



NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION NETWORK

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS



PREFACE

This Code of conduct and Ethics for NRCN, sets out standards of behavior for all staff of NRCN.

It is designed to ensure the impartiality, objectivity, transparency, integrity, efficiency and effectiveness of NRCN staff when performing their duties. It is intended to guide staff in their behavior and how they relate to each other and the public.

While there are ethical obligations and Codes of Conduct specific to each profession within NRCN like, prosecution, investigation, drivers, finance, operations and so on, the NRCN code of conduct and Ethics is based on ethical standards or guiding principles which apply to the entire NRCN team.

In essence, the Code of conduct and Ethics shall be imbued to promote transparency, good working relations and accountability among NRCN staff and improve the image of NRCN as an organization.

All NRCN staff are enjoined to conform to the Code of conduct and Ethics and promote its observance.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR ALL NRCN STAFF

1.0 PREAMBLE

Our Mission is to Combat nature related crime to protect ecological systems for the benefit of current and future generations. To achieve this, NRCN must have staff who are loyal, committed, results-oriented, accountable and observe a high standard of conduct in both official and private life.

The aim of this Code of conduct and Ethics is to provide general guidance to NRCN staff in their relationships at work and dealings with their clients and the general public. It compliments existing laws, regulations, guidelines and professional Codes of Conduct issued for the purpose of prescribing acceptable standard of behavior and conduct.

2.0 APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS AND INTERPRETATIONS

2.1 Application of the Code

- (i) This Code of conduct and Ethics is applicable to all persons holding or acting in any NRCN office.
- (ii) The Code shall be reinforced by professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics.

(iii) Information on the Code shall be made available to all staff.

2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

The Code of conduct and Ethics is based on the following principles: -

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| Accountability | Staff shall be personally responsible for his or her actions or inactions. |
| Good Fearing | At NRCN; We put God First in everything we do. He is the foundation of our operations. <i>“Proverbs 3:6, In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths”</i> |
| Decency | Staff shall present himself or herself in a respectable manner that generally conforms to morally accepted standards and values of society. |
| Diligence | Staff shall be careful and diligent in carrying out his or her official duties. |
| Discipline | Staff shall behave in a manner as to conform |



with the rules, regulations and the Code of Conduct and Ethics for NRCN generally and codes of professional conduct for the specific professions.

- Effectiveness** Staff shall strive to achieve the intended results in terms of quality and quantity in accordance with set targets and performance standards set for service delivery.
- Efficiency** Staff shall endeavor to optimally use resources including time in the attainment of organizational objectives, targets or tasks.
- Integrity** Staff shall be honest and open in conducting all NRCN affairs.
- Loyalty** Staff shall be committed to the Policies and programmes of NRCN while carrying out all organizational operations.
- Professionalism** Staff shall adhere to the professional codes of conduct, exhibit high degree of competence and best practices as prescribed for in a given profession in policies and code of conduct.
- Selflessness** Staff shall not put his or her own interest before NRCN interest. He or she should not take decisions in order to gain financial and other benefits.

Transparency

Staff shall be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions taken. He or she must always be prepared when called upon to give reasons for the decisions he or she has taken.

3.0 WORK ETHICS

3.1 Professional Conduct

We are proud of our professional and congenial work environment, and we are firmly committed to ensuring it remains productive, engaging, and respectful. Staff must conduct themselves professionally at all times. See the Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment policy for additional information.

Responsible Business Conduct

All contracts with third parties (such as independent contractors, consultants, vendors, suppliers, business partners) must be approved in advance of the NRCN doing business with them, and a contract must be in place before work begins. No contractual agreement will be considered valid and enforceable by NRCN in the absence of approval.

Respect for intellectual property, including copyrights and trademarks owned by the NRCN and others, is critically important to us. Each of us is responsible for ensuring these rights are upheld.

3.2 Attendance to duty

- 3.2.1 Staff shall observe the official working days in accordance with the regulations and shall always be available for official duty when called upon.
- 3.2.2 Staff shall without exception perform his or her duty in a manner that conveys professionalism, respect and conforms to morally accepted standards.
- 3.2.3 Staff shall commit working hours to official duties.
- 3.2.4 Staff in position of authority shall exercise such authority with due diligence and trust and shall demonstrate a high standard of Performance of duty and conduct.
- 3.2.5 Staff shall not hold two jobs at any point in time (moonlighting)
- 3.2.6 Staff shall be results-oriented and committed to the performance of his or her duties.

