



Hivos Integrity Policy January 2016

Introduction

Hivos aims for the highest possible integrity in its contact with partners, suppliers, clients, among Hivos staff and in relation to business property. The focal points of staff policy, i.e. justice, legal security, openness and clarity, individual responsibility and room for initiative, diversity and creativity, also serve as a point of departure for the Integrity Policy.

Integrity cannot be guaranteed just by drawing up a number of rules of conduct. Attitude and “wanting to do things properly” are also important aspects of integrity. We can think of integrity as having a hard side and a soft side. The hard side consists of regulations, both internal and external, and the soft side is the organisational culture at Hivos. Integrity in an organisation means being open and respectful towards one another, avoiding deception and that management sets good examples through exemplary conduct.

Apart from the contents of the Integrity Policy, Hivos employees are obliged to comply with legal requirements and abide by common social norms and values.

This integrity policy consists of a code of conduct, an internal complaints procedure and a whistle-blowers procedure (see below).

Key values

Hivos is guided by humanist values. Together with civil society organisations in developing countries, Hivos contributes to a free, fair and sustainable world. Our vision and mission is a world in which all people are equal and in which there are no boundaries to the development possibilities for people. Hivos trusts in the creativity and capacity of people.

Key humanist values for Hivos are human dignity and self-determination; rejection of dogmatism and authoritarian rule; pluralism and democracy; mutual solidarity; responsible citizenship; respect for people’s cultural and social identity.

These values inform the choices we make regarding the way and with whom we conduct our affairs and the way Hivos staff behaves towards each other and the outside world.

Evaluation and revision

This policy will be periodically reviewed and modified to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs and realities of the organisation. This review process is led by the Controller at Head Office in The Hague. His/her findings are published in the Annual Report, and the members of the Works Council and the Supervisory Council are also notified of them.

Any changes in the policy will be legally binding for all employees at the moment that the updated document has been communicated.

New employees are specifically informed about the Integrity Policy during their employment conditions interview. By signing the Hivos employment contract, they also sign for receipt of the printed copy of the existing policy.

The Integrity Policy will also be addressed during the Performance Management Cycle.

1. CODE OF CONDUCT

In general

Each Hivos office has to define specific aspects if the local context requires such adjustment of this code.

Article 1.1 Recruitment & Selection

During recruitment and selection, a candidate's integrity and attitude to integrity risks in the position are important considerations.

Article 1.2 Discharge of Duties

Every employee shall discharge the duties entrusted to him/her with the highest degree of professionalism, ownership, integrity and loyalty to Hivos. Every employee shall comply with all internal and external regulations and lawful instructions regarding the work of Hivos given to him/her by the Board of Directors, the Regional Director or his/her Manager as the case may be. Every employee shall devote working hours to the work of Hivos, and may not undertake private work during working hours, unless duly authorized.

Article 1.3 Other positions

Employees are obliged to communicate the intention to carry out remunerated (or not-remunerated, but possibly conflicting) work elsewhere to the employer in writing. If this work presents a problem for the proper performance of the employee's position the employer must, within a month of said communication and after hearing the employee, notify the employee in writing, stating reasons, why the performance of said other work is not permitted.

New employees who were already performing other work and do not terminate this work after employment with Hivos must communicate this to the HR department before signing the employment contract.

Article 1.4 Conflict of Interest

No employee shall, while in the employment of Hivos, engage in any business or activity that would undermine his/her performance or conflict with the interests of the organization. Hivos shall generally not enter into agreements with or procure goods or services from employees, directors or their relatives (within the local context), except for exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated to be in the best interest of Hivos and no viable alternatives are possible.

No employee or Director may be involved in any decision-making process, or seek in any way to influence it, where he/she may be in a position to gain privately from the decision or his/her relatives are involved.

All employees shall disclose forthwith any or potential conflict of interest and seek approval before proceeding and act with respect to the [Hivos Conflict of interest procedure](#), as published on Scienta.

Article 1.5 Professionalism

Work performed in the countries in which we operate must be carried out with respect for the local culture, structures, laws and customs, as long as these are not in contradiction with international human rights norms, humanitarian law or Hivos values.

Dealings with partners must be professional and strictly business-related.

All employees shall at all times act in a manner that shall enhance the reputation and wellbeing of Hivos. No employee shall act in a manner that could bring the reputation of Hivos into disrepute or otherwise jeopardize its standing.

Article 1.6 Accepting gifts and benefits

Employees are not permitted to accept or demand direct or indirect gifts, remunerations, attendance fees or commissions, or to accept inheritances or testamentary gifts from persons with whom the employee only comes into contact by virtue of the employee's position.

