



HIVOS CODE OF CONDUCT
MAY 2026

Version	Date	Owner	Changes
0.1	November 2018	Natascha Smit	Original document
0.2	20 May 2026	Emmanuel Ndebele	New format

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 signatory shall discharge the duties entrusted to him/her with the highest degree of professionalism, ownership, integrity and loyalty to Hivos. Every signatory shall comply with all internal and external regulations and lawful instructions regarding the work of Hivos given to him/her by the Hivos CEO, CLT Function Head or his/her Manager. Every signatory 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

Signatories 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 signatory's position the employer must, within a month of said communication and after hearing the signatory, notify the signatory in writing, stating reasons, why the performance of said other work is not permitted. New signatories who were already performing other work and do not terminate this work after employment with Hivos must communicate this to the respective People and Culture contact before signing the employment contract.

Article 1.4 Conflict of Interest

No signatory 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 signatories, 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 signatory 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 signatories 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.

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 signatories shall always act in a manner that shall enhance the reputation and wellbeing of Hivos. No signatory 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

Signatories 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 signatory only comes into contact by virtue of the signatory'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. In general, gifts 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, program approval, visa or work permits. No signatory will accept a bribe of any kind. Hivos Program and Finance staff are strictly prohibited from soliciting or accepting bribes, or any financial or non-financial favors, from partner or sub-grantee organisations, whether prior to the issuance of a grant or at any point during the lifecycle of a Hivos-funded partnership.

Article 1.8 Corruption and fraud

Hivos has zero tolerance for any form of corruption, theft, fraud and dishonesty. No signatory may falsify or otherwise provide false information. A signatory who engages in such illegal actions shall be subject to summary dismissal. A signatory 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 which undermine Hivos corporate objectives. These individuals can make use of the Hivos whistle-blowers procedure.

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 organisation facilities

Hivos properties, equipment and other assets may only be used for the work of the organization, unless authorized otherwise in writing by the CEO, CLT function leads or their representatives. The official stamps of Hivos may only be used by the CEO, CLT function leads 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 signatories 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 behavior 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 organized by Hivos where alcohol is served, the responsibility for alcohol consumption use lies with the user.

The use of alcohol during business trips should be minimized and the signatory must in such cases be aware of his/her representative position.

Article 1.12 Mutual respect, non-discrimination and child protection

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

No signatory may abuse or deliberately intimidate any other person. No signatory 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 which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior. See the Safeguarding policy for definitions and details.

Article 1.13 Internet and e-mail use

The internet system and the e-mail system are available to signatories 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 signatory is not permitted to gain unauthorized 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 signatory 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 a signatory is suspected of violating the rules, monitoring may only be performed by the CEO or their designate 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 CEO. Such decision clearly indicates when this temporary authorization ends. An intention to monitor the content of e-mail is communicated to the signatory concerned in advance, unless this is not reasonably possible.

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

Article 1.14 Information

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

The signatory 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 signatory. The signatory shall respect the Hivos Confidentiality Procedure.

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

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

Article 1.15 Media

All signatories may only contact the media on behalf of Hivos or act as a spokesman after having the explicit permission of the authorized staff member. When it applies to local media in a country only the authorized staff member or Legal representative (if so empowered) shall handle such communications. In all other situations, the authorized staff member is the Communications Officer responsible for press relations on Global level or for a specific region.

When dealing with the media, signatories will cooperate with the media to ensure that the general public is accurately informed about the Hivos program and the context in which the program takes place.

When dealing with the media, signatories will make sure that the media approach and portrayal of the beneficiaries of our programs are done in a respectful manner and in accordance with Hivos's Safeguarding Policy. Therefore, a briefing of the Communications Officer is mandatory before speaking to media.

Hivos will furthermore ensure that external or internal demands for publicity will not interfere with the principle of maximizing the impact of our programs.

Article 1.16 Responsible use of social media

Hivos understands the popularity and benefits of social media sites if used responsibly. Such sites allow for, and promote, general communication, online discussion and provide the ability to share information about yourself and others quickly and easily.

