

# Anti-corruption Policy and Action Plan



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## 1 Introduction

FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development - is a knowledge and resource centre on international gender issues. It is an umbrella organisation for women's organisations, groups and forums in political parties, trade unions, and solidarity and aid organisations in Norway.

The governing structure and organisation consist of an annual member assembly, a board (elected by the annual assembly) and a secretariat in Norway, with a regional office for Latin America in Colombia.

FOKUS practices zero tolerance for corruption in its wider understanding. Including all forms of abuse of authority. applies to breaches of FOKUS' Code of Conduct. Combating corruption effectively and sustainably is a long-term process. FOKUS seeks to be an advocate and partner for discussion in all stages of these efforts.

We view our anti-corruption activities as a means of strengthening our own as well as our member, cooperating and implementing partners' organisations. These efforts are an integral part of promoting a healthy organisational culture, democratic and transparent human and financial management and trustworthy leadership.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to inaction when indications of misuse of authority come to attention and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our work and relationships to strengthen the overall objective of FOKUS which is to be a member-based skills and resource center. Through promotional work and development cooperation, the organisation is expanding its international involvement in and efforts for women's human rights and social participation.

As a value-based organisation we acknowledge the right of every person to be protected against such practices as mismanagement and corruption.

## 2 Objective

FOKUS' vision is of a society based on parity and equality, where women's and girl's human rights are respected and protected, and where everyone can participate on a level playing field, regardless of gender.

The overall objective is to promote women's human rights and gender equality globally. This necessitates strengthening women's access to rights, resources and power, which FOKUS seeks to achieve through advocacy and international development cooperation.

FOKUS is accountable for all funds it receives to improve the lives of often poor and marginalized women and girls globally. Organizations are often vulnerable to mismanagement and corrupt practices.

## 3 Scope

All those who represent FOKUS shall act in compliance with the organisation's basic values: accountable, independent, inclusive and brave.

The Policy applies to all relevant persons of FOKUS – Forum for Women and development, including staff, board members, member organisations, partners, volunteers, and short-term contractors.

FOKUS works on three main pillars to fight corruption: prevention, detection and investigation followed by sanctions. This chapter set out to demonstrate how we work to mitigate corruption risk by reducing the possibility and increasing the risk of getting caught, and how FOKUS respond to corruption if first discovered.

FOKUS includes an Action Plan in order to show how the organisation practices the policy in its operations.

## 4 Definition

FOKUS defines corruption as “**the abuse of entrusted power for private gain**”. This includes financial corruption such as bribery, embezzlement, fraud and financial statement manipulation. The definition is not limited to financial forms of corruption. It also encompasses non-financial forms of corruption, such as nepotism, distortion of aid funds or allocation of aid funds in exchange for sexual services. The list is not exclusive and all forms of actions that falls under the definition above are guided by this policy. Private gains refer not only to individuals but also to families and communities, political parties and organisations, corporations and professional or social associations, and warlords and militias.

FOKUS defines corruption as all abuse of power, money or position for illegitimate personal or group benefits.

This includes all forms of ethical corruption, whether financial (for example bribes, embezzlement, extortion, kickbacks and fraud) or other forms of personal benefit or pleasure.

It also covers all forms of nepotism and illegitimate favouritism of groups or employees based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation or other identity.

This list is not exhaustive and does not mean that something not listed here is allowed.

## 5 Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH)

FOKUS rejects all forms of improper behaviour, sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment. Employees must treat everyone with dignity and avoid behaviours categorized as harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment.

The following definitions apply:

- Sexual exploitation: any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another
- Sexual abuse: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
- Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted sexual attention that has the purpose or effect of being offensive, frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or troublesome

All indications of the occurrence SEAH shall trigger careful and quick action to:

- Stop harm continuing
- Conduct investigation properly
- Report to relevant authorities

The rights, needs and wishes of the alleged victim will always be treated with highest priority.

FOKUS requires personal commitment to the organisation's standpoint and approach through the Code of Conduct.

## 6 Risk management

An essential part of FOKUS work to combat corruption is a holistic risk management system to identify, mitigate, detect, investigate and last to put sanctions on corrupted acts. Corruption occurs due to incentives, opportunities for personal enrichment and rationalization for means of corruption as well as when there is a limited risk of detection and punishment<sup>1</sup>.

## 7 Prevention

Preventing corruption in all forms, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, is the overarching goal of FOKUS' risk management. The tone at the top is signalled through: unambiguous messages from the leadership of FOKUS and all cooperation partners; robust routines and procedures based on risk assessments and due diligence; clear policy on procurement; awareness raising trainings on internal and external rules and laws; consistent requirement for commitment to the Code of Conduct and workplace processes that are democratic and transparent.

### **Leadership Signals and Values**

The leaders at all levels of an organisation are powerfully placed to create an environment of 'zero-tolerance' towards corruption. Leaders' words, policies and actions can break the implicit taboo about discussing corruption, behind which it can thrive, and give incentives that build the necessary trust for staff to report it. Leadership also determines whether staff feels equipped to identify corruption and empowered to do anything about it. A strong internal and external focus on corruption can establish an organisations' reputation as truly accountable. FOKUS work after the ideals of accountability, independency, inclusiveness and braveness meaning that working on anti-corruption it is fundamental to break the taboo on discussing corruption, putting anti-corruption awareness on the agenda for all parts of the FOKUS umbrella. Thus, a comprehensive risk management system must be in place.