This applies to gifts of a value of EUR 50.00 or more, or any other amount formally registered in accordance with the local context.

Any gifts made are to be accepted on behalf of the employer and handed in. This usually concerns gifts that may obligate (or appear to obligate) the recipient.

Article 1.7 Bribes and other illegal charges

As a basic principle, Hivos does not condone the payment of bribes. These include, but are not limited to, illegal charges imposed for the release of goods from customs, "taxes" levied by local authorities in addition or beyond to the legal maximum, or illegal charges imposed by local authorities in exchange for mission registration, programme approval, visa or work permits. No employee will accept a bribe of any kind.

Article 1.8 Corruption and fraud

Hivos has zero tolerance for any form of corruption, theft, fraud and dishonesty.

No employee may falsify or otherwise provide false information. An employee who engages in such illegal actions shall be subject to summary dismissal. An employee who has caused loss to Hivos through such illegal actions may additionally be held liable for reimbursing the cost of the loss or damage caused.

Hivos commits to protect individuals who wish to report or protest the occurrence of irregularities and malpractices that undermine the corporate objectives. These individuals can make use of the whistle-blowers procedure that is part of this policy.

Article 1.9 Foreign trips

Invitations by third parties to go on a foreign trip must be reported to the first Manager in line. The Manager determines whether the trip is functional; it can only be accepted if this is the case. Travel and accommodation expenses are claimed through the normal expense statements.

Article 1.10 Use of company facilities

Hivos properties, equipments and other assets may only be used for the work of the organization, unless authorized otherwise in writing by the Board or Executive Director as the case may be. The official stamps of Hivos may only be used by the Executive Director or officers designated by him/her to do so.

Taking home consumption articles such as office supplies or snacks without explicit approval from a Director or Manager is not permitted and is considered theft.

All employees shall safeguard all properties and materials entrusted to them, and exercise the utmost care in their use.

Article 1.11 Alcohol and drugs

The possession, use or being under influence of drugs or any other means that affect behaviour during business is prohibited.

The possession or use of alcohol during business is prohibited unless authorized explicitly by the Director or Manager, for example in the case of a reception, lunch or dinner. For a meeting, organised by Hivos, where alcohol is served, the responsibility for the alcohol use lies with the user.

The use of alcohol during business trips should be minimised and the employee must in that case be aware of his/her representative position.

Article 1.12 Mutual respect, non-discrimination and child protection

Hivos employees are judged on their performance and proven competencies. Discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion or personal beliefs, political opinion, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or otherwise is prohibited.

Every employee shall conduct him/herself with courtesy, respect and integrity towards all persons in the course of doing his/her work. No employee may discriminate against any other person.

No employee may abuse or deliberately intimidate any other person. No employee may make sexual advances where he/she knows or ought to know that the solicitation is unwelcome or in any other way sexually harass another person.

Aggression and violence are not tolerated.

Hivos staff must avoid actions or behavior with children that may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior. See the CSR policy for definitions and details.

Article 1.13 Internet and e-mail use

The internet system and the e-mail system are available to employees for business use. This means that it should be used for work-related duties. Limited (occasional and brief) personal use is permitted, provided this does not disrupt normal daily activities and/or the technical infrastructure.

The employee is not permitted to gain unauthorised access to non-public sources on the internet and to visit internet sites that contain pornographic, racist, discriminating, insulting or offensive material. Neither is it permitted to download and install such content.

The employee is not permitted to use the e-mail system for spamming, sending messages of a pornographic, (sexually) harassing, racist, discriminating, insulting or offensive nature or messages that (may) incite hate and/or violence.

Content monitoring will only take place in the event of compelling reasons. If an employee is suspected of violating the rules, monitoring may only be performed by the Executive Director for a fixed (short) period and is limited to internet and e-mail traffic data.

When data traffic monitoring has to be performed by the IT staff at Hivos, it has to be commissioned by the Executive Director. Such decision clearly indicates when this temporary authorisation ends. An intention to monitor the content of e-mail is communicated to the employee concerned in advance, unless this is not reasonably possible.

If an employee is found to have made unauthorised use of internet or e-mail he/she will immediately be called to account by the superior and measures will be taken, depending on the nature of the abuse.

Article 1.14 Information

Hivos expects from all employees that they manage and report their business data in a reliable, honest and careful way.

