31 March 2015 (layout)
Available at: www.wetlands.org
Original language: English
Adopted by: Management Board/Supervisory Council in October 2009