### **Risk Management**

Risk management is an integral part of all FOKUS' activities at all levels. The Board, the Secretariat, as well as the member organisations and partners employ the risk monitoring matrix in all parts of management. Corruption risk exists in all parts of FOKUS, however it is considered highest where the majority of FOKUS funding are utilized: in the programme activities. Hence FOKUS allocates extra resources for risk analysis, financial reviews and monitoring and due diligence of partner organisations.

### **Procurement**

FOKUS' procurement policy states that procurement of goods, services or works shall be based on principles of competition, equal treatment, transparency, verifiability, predictability and non-discrimination, and shall be performed according to good business practice. See FOKUS' procurement policy for more information. FOKUS shall never engage in "non-arms length transactions", document or check forgery, money laundering, taking commissions and influencing tender process for improper benefit and theft.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.u4.no/topics/anti-corruption-basics/basics>

**Training and Awareness**

FOKUS' applies a zero tolerance on corruption which is communicated to all organisation receiving funds from FOKUS. Extended knowledge and capacity training in rules and laws as well as practices related to corruption is fundamental to prevent corruption. FOKUS' shall train own staff, while also committed to ensure that similar trainings are done at local implementing partners and member organisations. All relevant persons will receive training in the content of this policy and all relevant FOKUS' documents related to this before or shortly after working or establishing a relationship with FOKUS.

**Code of Conduct**

FOKUS' employees and people working for FOKUS must commit to and follow our Code of Conduct. FOKUS' Code of Conduct translates this Anti-corruption Policy into required individual and group behaviour. FOKUS' Code of Conduct is attached as Annex 3.

**Transparency**

FOKUS Anti- Corruption Policy should be available on FOKUS website and given to all FOKUS' partners, external consultants, employees and member organisations. By adopting transparency FOKUS publish information about all partners receiving funds from FOKUS as well as including their annual budget. Furthermore, FOKUS seeks to make information accessible and easily understandable for audience such as member organisations, implementing partners, beneficiaries, donors and media on our website and in our daily communication. FOKUS also encourage transparent reporting of corruption.

## 8 Detection

In all FOKUS activities detection of corruption is central. However, it is particularly in the programme implementation phase that corruption can be discovered. Thus, FOKUS' strive to detect corruption through project monitoring, external evaluations, audit and complaints mechanisms including a whistle blower system.

**FOKUS Routines and Programme Monitoring**

FOKUS has established routines and procedures for monitoring the programme implementation, results, risk and financial management. FOKUS handbook on financial management describes the roles and responsibility of the FOKUS Secretariat staff members. Furthermore, for program management and financial reviews FOKUS' has a holistic project manual describing the routines in the management cycle for a member organisation and employees in FOKUS. Central procedures for programme monitoring include interim reports, annual reports and indicator collection reports (M&E), travel reports, periodically financial reviews and risk analysis.

**Evaluations, reviews and audits**

FOKUS conduct external evaluations of all programmes within a four-year term of the signing of an agreement. Furthermore, FOKUS requires annually audit reports for each implementing partner and member organisation. In addition, FOKUS finance staff or external resources are conduction financial reviews of partners every second year.

## 9 Concerns and Complaints Raising (Whistleblower) System

FOKUS' thrust regarding concerns and complaints is to build confidence of all relevant persons such as implementing partners, members, beneficiaries and employees to report genuine concerns about fraud, bribery or other types of misconduct. A genuine concern should be reported when there is

evidence or a strong suspicion of misconduct in any of the following areas: fraud or bribery, sexual misconduct, harassment and any other illegal act.

If an individual or group has concerns, they are strongly encouraged to report these concerns. Anyone affected by FOKUS' work or the projects we support are encouraged to raise concerns, including (but not limited to):

- Employees
- Consultants and others directly involved in the organisation
- Our member organisations and implementing partner organisations
- Institutional/individual donors
- Supporters and stakeholders

The following are suggested channels for informing FOKUS of known or suspected breaches of The Code of Ethics, which encompasses misuse of authority in any way:

- Speak to an employee of FOKUS
- Write to the email address of an employee of FOKUS
- Submit information into the suggestion box at FOKUS office in a programme country
- Write a letter and send in the post to FOKUS
- If there are reasons not to contact the direct line manager, or the concerned party or parties are external to FOKUS, the following email can be used:

**[alert@fokusvinner.no](mailto:alert@fokusvinner.no)**

FOKUS has clear routines for monitoring this email address and ensuring action is taken carefully and quickly, using professional competence as appropriate.

FOKUS has zero tolerance to any form of retaliation against whistleblowers. All individuals who report genuine concerns will be properly followed up, protected and supported.

FOKUS is conscious of the importance to encourage information to come forward. This may be hampered by the use of the term "whistleblower" in some cultures and societies. Terms that do not discourage the raising of concerns and complaints through cultural sensitivities shall be used.