3.3 Time management

- 3.3.1 Staff shall have strict regard to the working hours. He or She shall not come late to office meetings and Official functions without reasonable cause.
- 3.3.2 Staff shall endeavor to accomplish planned activities on time. He or she shall desist from engaging in behavior or conduct that disrupts or interferes with the work of other officers, such as, but not limited to: -
- 3.3.3 Being lazy and idle at work.
- 3.3.4 Full time reading newspapers, keeping the radio loud as to disrupt concentration, playing computer games or surfing the Internet irresponsibly. The only exceptions are training- related Television and video programmes, Video Conferencing, Open and Distance Learning.
- 3.3.5 Transacting private business in office and during office hours.
- 3.3.6 Engaging in private conversation and gossip during working hours
- 3.3.7 Unless otherwise stated, the official working hours are: - Monday –
Friday: 8. 00a.m – 5. 00p.m

3.4 Absence from duty

- i) Staff shall seek and obtain permission from his or her supervisor to be absent from duty. Permission shall not be unreasonably denied or granted.
- ii) Staff shall, during official working hours, report his or her absence from office to his or her immediate supervisor or relevant persons.

3.5 Sexual Harassment

- 3.5.1 Staff shall avoid unethical and unbecoming behavior such as use of rude, abusive and obscene language, indecent dressing, and sexual suggestive gestures which constitute sexual harassment and hence a violation of human rights.
- 3.5.2 Staff shall not subject others or be subjected to conduct of a sexual nature affecting his or her dignity, which is unwelcome, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient.
- 3.5.3 A sexually suggestive and offensive behavior may manifest itself in such forms:
- 3.5.4 An employee being forced to choose between acceding to sexual demands or losing job benefits (sexual blackmail).
- 3.5.5 Verbal and non-verbal sexually offensive behavior exhibited by colleague.
- 3.5.6 Staff who is subjected to sexual harassment offer shall report such a case with the adduced evidence, where applicable, to his supervisor, contact officer or sexual harassment committee that is responsible for investigating such offences with a view to obtaining redress.

3.5.7 Staff who has lodged any complaint regarding sexual harassment using the established complaints procedure shall not be unduly victimized.

3.5.8 Remedies for sexual harassment shall be those prescribed under the civil or criminal laws.

3.6 Conflict of interest

In the execution of NRCN work, Staff shall not put himself or herself in a position where his or her personal interest conflicts with his or her duties and responsibilities. Staff is required to inform his or her supervisor of the nature and extent of his or her interest.

3.7 Misuse of Official Position

Staff who misuse their official position for personal gains or to favor their family or friends are liable to disciplinary action or even prosecution. Examples of misuse include a staff member responsible for the selection of suppliers giving undue favor or leaking tender information to his relative's company with a view to awarding the contract to the latter.

3.8 Property of the Organization

Staff given access to any property of the organization should ensure that it is properly used for the purpose of conducting the organization's business. Misappropriation of the organization's property for personal use or resale is strictly prohibited. Each of us is responsible for protecting NRCN's information technology systems (including our computer network, hardware, software, and all related applications). We must do our part to protect these systems from damage, alteration, theft, fraud, misuse, and unauthorized access. See the Information Security policy and Acceptable Use policy for additional information. You must notify the Information Security Team immediately in the event of a potential Information technology security issue.

3.9 Financial Credibility

Staff shall not engage in any arrangement that would cause him or her financial embarrassment, e.g. bankruptcy.

Responsible Use of Assets and Expenditures

The responsible expenditure of financial resources, and use of NRCN's assets, is essential to the company's sound management, maintenance of our reputation, and the continuing confidence of our donors and partners.

To ensure that our financial statements properly reflect our assets, liabilities, and transactions, the financial records each staff member submits must be complete, accurate, and understandable. This includes the information each of us provides in payroll documents, travel and expense reports, purchasing, and every other company financial record. The key principles you must follow in your business dealings, expenditures, and record keeping include the following:

- Act ethically, professionally, and responsibly any time you handle NRCN's resources (funds and other property).
- Be conservative when spending the NRCN's money.
- Be accurate, thorough, and truthful in your business records. All staff who incur covered expenses must follow to obtain reimbursement. Our Finance policy explains the methods and processes you should use for all business-related purchases.

3.10 Confidentiality

3.10.1 NRCN Staff is a custodian of official information that comes into his or her possession in the course of his or her duty in NRCN. The release of such information must be guided by the laws relating to rights of access to information as prescribed in the Official Secrets Act and other relevant laws that may be enacted from time to time.

3.10.2 Staff shall continue to maintain secrecy and confidentiality of official information even after he or she has left NRCN. Such information shall not at any point in time be used against NRCN.