The employee has a duty of confidentiality regarding information that comes to his/her knowledge pursuant to his/her position and profession, insofar as such obligation arises from the nature of the matter in hand or has been expressly imposed on the employee.

The employee shall respect the Hivos Confidentiality Procedure.

Questions from the media on these topics are dealt with in accordance with Hivos' communication policy.

Every employee of Hivos will sign a declaration he/she will act on line with the Hivos Confidentiality Procedure and any breach of confidentiality will lead to disciplinary action.

Article 1.15 Privacy

Hivos manages all privacy sensitive information from employees, partners and stakeholders in a reliable, honest and careful way. Employees must act in correspondence with internal and legal privacy regulations.

Information about employees is only made available to them for whom this is relevant in the context of their position.

2. INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE REGARDING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

From the employer's standpoint, inappropriate behaviour between colleagues (including superiors) cannot be accepted in the organisation. A work climate characterised by openness, commitment and trust are important elements for employees as well as the organisation as a whole. There is no place for systematic bullying, sexual harassment, aggression and discrimination in such a climate.

Before using this complaints procedure, the employee can first discuss and try to solve his/her complaint with his/her manager or the HR department.

The Executive Director for HO and the Regional Directors for the regional offices appoint in consultation with the Works Council a confidential counsellor who has had special training to deal with the problems of inappropriate behaviour.

The Executive Director and the Regional Directors must ensure that the complainant, the accused and those heard by the Complaints Committee (as mentioned under 2) to give a witness statement are not disadvantaged. Neither should the confidential counsellor and the members of the Complaints Committee be disadvantaged as a result of performing their duties. In order to protect privacy, all persons involved in the complaint procedure have a duty of confidentiality.

All files will be administered by the confidential counsellor who is responsible for keeping the complaints files with due care. All files will be kept for 5 years.

Procedure

1. The complainant lodges the complaint to the confidential counsellor.

If desired by the complainant the confidential counsellor acts as a point of contact and advises and supports the complainant. He also investigates with the complainant if the problems can be solved in a discussion between the complainant and the accused, through mediation and/or through referral to experts.

When both complainant and the accused agree, mediation by a mediator is possible.

With the complainant's consent, the confidential counsellor notifies the Executive Director of the complaint or the request for mediation.

2. In some cases mediation is not possible. In that case end in case the preceding step does not lead to a solution, the Board of Directors establishes an ad hoc Complaints Committee in consultation with the Works Council. The Complaints Committee consists of 2 or 4 (according to FNV rules) expert members, including the chairman and in any event one member with legal expertise. The Executive Director and the Staff Council each nominate one member. A third member, who is also the chairman, is nominated jointly. The employer appoints the nominated members, one of them being a female and none of whom are Hivos employees.

If one of the committee members is in any way involved in the complaint this committee member is excluded from participating in the procedure. In case of doubt, the other committee members will decide.

The (substitute) members are appointed for a term of three years. The maximum membership term is six years. If the composition changes before the end of the term, the first term of appointment of the entire committee is nonetheless maintained. One of the committee members must have some judicial knowledge. The commission consists of at least one woman.

When necessary a regional office can establish its own Complaints Committee.

Committee duties may be as follows:

- assess if, and if so to what extent, a complaint is admissible;
- institute an inquiry into the circumstances of the complaint and advise on any measures to be taken;
- report to the Executive Director on the findings of the inquiry;
- advise, on request or at its own initiative, on the problem areas concerning inappropriate behaviour.

The Complaints Committee is provided with the resources and facilities, which the Committee reasonably requires for its duties, including administrative support. The Complaints Committee may, if desired, call in the assistance of an external expert. Any related costs are borne by Hivos.

3. The complainant lodges the complaint in writing to the Complaints Committee. The complaint must specify:
 - a description of the incident, what happened, when or in which period;
 - the name of the accused;
 - any steps the complainant has already taken; and
 - any written documents that have been previously submitted.

The Complaints Committee advises the Executive Director or Regional Director that a complaint has been lodged and on the progress of the complaint handling. In situations where the complaint involves a member of the Board of Directors, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board is advised of the complaint and on the progress of the complaint handling. In that case, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board substitutes the Executive Director in the procedure.

If the complaint involves an act or offence that is so serious that urgent action is required, the Executive Director or Regional Director must immediately take a provisional or other measure.