Individuals and groups with concerns and concerns have the possibility to inform FOKUS' main donors directly:

**<https://www.norad.no/en/front/about-norad/Report-a-concern/>**

## 10 Investigation

In any situation where there is suspicion of breach of FOKUS' Anti-corruption Policy, Norwegian member organisation, cooperating or implementing partner must immediately take action in order to safeguard persons or groups being harmed, establish what has occurred, judge proportionate sanctions and change practices to prevent misconduct in the future. Norwegian member organisations, cooperating and implementing partners shall inform FOKUS of any such cases.

The purpose of conducting an investigation is to gather evidence and facts to establish whether suspicions or allegations are true, and whether any proven incidents are isolated or more widespread. All investigations should be impartial, thorough, timely and confidential. Any relevant persons investigated will be considered innocent until proven guilty. Investigations may be done internally by FOKUS own staff or be carried out by a professional third party.

Investigators should be objective and unbiased, thorough, able to maintain confidentiality, competent in investigative techniques, empowered with sufficient seniority and confidence, honest persons of integrity, and independent of any possible subsequent disciplinary process.

Depending on the seriousness of the situation, FOKUS may decide to halt the financial support while the investigations are ongoing as well as notifying any other donors to the affected programme or project.

A formal documented investigation report shall be the basis for further action.

Annex 2 contains detailed guidance pertaining to investigations.

### **Donors**

FOKUS shall have an open communication with donors affected through the investigative process.

The final report will be sent to the affected donor.

## **11 Sanctions**

Any proven breach of this policy will be sanctioned in as described below. In principle all breaches will be reported to the police, however in less serious cases FOKUS might refrain from reporting to the police.

FOKUS' staff in breach of this policy will receive a written warning or, for serious breaches, immediate dismissal.

FOKUS board members in breach of this policy will be asked to resign from their board duties. Further actions will be considered depending on the severity of the breach.

Volunteers will immediately be dismissed from their role in FOKUS and shall be denied any future relation to FOKUS

Contractors: FOKUS will seek to cancel any ongoing contracts and will refrain from making future contract with the contractor.

Norwegian Member Organizations and Partner Organizations: FOKUS will demand that the organisation reports the responsible party to the police and that the value of funds involved are returned to FOKUS. Depending on the seriousness of the break and the organisation's willingness to resolve the issue, FOKUS might decide to continue with the collaboration.



## Annex 1 Anti-corruption Action Plan

	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsible at FOKUS</b>
<b>1</b>	<p>Get familiar with the contents of the Anti-corruption Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff at FOKUS</li> <li>• Board of Directors at FOKUS</li> <li>• Member and implementing partner organisations: main contacts and leadership persons</li> <li>• Consultants</li> </ul> <p>Identify key changed areas and issues outside the traditional definitions.</p> <p>Use scenarios for more extensive training.</p>	When policy is updated, for all new staff and consultants	FOKUS Sec. Gen.
<b>2</b>	<p>Ensure FOKUS' agreements with member organisations, implementing partners and partners in consortiums are consistent and complete, compared with FOKUS' agreement with Norad.</p> <p>Identify key changed areas and issues for highlighting to partner staff pedagogically.</p>	2024-2025	Head of Programs
<b>3</b>	<p>Ensure risk assessment and management tools are applied and followed up.</p>	On visits or combination of virtual and visits	Financial Controller and Programme Advisers
<b>4</b>	<p>Advocate through discussions in all stages of partner contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• healthy organisational culture</li> <li>• proper financial management</li> <li>• trustworthy leadership</li> <li>• transparent and open sharing of information</li> <li>• confidentiality strictly applied in key areas, for example procurement, staff contracts, payment controls</li> </ul>	On visits or combination of virtual and visits	Program staff

	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsible at FOKUS</b>
5	<p>Ensure independent and objective visits to all partner offices that include verification of accounting documentation, accounting systems, test segregations of duties.</p> <p>Important to emphasise initiatives as included in capacity building activities and not as indications of mistrust from FOKUS.</p>	On going	Financial Controller
6	Ensure quality of external auditors of local partners is high and engage in changes of auditing team every 4-5 years.	On going	Financial Controller
7	<p>Re-assess and review partners' Financial Management procedures. Are they updated for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roles and responsibilities,</li> <li>• procurement and asset management procedure,</li> <li>• policies on recruitment,</li> <li>• pay and allowances,</li> <li>• concerns and complaints raising mechanisms</li> </ul>	On going	Financial Controller
8	Forum (virtual) for partners finance staff to share learning and good practices regarding financial controls, reporting and anti-corruption.	Zoom meeting minimum once per year	Financial Controller with Program Advisers
9	Follow up management letter points from external auditors and use the information as a start point for understanding grant management and financial control issues.	Every April	Financial Controller
10	<p>Reduce and preferable remove cash. Encourage use of mobile and internet banking, with associated controls.</p> <p>Beware of possibilities and technological changes in each country.</p>	2024-2025	Financial Controller and Program Advisers
11	<p>Perform "deep dive" tests of partner organisations on a judgmental basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• double entry for advances to staff for activities</li> <li>• procurement of items of higher total value</li> <li>• procurement of recurring items</li> <li>• finance and administrative manuals: contents in comparison with FOKUS agreement</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Financial Controller

