

## **PARTNER CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

**Policy number:** #3

**Status:** Approved

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### **1. POLICY STATEMENT/PURPOSE**

Our Partners play a crucial role in our mission. Freedom of Information Center of Armenia (hereinafter FOICA) collaborates with individuals and organizations worldwide to advance our efforts in protecting access to information. We are dedicated to fostering secure, respectful, and equitable partnerships. Consequently, we expect our Partners and employees to adhere to the utmost standards of ethical and moral conduct, aligning with international human rights norms as well as FOICA's values and principles. The purpose of this Code is to cultivate an environment where our partners feel valued and receive equitable treatment, while upholding the highest standards of ethical and moral conduct in their work.

### **2. SCOPE**

This Code is applicable equally to all Partners of FOICA, regardless of the type of support they provide to or receive from FOICA (financial or in-kind).

### **3. CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is a condition of partnership with FOICA that Partners understand and abide by this Code. Partners bear responsibility for the actions of their employees and volunteers in connection with this Code. Noncompliance with this Code may lead to the immediate termination of a grant, partnership, or contract with FOICA.

#### **3.1 Act in a way consistent with FOICA's values and standards**

FOICA's values and standards are:

- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Tolerance and acceptance of diverse opinions and perspectives.
- Accountability for actions and decisions.

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- Commitment to the protection and preservation of the environment.
- Transparency in operations and decision-making processes.
- Non-discrimination, ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for all.
- Mutual respect among team members, partners, and stakeholders.
- Trustworthiness in building and maintaining relationships.
- Inclusiveness, promoting the participation and representation of all individuals and communities.
- Responsibility for the impact of actions on society and stakeholders.

These values and standards reflect the commitment of the Freedom of Information Center of Armenia to promote human rights, contribute to the transparency and openness of the government system and to stimulate civil society's involvement in the governance system.

### **3.2 Respect the environment**

Recognizing that a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the right to a healthy life, clean water, and a thriving ecosystem, Partners of the Freedom of Information Center of Armenia are required to not only respect the natural environment but also prioritize access to information for effective environmental protection. Access to information empowers individuals, communities, and organizations to make informed decisions, actively participate in environmental decision-making processes, and hold authorities accountable for their environmental actions.

### **3.3 Treat all people with respect and dignity**

Partners are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in their working and employment practices. It is essential that Partners refrain from any form of discrimination against employees, beneficiaries, or clients based on race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, political affiliation, union membership, national origin, or marital status.

Creating a safe and respectful working environment is a shared responsibility. By upholding these principles, Partners contribute to the promotion of equality, respect, and dignity within their organizations and in the wider communities they serve.

### **3.4 Avoid conflicts of interest**

Partners shall not undertake any action contrary to human rights principles or which serves to undermine the work of FOICA.

### **3.5 Comply with all relevant laws and regulations**

Partners are required to adhere completely to all laws governing their business operations in the country where they operate, which encompasses both domestic and international laws and regulations concerning anti-money laundering, trafficking, and anti-bribery. They must also abide by internal policies that promote ethical conduct. In instances where there are no specific laws in a particular country,

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Partners must adhere to the standards outlined in this Code. Additionally, Partners are obligated to fulfill all contractual commitments agreed upon with FOICA.

### **3.6 Ensure high standards related to anti-bribery and corruption**

Partners are strictly prohibited from participating in any form of corruption, extortion, fraud, or other illicit payments or offerings. Specifically, Partners are not allowed to provide services, gifts, or benefits to FOICA employees with the intention of influencing any aspect of FOICA's operations. Partners are expected to adhere to international anti-bribery standards outlined in the United Nations' Global Compact, as well as local laws pertaining to corruption and bribery. Moreover, Partners must disclose any conflicts of interest that could compromise the fair and unbiased delivery of their activities or services to FOICA.

### **3.7 Ensure confidentiality and information security**

Partners shall never breach the confidentiality of information they receive in a professional capacity from FOICA. Partners shall not access any unauthorized personal and business information of FOICA.

### **3.8 Ensure exemplary employment practices**

Partners are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of intimidation or subjecting workers to cruel or degrading treatment, which includes sexual harassment, sexual abuse, physical punishment, or mental and physical coercion. Partners must not utilize forced, bonded, indentured, or compulsory labor in any capacity. All employment must be voluntary, and workers should have the freedom to resign or terminate their employment with reasonable notice. It is strictly forbidden for Partners to employ children who are aged 15 years or younger. Partners are expected to adhere to applicable national laws and regulations, including those governing working hours, wages and benefits, anti-trafficking measures, and relevant occupational health and safety regulations.

FOICA reserves the right to update this policy and will strive to notify all affected stakeholders of any changes. Please reach out to us at [foi@foi.am](mailto:foi@foi.am) for any questions or feedback you may have about this Code or to report any breaches.

## **4. Definitions**

### *Abbreviation Definition*

**Code :** This Partner Code of Conduct and Ethics

**Partner :** Partners include employees, volunteers, subgrantees (whether they are organisations or individuals) and their staff / officers of subgrantees; contractors and consultants; and training and event participant.