3.10.3 Staff shall not at any time engage himself or herself in loose talk and make unguarded statements.

4.0 Publishing of official information

4.1.1.1 Staff shall not publish any official information in any document, article, book, play, film or otherwise without **explicit permission** from the Responsible Officer.

4.1.1.2 For Royalties, Patents and Copyrights, Staff shall notify his or her Responsible Officer if he or she creates what is believed to be an invention.

4.1 Communication to the Press

- i) Staff shall not communicate with the media on issues related to work or official policy without due permission from the authorizing officer.
- ii) Official information will be released to the media by officials who have been authorized to do so according to the laid down procedures.

4.1.1 Anonymous communication

Staff is prohibited from writing or disseminating anonymous and malicious letters and printing of graffiti intended to demean the image of NRCN, Staff or any other person.

4.1.2 Open Reporting

We recognize that there are situations in which making the right decision can be challenging. By raising concerns, sooner rather than later, you give the NRCN the opportunity to resolve issues that might otherwise be damaging to our mission and reputation.

Many of these issues can best be resolved in consultation with your manager, or the next higher level of your management. All managers are responsible for maintaining an “open door” to staff. Alternatively, you may contact Human Resources. We are here to support your doing the right thing. See the Open Reporting policy for additional information.

Reporting Potential Violations

If you believe that a violation of law, our Code of Ethics, or our policies may have occurred, or is going to occur, you are obligated to report it immediately. While we hope you feel comfortable discussing it with your manager, we recognize there may be times when you prefer to use another avenue for addressing an issue. You should feel comfortable reporting the issue to any one of the following: your



next-level manager,
and CEO, or any member of the Board.

Human

Resources,

Investigation and Resolution

All reported violations of law, our Code of Ethics, or our policies will be investigated promptly, objectively, and thoroughly. NRCN treats these as confidential internal matters. Information about them is shared only to the extent necessary to investigate and take any corrective action that the company deems appropriate for resolving the matter consistent with our standards and the law.

Staff members found to have committed violations are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and possible legal action depending on the violation. Similarly, third party representatives, and others acting on our behalf, are subject to having their business relationships with NRCN terminated, and potentially other penalties, for violations.

We Do Not Retaliate

Retaliation against any staff member who reports misconduct, or cooperates with an investigation, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Staff members are expected to seek advice, raise concerns, report potential misconduct in good faith, and cooperate with the investigative process. This is critical because silence hurts us when it comes to ethics and compliance. If you feel you have been retaliated against, be sure to contact Your manager, HR or CEO.

4.1.3 Use of official information for personal gain

Staff shall not use official information acquired in the course of official duties to advance personal gain.

4.1.4 Chain of Command

Staff aggrieved by the decisions or actions of his or her immediate supervisor shall follow the established disputes and settlement procedure in seeking redress.

4.2 Removal, destruction or altering of records

Staff shall not willfully remove, destroy or alter public records from the office or section to which they belong or from any other office premises.

4.3 Accountability

Staff shall hold office in public trust and shall be accountable to the public. He or She shall be accountable for all resources under him or her as follows: -

4.4 Financial

- 4.4.1 Staff shall ensure proper and frugal utilization of public funds and value for money.
- 4.4.2 Staff shall at all times promptly account for any financial resources entrusted to him or her in accordance with the Finance Manual and Procurement Regulations.

4.5 NRCN Property/Assets

Staff shall safeguard NRCN property/assets entrusted to him or her and shall ensure that no damage, loss or misappropriation occurs in the process of procurement, storage, utilization and disposal.

4.6 Human Resource

- (i) HODs shall ensure that staff under his or her supervision have clear job descriptions and understand the scope of their work.
- (ii) HODs and managers shall, without favor, support staff under his or her supervision to enhance their competencies and self- development.
- (iii) Staff shall ensure respect for subordinates, colleagues and supervisors.

4.7 Administrative

- (i) Staff shall be accountable both for actions and inactions through normal tiers of authority and will adhere to meritocratic principles in decision making.
- (ii) Where Staff believes that he or she is being required to act in any way which is inconsistent with this Code he or she shall refrain and report the matter to the next line manager.

4.8 Handling of Gifts, Bribes, Favors and Presents

4.8.1 Gifts

4.8.1.1 Staff or any member of his or her family shall not solicit or accept valuable gifts, presents, hospitality gratuity or favor or other benefits, if he or she has reason to believe that the acceptance of such gifts, presents and other benefits is bound to influence his or her judgement or action in a matter he or she is dealing with or will handle in future.

4.8.1.2 Staff shall not give such gifts to influence the judgement or action of another person in his or her favors.

4.8.1.3 Staff who, in the course of discharging his or her duties, receives any gifts or other benefits from any source shall disclose that gift or benefit to NRCN and shall be treated as a gift or donation or commission

4.8.1.4 Staff may accept or give a gift if the gift is in the nature of a souvenir or ornament and does not exceed five currency points in value.