## Annex 2 Guidance on investigation

### Main steps

The investigation is guided by the following general principles:

#### STEP 1: Organizational preparation

- Decide if an investigation is necessary
- Establish terms of reference – the rules that the investigation will follow, including precisely what needs to be investigated
- Choose an appropriate investigator

#### STEP 2: An investigator's preparation

- Draft an investigation plan
- Identify who might need to be called to an investigation meeting (interview)
- Identify what evidence might need to be gathered – and how to get it
- Contact parties involved in the matter

#### STEP 3: Handling an investigation meeting

- Establish who can accompany those alleged to have committed misconduct at the meeting
- Plan what questions need to be asked
- Interview the parties involved and any relevant witnesses
- Handle reluctant witnesses or refusals to meet appropriately

#### STEP 4: Gathering evidence

- Arrange and agree witness statements
- Collect any relevant written records and documents, e.g., timesheets
- Collect any relevant and appropriate physical evidence

#### STEP 5: Report the investigation findings

- Write an investigation report
- Report what is likely to have happened – the balance of probabilities
- Make a recommendation, where requested

#### STEP 6: After an investigation is completed

- Submit the report and conclude the investigator role
- Retain the report for an appropriate period of time
- Ensure any recommendations unrelated to the matter are considered

### Investigation Team

The internal investigation team should ideally be ethnically mixed, and gender balanced. If the case is related to sexual exploitation or abuse, specialist support shall be used. The composition of the Team and its Terms of Reference will depend on the size and scope of the investigation.

Based on the Report from the Internal Investigation Team, the Senior Management Team at FOKUS will decide if further enquiries should be made internally or an external investigation will be required.

### External Investigation Team

External investigation teams should ideally be ethnically mixed, and gender balanced. If the case is related to sexual exploitation or abuse, an externally contracted psychologist will support the team. The steps followed for external investigation teams should follow the same principles outlined above, unless the donor(s) for the program, project or activity impacted have their own rules on how external investigations should be conducted.

## Annex 3 Code of Conduct

### CODE OF CONDUCT

#### 1. Introduction

FOKUS' vision is of a society based on parity and equality, where women's human rights are respected and protected, and where everyone can participate on a level playing field, regardless of gender.

FOKUS' objective is to be a member-based skills and resource centre. Through promotional work and development cooperation, the organisation is expanding its international involvement in and efforts for women's human rights and social participation.

FOKUS aspires to promote universal respect for human rights in general, and women's human rights in particular. All of FOKUS' efforts are also intended to support the UN Convention: *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, the *Plan of Action from the UN's World Conference on Women* in Beijing and the UN's Sustainable Development goals. All activities performed by or under the auspices of FOKUS shall serve this purpose.

All those who represent FOKUS shall act in compliance with the organisation's core values: FOKUS shall be **accountable, independent, inclusive** and **brave**.

All of FOKUS' activities shall be compliant with its ethical guidelines, encompassed in this Code of Conduct and with the Anti-corruption Policy and Action Plan.

FOKUS adheres to ethical standards ensuing from *relevant UN and ILO conventions* (see Annex 1).

FOKUS prioritises the combating sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment and commits to zero tolerance of inaction. The Code is clear on this; Guidelines for preventing and detecting SEAH are included as Annex 2.

Guidance on raising Concerns and Complaints is provided in Annex 3.

#### 2. Scope and accountability

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to guide individuals who represent FOKUS to perform their duties in an ethically responsible manner and in keeping with the standards and values that FOKUS lays down in its governance documents. The Code will also help ensure compliance with legislation and regulations that are relevant for FOKUS' activities.

While the guidelines provide a framework for what FOKUS considers to be responsible behaviour, they are not exhaustive. As a representative of FOKUS, you need to show good judgement, caution and care in your work for the organisation.

The Code of Conduct applies to everyone who represents FOKUS. This includes all employees, Board members and consultants. All employees, Board members and

consultants shall sign the Code of Conduct to demonstrate that they are familiar with the ethical guidelines. All Board members shall sign the Code of Conduct at the first Board meeting they attend. The Code is attached to employees' contracts of employment.

FOKUS' member organisations, as well as cooperating and implementing partners, that run development cooperation projects shall have their own ethical guidelines. The organisations themselves can decide whether they would prefer to use FOKUS' guidelines or develop their own, as long they are in keeping with the requirements in the guide provided by NORAD. No actions shall be taken that are at variance with the guidelines, nor should others be encouraged to take such actions. If you are in doubt about whether a particular activity is legal or ethically acceptable, ask your immediate superior in advance. It is important to discuss and mobilise the ethical FOKUS' guidelines regularly. Breaches of the Code can lead to in-house disciplinary measures, termination of employment or, in serious cases, to prosecution (see Annex 2).

### **3. Management of human resources**

FOKUS shall be an organisation in which employees, Board members and individuals from the member organisations feel included, heard and informed. The organisation's decisions and administration are to be based on open, participatory and democratic processes.

FOKUS shall strive to ensure that all the work performed is of a high calibre, and that the necessary expertise is available in the organisation at all times.