Signatories may not disclose confidential information relating to Hivos, its staff or partners. Confidential information relating to Hivos should be handled according to the article above on Media (1.15)

Signatories may not use social media sites to make comments about, or post contact details or photographs of other employees or other associates of Hivos where these might be deemed as offensive or breaching privacy. Comments or other postings of this nature may constitute unacceptable behavior. This includes where individuals are not named but can be readily identified by themselves or others from the information posted.

Article 1.17 Privacy

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

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

Article 2.1 Child Safety Policy

Hivos maintains a 'zero- tolerance to violence' policy which includes violence toward any Hivos staff member, representative, partner or beneficiary of any age. In reference to child protection, adult-child relations and peer relations the following behavior is not permitted by Hivos:

- Racism, homophobia, sexism, and/or religious discrimination;
- Showing preferential treatment of some children to the detriment or exclusion of others;
- Shouting and bullying of children which includes using language with children or offering advice which is offensive, abusive, or threatening in any way;
- Intentionally physically or verbally intimidating children and/or preventing a child from expressing his/her opinion;
- Hitting or any form of physical abuse of children;
- Physically restraining children during program activities or at any other time unless the staff member has had appropriate training and another responsible adult is present as a witness;
- Assisting children with tasks of a personal nature which are not part of their job description and/or which the child is capable of fulfilling themselves;
- Allowing a child or young person with whom you work to stay overnight in your house and/or to sleep in the same bed;
- Spending time alone/unsupervised with a child or young person with whom you work.
- Hire children for domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age or development stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;
- Not comply with all relevant legislation, including labor laws in relation to child labor;
- Wherever possible and practical, two adults should be present during workshops and other children's activities. Where this is not possible staff should seek alternatives such as the presence of adult community members and/or use of open spaces that are visible to others in the area;
- Developing physical or sexual relationships with children;
- Developing relationships of an inappropriate nature with children, which could in any way be deemed abusive or exploitative;
- Engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts;
- Displaying general behavior which is against good practice or is potentially abusive, including behavior by means of ICT, like mobile phone or internet;
- Due to the inherent imbalance of power between line managers and staff, or benefactors such as Hivos staff and beneficiaries of any age, Hivos does not permit personal relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries or line managers and staff.

All signatories have a duty to report suspected or confirmed breaches of the Child Safety Policy through the Whistle-Blower facility. Reports must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of the breach.

Article 2.2 Abuse of position

Signatories will not abuse their position in the organisation in any way. Abuse of power includes but is not limited to: favoritism, nepotism, corruption, and all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. Some specific instances are highlighted in the articles below:

- No signatory is permitted to have any form of sexual relation or any relation with a minor beneficiary.
- No form of sexual harassment is tolerated.
- No signatory will extract or attempt to extract money or other benefits of any kind in return for employment and/or project participation.
- No signatory will extract or attempt to extract money or benefits of any kind in return for funding a specific (partner) organization.
- It is recommended that a signatory does not favor or support any minor beneficiary privately. In an exceptional case this is only possible with the consent of the CEO or Head of Programs.

Article 2.3 Photography

When taking part in or visiting Hivos activities, photography should be kept to a minimum unless the signatory had been requested or assigned to document the activity. Informed consent is required for all photographs of individual and/or small groups of children and should be granted before the photo is taken.

When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes, signatory must:

- Assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child;
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. As part of this it must be explained how the photograph or film will be used;
- Ensure that photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure that images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- Ensure that file labels, Meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form if permission from a parent/guardian has not been granted (applies to crowd shots).

Article 2.4 Confidentiality

All signatories will take care to ensure that confidential information is properly protected and not disclosed to third parties. This includes any private information about children.

Declaration and signature:

The Hivos Code of Conduct is part of the Hivos Safeguarding Policy. By signing this document, the undersigned declares to endorse all articles of the Code of Conduct and have read the Safeguarding Policy, including the annexes, in full and understood its intentions, implications, and possible consequences for his/her behavior as representative of Hivos. Any signatory who has questions about any aspect of this Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy and its potential implications for him/her has the responsibility of discussing it with his/her manager and/or Hivos People and Culture Manager in their region.

Name:

Place:

Date:

Signature:

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