4. Within two weeks, the Complaints Committee communicates his decision in writing to the complainant as to whether the complaint is admissible or not.
5. If the complaint is found to be admissible the Complaints Committee gives the accused the opportunity to inspect the complaint and, if desired, within one week, first submit a written response.
6. An instituted inquiry is completed within six weeks after the complaint has been declared admissible, unless the Complaints Committee considers this to be in conflict with the due care required for the inquiry. If this is the case, the complainant and the accused are notified of this in writing, stating reasons. This letter also states when the inquiry will be completed
7. The week after the written response from the accused as mentioned in step 4 is received by the Complaints Committee the complainant and the accused are sent a written invitation to a hearing. The complainant and the accused are heard separately.

The Complaints Committee is authorised, either at the request of the complainant and the accused or at its own initiative, to hear third parties. If the Complaints Committee does hear third parties, complainant and accused are given the opportunity to respond to this.

All Hivos employees have a duty to appear if called to a hearing by the Complaints Committee.

All hearings are private and confidential.

8. The complainant can request the support of the confidential counsellor or a counsellor or representative of his/her choice. The accused can request the support of a counsellor or representative of his/her choice.
9. A report is made of every hearing. Within a week of receiving this report the person involved (complainant and accused) are asked to sign the report for approval, having added notes where relevant. If a person involved refuses to do this the reason must be stated under the report.
10. Within six weeks after the complaint has been declared admissible the Complaints Committee will come to a decision on the complaint. A simple majority of votes suffices. The Committee may decide to state the minority opinion in its decision.

The Complaints Committee will notify the Executive Director or Regional Director, the complainant and the accused of its verdict, accompanied by a compelling recommendation. The confidential counsellor or the representative will receive a copy of the verdict.

11. Based on and two weeks after the Complaints Committee's verdict and compelling recommendation, the Executive Director or Regional Director decides on the measures/decisions to be taken and notifies the complainant and the accused of the decision that has been taken and the grounds for that decision. This also includes the Complaints Committee's recommendation and whether it has been followed or, if not, why it has been deviated from. However, the employer will only depart from the recommendation if he has compelling reasons to do so and he will report this to the Committee. The decision is communicated in writing.
12. In consultation with the confidential counsellor, the Complaints Committee examines if and how aftercare should be provided for the complainant and, if relevant, the accused. The confidential counsellor can only give after care to the person he guided throughout the process. The other person in that case has to find someone else.

WHISTLE-BLOWERS PROCEDURE

Hivos seeks to attain the highest possible levels of financial management and accountability and therefore adopts a stance of zero tolerance to any form of corruption or fraud. Hivos therefore takes various proactive measures to prevent and deter any acts of corruption or fraud that may occur within its staff, implementing partners, beneficiaries and service providers.

All staff are required to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. They are expected to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

This whistle-blowers procedure is an important element in detecting corrupt and illegal practices and therefore considered a necessary ingredient in achieving good corporate governance.

This whistle-blowers procedure offers Hivos employees, staff of implementing partners, beneficiaries and service providers the possibility to report more formally a suspected violation of internal or external rules and regulations (legislation).

The objectives of the whistle-blowers procedure are:

- to facilitate the submission of concerns regarding questionable contracting, purchasing, accounting or finance matters by employees and management of Hivos, its partner organisations and its suppliers, on a confidential and anonymous basis;
- to ensure that all reports are seriously investigated, with appropriate follow-up.
- the receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints and reports received by Hivos regarding such matters;
- the protection from retaliatory actions of any employees or stakeholders reporting concerns.

For the formal report of suspected irregularities Hivos makes use of a unique e-mail address: whistle-blower@hivos.org.

In order to remain anonymous, informants are when necessary encouraged to communicate using anonymous internet based e-mail addresses that are not ordinarily capable of being traced or linked to the informant.

The inbox of the e-mail address whistle-blower@hivos.org is only accessible by the Controller of Hivos Head Office. Reports of concerns, and investigations pertaining thereto, shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. All files will be administered by the Controller of Hivos Head Office and be kept for 5 years. Disclosure of reports of concerns to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense. An individual who has reported a suspected abuse will not be disadvantaged in any way as a consequence of doing so, insofar as he/she acted in good faith and has nothing to gain personally from the abuse or from reporting it.

The Controller reports to the Board of Directors and advises on further action. If one of the Directors is implicated, the Controller reports to the Supervisory Council.

All reports received regarding anomalies occurring at partner organisations funded by Hivos or service providers will be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Hivos Sanctions procedure if applicable.

Within two weeks after receipt of the report, a decision will have been taken on follow-up.

An individual who has reported a suspected abuse will not be disadvantaged in any way as a consequence of doing so, insofar as he/she acted in good faith and has nothing to gain personally from the abuse or from reporting it.