FOKUS' human resources management shall be in compliance with current labour legislation, and comply with all health, safety and environmental requirements for employees and volunteers alike.

### **4. Behaviour based on mutual respect**

FOKUS' representatives shall perform their duties and behave with due respect towards colleagues. FOKUS does not accept behaviour that colleagues or others with whom we are in contact might perceive as threatening or derogatory. FOKUS' representatives shall behave considerately and respectfully in respect of colleagues and partners, and show respect for cultural, religious and social conditions.

FOKUS' representatives shall be aware of the balances of power that play out as part of development cooperation relations, and of any privileges that ensue from gender, nationality, ethnicity or other factors. All those who represent FOKUS shall be professional in their relations with employees and volunteers in implementing partner organisations and others with whom they come into contact as a representative of FOKUS.

You are prohibited from buying or receiving sexual services while on business trips.

FOKUS has no tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).

Sexual acts involving children (people under the age of 18) shall not occur, regardless of whether or not the sexual age of consent is lower in the country you are in or local laws are different. Believing the child to be older is not an acceptable argument, for example.

Report suspicions of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment immediately; Annex 2 provides further guidance.

Those engaged in humanitarian work are required to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and which is compliant with FOKUS' Code of Conduct. Leaders at every level have a particular responsibility to ensure that this is done.

### **5. Equal treatment**

FOKUS emphasises the importance of having an inclusive working culture. Everyone is unique and valuable and shall be respected for their individual skills and abilities. No form of bullying, harassment or discrimination is ever acceptable, regardless of whether it is based on gender, religion, national or ethnic origin, cultural background, social affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, age or political opinion.

All employees shall be treated equally. When personnel-related decisions are taken, only relevant qualifications such as individual suitability, education, experience, performance and other professional criteria shall be taken into account.

### **6. Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment**

FOKUS rejects all forms of improper behaviour, sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment and commits to zero tolerance of inaction.

The following definitions apply:

- *Sexual exploitation*: any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another
- *Sexual abuse*: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
- *Sexual harassment*: any form of unwanted sexual attention that has the purpose or effect of being offensive, frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or troublesome

All indications of the occurrence SEAH shall trigger careful and quick action to:

- Stop harm continuing
- Conduct investigation properly
- Report to relevant authorities

The rights, needs and wishes of the alleged victim will always be treated with highest priority.

FOKUS defines "zero tolerance" as acting on every allegation fairly and reasonably with due regard for procedural fairness. Zero tolerance does not mean zero incidents but ensures that FOKUS makes a defined effort to provide a comfortable and confidential way for victims and survivors to report and an appropriate response is put into action.

## **6. Intoxicants**

No intoxicants are allowed at FOKUS. Accordingly, you shall neither indulge in nor be under the influence of intoxicants when working for the organisation.

However, limited amounts alcohol may be served on special occasions, as appropriate.

The intake of alcohol is not to be combined with driving a motor vehicle. Intoxicants shall not be used/served in a manner that can cast a shadow on the participants or their organisations/companies.

On work-related trips, employees and others who represent FOKUS shall abstain from using or possessing any and all illegal intoxicants. You shall also exercise caution when using legal intoxicants, e.g. alcohol, outside of working hours on any trips on which you represent FOKUS, both in Norway and abroad.

## **7. Conflicts of interest**

FOKUS' representatives shall not seek to gain advantages for themselves, or for closely related parties, which are inappropriate or might otherwise not be in the best interest of FOKUS. You are to notify the management of FOKUS if immediate family or other closely related parties of a FOKUS representative are directly or indirectly associated with projects or programmes that receive funding from or through FOKUS, or receive any type of financial gain related to FOKUS' activities.

You are not to take part in or try to influence decisions, if doing so could lead to, or be perceived as, a conflict of interest. Such conflicts of interest may involve a personal interest in a matter, financial or otherwise, either directly or through closely related parties.

FOKUS employees:

- May belong to affiliated organisations, but shall not hold office or occupy positions of trust
- Shall not be a member of a project committee or other body that bears project responsibility in affiliated organisations
- Shall not be a programme adviser for programmes/projects that are administrated by affiliated organisations, where the programme adviser him/herself is a member or where closely related parties hold leading positions

If you become aware of a potential conflict of interest, report it to your immediate superior right away. Conflicts of interest are not always obvious, so if you are in doubt, consult a superior. Board members shall consult the Chair of the Board.

## **8. Bribes, gifts and advantages**

FOKUS' representatives shall not offer, promise or provide inappropriate advantages to others to get them to do or not to do something in connection with their professional duties. This applies regardless of whether the advantage is offered directly or through an intermediary.

Gifts or other benefits to external business associates shall be in keeping with locally accepted customs and practices. Gifts and other benefits shall be of modest value, shall not be given frequently and shall be given only when the time and place are appropriate. You are not allowed to accept money or other advantages that can influence, or be perceived as influencing, your integrity or independence.

Consultants are prohibited from accepting gifts of goods or services. Practical difficulties may necessitate temporary assistance to a consultant from an individual or organisation in partnership or other relationship with FOKUS. Such a situation shall be reported to the contact person at FOKUS as soon as practicable.