4.8.1.5 Staff may accept personal gift or donation from a relative or personal friend for such an extent and on such occasion as is recognized by custom.

4.8.2 Bribes

4.8.2.1 NRCN Staff who in his or her personal or official capacity, demands, accepts or gives any bribe or is an agent of any person who intends to influence him or her or another officer is in breach of this Code.

4.8.2.2 A member of the public who corruptly gives promises or offers any gift or present or reward or gratuity (tips) to any Staff as an inducement is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be dealt with in accordance with the laws of Uganda.

4.9 Dress and Appearance

For the promotion and projection of a good image of NRCN, Staff shall at all times dress appropriately and appear decent and respectable in a way that is generally acceptable.

5 SANCTIONS

Unethical conduct by Staff shall not be accepted at NRCN.

Depending on the gravity of the offence or misconduct, the following penalties shall apply:

- 5.1.1 Warning or reprimand.
- 5.1.2 Withholding or deferment of increment.
- 5.1.3 Making good of the loss or damage of NRCN property/assets.
- 5.1.4 Reduction in rank
- 5.1.5 Dismissal

7.0 REWARDS

- (i) An appropriate reward and recognition shall be accorded to NRCN staff who exhibits good ethical conduct.
- (ii) A reward shall be accorded to staff by the Responsible Officer or appropriate authority.
- (iii) The rewards shall include; but not limited to; -
 - (a) Word of recognition of good performance
 - (b) Open praise
 - (c) Challenging work assignments normally done by seniors
 - (d) Letter of recommendation
 - (e) Presents
 - (f) Souvenirs
 - (g) Certificate of merit
 - (h) Concessionary trips
 - (i) Cash bonuses
 - (j) Salary increments

8.0 OBLIGATIONS OF NRCN AS AN EMPLOYER

While Staff is expected to observe the code, NRCN as the employer has the following obligations as laid down in the Constitution and operationalized by the relevant laws: -

- (i) To provide satisfactory, safe and healthy working environment.
- (ii) To ensure reasonable pay for Staff.
- (iii) To ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

- (iv) To ensure that employees are accorded rest and reasonable working hours and periods of holidays with pay as well as remuneration for Public holidays.
- (v) To enable every employee to practice his or her profession consistent with the professional Code of conduct and Ethics, the Constitution and other laws of Uganda.
- (v) To accord every Staff the right to join a Trade Union of his or her choice for the promotion and protection of his or her economic and social interests in accordance with the law.
- (vi) To protect Staff's rights, including the right to withdraw labor in accordance with the law.
- (vii) To accord protection to female staff during pregnancy and after birth.
- (viii) To provide Staff with the necessary tools, equipment and gear for performance of their duties.

8.1 ROLE OF MANAGERS

We are each responsible for our own conduct. Those in supervisory positions play an additional role in promoting a workplace culture that upholds NRCN; core values. Supervisors set up the tone by;

- i. Serving as role models of integrity.
- ii. Encouraging an ongoing dialogue on business conduct issues and providing guidance to staff.
- iii. Ensuring that internal systems, policies and procedures are applied consistently and fairly.
- iv. Supporting staff members who raise a business conduct concern and fulfilling NRCN's commitment against retaliation.
- v. Never ignore illegal behavior, Code of Ethics violations, policy violations, or other conduct that does not meet our high expectations for ethical and lawful conduct.
- vi. Ensure that the staff and third parties you manage are familiar with our Code of Ethics, and understand the importance of our strong ethical and compliance culture.
- vii. Create a work environment where staff feels comfortable discussing our Code of Ethics and speaking up when they have concerns.
- viii. Promptly escalate concerns about a potential violation of law, our Code of Ethics, or our policies to relevant officials.
- ix. Never retaliate against a staff member who reports a concern about suspected or actual misconduct, or tolerate retaliation by anyone else.

9.0 POLICIES, CIRCULAR STANDING INSTRUCTIONS AND NRCN NOTICES

All Staff must be familiar with all the operational regulations and policies issued from time to time. Deficiencies arising out of ignorance of the regulations at the place of work shall not be pardoned for their infringement.

10.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE.

It is the personal responsibility of every staff member to understand and comply with the Code of Conduct.

All managers should also in their daily supervision ensure that their subordinates understand and comply with the standards and requirements stated in the Code.

Any staff member who violates any provision of the Code will be subject to disciplinary action. In cases of suspected corruption or other criminal offences, a report will be made to the appropriate authorities.