If you as an employee are offered or have received gifts or benefits other than ordinary token courtesy gifts, notify your immediate superior right away.

### **9. Competing activities**

FOKUS' representatives shall be loyal to FOKUS. While you are still an employee of FOKUS, you shall not own, operate, give significant help to or accept employment from another undertaking which directly or indirectly competes with or undermines FOKUS' work or operations.

If you are in doubt, consult one of your superiors. Board members shall consult the Chair of the Board.

### **10. Fundraising**

At FOKUS, fund-raising shall be performed in accordance with the current ethical guidelines laid down by the Norwegian Control Committee for Fundraising ([www.innsamlingskontrollen.no](http://www.innsamlingskontrollen.no)).

### **11. Data processing**

FOKUS shall process personal data that has been collected in accordance with the Personal Data Act. Personal data shall only be stored if the user actively gives permission for the data to be disclosed. Registered information shall be processed in a strictly confidential manner and pursuant to §8 of the Personal Data Act, and it shall only be used for the following purposes:

- To satisfy signed agreements
- To satisfy the organisation's legal obligations pursuant to the Income Tax Act and the Norwegian Accounting Act
- For activities pertaining to information about and fund-raising for FOKUS

Upon written request, individuals can find out what personal data FOKUS has registered, and how they are used.

FOKUS shall not disclose personal data to others. Unnecessary information shall be deleted when storage is no longer required for the original purpose.



**12. Procurement of goods and services**

FOKUS' procurement of goods and services shall be compliant with the guidelines laid down by the Initiative for Ethical Trade, see Annex 1.

**13. Accounts and reporting routines**

FOKUS' accounting and reporting routines shall at all times be compliant with relevant legislation, accounting standards for not-for-profit organisations and decisions taken at the meetings of the Council of Representatives. The accounts shall not contain erroneous or intentionally misleading items. In reasonable detail, they shall provide a justifiable and accurate impression of FOKUS' assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures. Transactions shall not intentionally be classified incorrectly, whether this applies to an account, department/project or accounting period.

The periodic reports to FOKUS' Board and the meeting of its Council of Representatives shall render visible the use of funding relative to FOKUS' objectives, adopted plans and budget, thus contributing to the effective utilisation of the funding that has been raised.

**14. Protection of assets and archives**

Assets and archives that belong to FOKUS will be used and stored with discretion and respect, and they will be safeguarded from destruction and misuse. You are not allowed to use FOKUS' time, equipment or materials for purposes not directly related to FOKUS' activities or without the permission of your immediate superior. The same applies to removing or borrowing FOKUS' assets without permission. The organisation's computers or other technical equipment shall not be used to watch, download, or distribute pornography or illicit material.

**15. Confidential information – Duty of Confidentiality**

FOKUS' general principle of transparency and insight shall not be an impediment to the expedient protection of information that is important for the organisation's activities and for personal safety. All those who work at or for FOKUS shall exercise a special duty of care with a view to information to which you are privy through your work, and which you understand, or should understand, should not fall into the hands of outsiders because they might harm the organisation and/or the people FOKUS strives to help.

**16. Basic principles**

This document explains basic principles, standards and procedures that are normative for those who represent FOKUS. The document does not grant any rights for contacts, partners, vendors or other individuals or units.

**To capture individual recognition of, and encourage allegiance to, the Code of Conduct**

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood FOKUS' Code of Ethics, and acknowledge that should I contravene any of the stated instructions, conditions or requirements, I may be subject to sanctions.

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Name, date, place

**Annex 1 to  
Code of Conduct:****IEHS GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL TRADE** (adopted by the Board of FOKUS on 22 June 2017)

The IEHS guidelines for ethical trade are based on key UN and ILO conventions and documents. The content of the IEHS guidelines specifies minimum and not maximum standards. National legislation shall be adhered to. Where the guidelines and national legislation and regulations address the same topic, the highest standard shall apply.

**1. Compulsory labour/slave labour (ILO conventions nos. 29 and 105)**

There shall be no form of forced labour, slave labour or work performed involuntarily. Workers must not turn over a deposit or identity papers to an employer, and they shall be free to terminate their employment with a reasonable term of notice.

**2. Trade unionism and collective bargaining (ILO conventions nos. 87, 98 and 135 and 154)**

2.1 Workers shall without exception have the right to join or set up trade unions of their own choice, and to bargain collectively.

2.2 The employer shall not discriminate against trade union representatives, or prevent them from performing trade union work.

2.3 If these rights are limited by statute, the employer shall pave the way for, and not in any case prevent, parallel mechanisms for free and independent organisation and negotiations.

**3. Child labour (UN Convention on the rights of the child, ILO Conventions Nos. 138, 182 and 79, ILO recommendation no. 146)**

3.1 Children under the age of 18 shall not perform work that can put their health or safety at risk, including working at night.

3.2 Children under the age of 15 (14 or 16 in certain countries) shall not perform work that can be detrimental to their education.

3.3 New recruitment of child labour at variance with the above-mentioned conventions is unacceptable. If such child labour is already taking place, efforts shall be made to phase it out promptly. Meanwhile, efforts shall be made to ensure that the children are given an opportunity for subsistence and education until the children are no longer of mandatory school age.

**4. Discrimination (ILO Conventions Nos. 100 and 111 and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)**

4.1 There shall be no discrimination in the world of work based on ethnicity, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, trade union membership or political affiliation.

4.2 Protective measures shall be established against sexual harassment, threatening, abusive or exploitative behaviour and against discrimination or termination without good cause, e.g. matrimony, pregnancy, parental status or status as infected with HIV.

**5. Brutal treatment**

5.1 Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse shall be prohibited. The same applies to sexual or other abuse, and different types of humiliation.

## **6. Health, safety and the environment (ILO convention no. 155 and ILO recommendation no. 164)**

6.1 Efforts shall be made to provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees. Necessary measures shall be taken to prevent and minimise accidents and health hazards as a result of, or related to factors in the workplace.

6.2 Workers are to have regular, documented training in health and safety. Health and safety training shall be repeated for new employees.

6.3 Workers are to have access to clean sanitary facilities and clean drinking water. If relevant, the employer shall also arrange for access to facilities for safe food storage.

6.4 If the employer provides accommodations, they shall be clean, safe, adequately ventilated and offer access to clean sanitary facilities and clean drinking water.

## **7. Wages (ILO convention no. 131)**

7.1 Workers shall be paid wages that are at least commensurate with national minimum wages or industry standards, and always enough to cover basic needs.

7.2 Wage conditions and the payment of wages and salaries shall be established by agreement prior to the commencement of employment. The agreement shall be understandable for the employee.

7.3 Disciplinary reactions involving deductions in wages and salaries shall not be allowed.

## **8. Hours of work (ILO conventions nos. 1 and 14)**

8.1 Working hours are to be in keeping with national legislation or industry standards, and not exceed working hours in compliance with current international conventions. It is recommended that the hours of work not exceed 48 hours per week (8 hours per day).

8.2 Workers shall have at least one day off each week.

8.3 Overtime shall be limited. A maximum of 12 hours per week is recommended.

8.4 Workers shall always be paid a supplement for overtime, amounting to at least the minimum provided by law.

## **9. Standard employment**

9.1 In compliance with international conventions and/or national legislation and regulations for standard employment, obligations to workers shall not be circumvented by using temporary employment (such as contract, casual and day labour), subcontractors or other working arrangements.

9.2 All employees are entitled to employment contracts in a language they understand.

9.3 Apprenticeship programmes shall be clearly defined with a view to length and content.

## **Factors outside the workplace**

### **10. Marginalised demographic groups**

10.1 The production, and the extraction of raw materials for their production, shall not contribute to destroying the resource and income base for marginalised demographic groups, e.g. in the case of the confiscation of vast land areas or other natural resources upon which these demographic groups depend.

## **11. The environment**

11.1 Environmental measures are assessed throughout the entire production and distribution chain, from raw material production to retail sales. Efforts shall be made to protect local, regional and global environmental aspects. The local community at the production site shall not be subject to predation, or damaged by pollution.

11.2 National and international environmental legislation and regulations shall be complied with.

11.3 Relevant discharge permits shall be obtained where so required.

11.4 Hazardous chemicals and other substances shall be managed properly.

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## Annex 2 to Code of Conduct

### Guidelines for prevention and detection of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or harassment

#### FOKUS' key principles:

1. Prioritise victims and survivors of SEAH
2. Prioritize transparency and accountability
3. Be a reliable, respected, and active partner in combating SEAH

Combating SEAH requires ownership, leadership, participation of the entire workforce, transparency, and a learning mindset at the individual and organisational levels. Addressing sexual misconduct effectively will positively impact broader organisational change that will address other forms of misconduct and emerging cultural, structural, and behavioural challenges.

#### Prevention

Preventative measures include:

- Integrate the risks of SEAH occurring in the FOKUS and project risk matrices and pertinent actions to manage identified risks
- Work on increasing awareness in all parts of the program chain: beneficiaries, communities, cooperating and implementing partners, and other FOKUS stakeholders
- Embed a rights-based approach as an underlying motivation to combating SEAH

#### Detection

Effective detection requires:

- Patient work building trust in all communication channels and relationships
- Extra focus on high-risk situations and contexts
- Consideration of SEAH risks in Monitoring and Evaluation initiatives
- Concerns and complaints raising channels that are easy to access and lead to action
- Access to experts on investigating and combating SEAH

#### Long-lasting improvements

Long term solutions require:

- Learning from investigations
- Listening to program participants, cooperating organisations and partner staff and FOKUS personnel

Demonstration that FOKUS has Zero Tolerance of Inaction.

**Annex 3 to Code of Conduct**

**Raising Concerns and Complaints (Whistleblowing)**

<p><b>What does this relate to?</b></p>	<p>Reporting concerns and complaints one may observe or evidence when the observations relate to breach of this Code of Conduct or potentially illegal activity.</p>
<p><b>Who can raise concerns?</b></p>	<p>As a point of departure, the guidelines apply to all FOKUS employees, including interns and consultants, the Board, member organisations and partners in the South. Outsiders without affiliation with FOKUS are also welcome to issue warnings about any censurable conditions. The guidelines apply to such whistle-blowers insofar as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>To whom should I voice my concern?</b></p>	<p>As a general rule, you should notify your immediate superior or someone in a position higher up the hierarchy. You can also notify in-house management indirectly through your union representative, safety delegate or a colleague.</p> <p>You also always have the right to notify supervisory authorities or other government authorities (e.g. the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the Norwegian Data Protection Authority, the police, etc.).</p> <p>Individuals and groups with concerns and concerns have the possibility to inform FOKUS' main donors directly:  <a href="https://www.norad.no/en/front/about-norad/Report-a-concern/">https://www.norad.no/en/front/about-norad/Report-a-concern/</a></p>
<p><b>Notification requirement! What am I required to raise concerns about and who am I required to notify?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have a duty to immediately inform your employer and safety delegate and, as need be, other employees about faults or defects that could endanger life or health, unless you yourself can rectify the matter.</li> <li>• You have a duty to inform your employer or safety delegate about harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace.</li> <li>• You have a duty to notify your employer if an employee is hurt on the job or contracts a disease which you believe is due to work or conditions at the workplace.</li> <li>• You have a duty to notify your employer of</li> </ul>

	<p>circumstances that can cause the employer, employees or others to sustain losses or harm, cf. the ethical guidelines.</p>
<p><b>Do I have a special notification obligation as a safety representative?</b></p>	<p>Safety representatives have a special notification obligation pursuant to the Working Environment Act. If a safety representative becomes aware of matters that could cause an accident or endanger health, the safety representative shall immediately notify the local employees on site and the employer. If the report has not been acted upon within a reasonable period of time, the safety delegate shall inform the Working Environment Committee or the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority.</p>
<p><b>What should the notification include?</b></p>	<p>A notification should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full name (Can be anonymous)</li> <li>• Whistleblower's place of work (Can be anonymous)</li> <li>• Date of report</li> <li>• Time interval, or date and time of the observation</li> <li>• A concrete description of what was observed</li> <li>• Place where the event/incident has occurred</li> <li>• Other witnesses</li> <li>• Any knowledge of previous issues with the same person(s).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Can I notify the media? (public notification)</b></p>	<p>§100 of the Constitution of Norway on freedom of expression gives you the right to speak your mind frankly in the general public discourse, including the right to express critical opinions on matters involving your place of work. The non-statutory duty to act in good faith nonetheless requires that you cannot harm an employer's interests or operations by making negative comments in public if they are not legitimate. The requirement that you must proceed in a justifiable manner normally implies that notification of censurable conditions is done through the undertaking's internal reporting channels and then to public inspection authorities. The requirement of reliability shall be more stringent in respect of public notification, e.g. notification to the media, blogging, websites, emails to multiple recipients outside the undertaking and other communications channels with a large, open circle of recipients.</p>
<p><b>Which principles apply to the processing of cases of complaints and concerns?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All concerns and complaints shall be processed immediately</li> <li>• Anonymity is possible</li> <li>• Anonymous sources can be just as valuable as open sources</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The different methods of notification shall be valued equally</li> <li>• Confidential treatment</li> <li>• It should be possible to use the warning system without fearing reprisals</li> <li>• The whistle-blower shall be given feedback within a reasonable period of time (provided the whistle-blower is not anonymous)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who processes the notification? Administrative procedure?</b></p>	<p>The employer must make a concrete assessment of who is to be involved in the further processing of the case and which measures are to be implemented, depending on what type of case it is, and to whom the notification applies.</p> <p>The case shall be filed/logged and otherwise processed in compliance the regulations that apply at any given time.</p>
<p><b>Will I receive any feedback?</b></p>	<p>The raiser of concerns and complaints shall, if not anonymous, get a confirmation of receipt of the notification. Otherwise, the question of insight will be governed by the Freedom of Information Act, the Public Administration Act, the Personal Data Act, etc.</p>
<p><b>Are there limitations that apply to notification?</b></p>	<p>Rules regarding the duty of professional secrecy, defamation, etc. apply regardless of the right to raise concerns pursuant to the Working Environment Act.</p>
<p><b>Am I taking a risk by raising concerns?</b></p>	<p>Reprisals against an employee who raises concerns are prohibited.</p>
<p><b>Consideration for the party that is the subject of the concerns</b></p>	<p>In the cases in which the employer decides to prosecute the case, the party that is the subject of the concerns shall, as a point of departure, be notified and informed about what information has been provided. By so doing, the party in question will have an opportunity to present his/her version of the case. Once the case has been processed, the party in question shall be notified immediately, regardless of the outcome of the processing.</p>
<p><b>Motives for raising concerns and complaints</b></p>	<p>The willingness to take all concerns and complaints seriously is dependent on the motives behind the concern or complaint being in the interest of FOKUS' core values.</p> <p>Raisers of concerns or complaints for reasons of personal gain while causing harm to others and going against FOKUS' core values will be subject to possible sanctions.</p>

<b>How do I raise a concern?</b>	You can raise a concern in writing or verbally, e.g. by telephone, letter, personal appearance (face to face), or by email: <a href="mailto:alert@fokusvinner.no">alert@fokusvinner.no</a>
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