



CODE OF CONDUCT

TO

PREVENT SEXUAL HARRASSMENT AND

ABUSE

March 2022

UNDERSTANDING THE CODE

The Management and Staff of the CBF approves this code and will ensure that beneficiary staff, CBF staff and consultants have read, understood and are in agreement with the content of this document. CBF staff and consultants accept the consequences of any violation of any of the above provisions under this Code of Conduct.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen Gayle", is written in a cursive style.

Karen McDonald Gayle,
Chief Executive Officer

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INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) has a commitment to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and abuse of power. Staff and consultants of the CBF are personally and collectively responsible for upholding and promoting the highest ethical and professional standards in their work.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the Code of Conduct is to promote greater accountability among and between CBF and the people with whom we work in our programmes. It seeks to protect staff as well as every woman, man, girl and boy with whom we work from abuse by individuals or groups from within the CBF and the Caribbean Sustainable Finance Architecture.

SCOPE

This CBF Code of Conduct applies to all staff and beneficiaries of CBF in all their CBF interactions and joint projects. It also applies to temporary personnel such as consultants and volunteers who work in CBF programs. The term “staff” will be used hereinafter in this document for all fulltime and temporary personnel. All CBF partner organisations are encouraged to promote the spirit and principles of the Code of Conduct.

CBF CODE OF CONDUCT

This CBF Code of Conduct outlines the key responsibilities of all CBF and beneficiary staff in relation to respect for the welfare and rights of the people with whom they work. It is designed to assist staff to better understand the obligations placed upon their conduct, as to prevent the following: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices. Therefore, all CBF and beneficiary staff shall at all times:

- Respect and promote fundamental human rights¹ without discrimination.
- Treat all communities with whom we work, including crisis-affected populations, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees, fairly and with respect, courtesy, dignity and according to International Laws and Standards²
- Promote the implementation of present Code of Conduct by contributing towards the creation and maintenance of an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, abuse of power and corruption.
- Report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of this Code to her/his line manager and/or senior management of the CBF, who is expected to take prompt investigative action.
- Uphold the highest standards of accountability, efficiency, competence, integrity and transparency in the provision of goods and services in the execution of their function.

¹ As set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, see: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

Sexual exploitation and abuse

As one form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) CBF recognises that Sexual Exploitation and Abuse can occur. To protect CBF stakeholders in all situations, CBF staff and beneficiaries shall while on duty and off duty:

- Understand that sexual exploitation and abuse by staff constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.³
- Never engage in any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Never exploit the vulnerability of any target group, especially women and children, or allow any person/s to be put into compromising situations.
- Know that the exchange of employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- Never abuse a position to withhold assistance or give preferential treatment; in order to solicit sexual favours, gifts, payments of any kind, or advantage.
- When working with children, avoid actions or behaviour, which may constitute poor practice⁴ and never act in ways that may place a child at risk of abuse.

Harassment

CBF staff and staff of CBF beneficiary organizations shall never commit any act or form of harassment as it results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to individuals, especially women and children.

Therefore, all CBF Staff shall:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect in the workplace. Speak with civility and consideration.
- Never commit any act or form of harassment as it causes physical, sexual, psychological or emotional harm or suffering to individuals, especially women, children and people with disabilities.
- Never engage in any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, that makes the recipient feel persecuted, vulnerable and powerless.
- Understand what constitutes harassment, recognise early signs of sexual, gender and racial harassment (among others) and take swift action to prevent and resolve.

³ In countries where CBF undertake long-term development work, an employee who engages in a long-term sexual relationship with a member of the community, which is benefiting from an CBF partner's programme, and/or with another employee, is encouraged to inform his or her manager about the relationship to prevent the perception of a conflict of interest.

⁴ Poor practice relates to inappropriate behaviour that infringes an individual's rights or is a failure to fulfil standards of care

Fraud and corruption

CBF has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and corruption. CBF staff and staff of CBF beneficiaries shall never take advantage of their position when working with communities, partners or other stakeholders.

Therefore, staff shall at all times:

- Promote a culture of honesty and openness among staff and management.
- Be transparent in all work-related financial transactions.
- Never steal, misuse or misappropriate funds or property, ensuring that financial and other resources are used solely for the intended purposes. This applies also to any other income generated such as any interest received/earned on the funds.
- Never undertake document or check-forgery, money laundering, taking of commissions and influencing tender process for improper benefit and theft.
- Create a work environment where communities and staff can safely and confidentiality raise and report all serious concerns about suspected fraud and corruption.
- Never knowingly support individuals or entities involved in illegal activities.
- Never deliberately destroy, falsify, alter or conceal evidence material to an investigation or make false statements to investigators in order to materially influence or impede investigations into corrupt, fraudulent, coercive or collusive allegations.
- Conduct all business in accordance with internationally accepted practices and procedures and uphold the highest standards of accountability and transparency in relations to finances, management and governance, where relevant.

Unethical business practices

CBF staff shall:

- Never use or accept a bribe in the form of money, goods and or services to secure a contract for services when dealing with suppliers.
- Never take part in activities that generate personal, organisational or collective profit such as buying or selling when such activities may affect or appear to affect member agencies' credibility or integrity.
- Never take a share in the profits or budget leftovers as kickbacks, cuts or discounts for personal or organizational benefits.
- Declare any known or potential conflicts of interest to their employer (e.g. direct relationship with service providers or suppliers of goods for programmes, etc.).
- Never accept any gifts or other favours that may influence the performance of staff functions or duties. Gifts are defined as, but not limited to: services, travel, entertainment, material goods, among others. In order to respect national and local traditions and conventional hospitality, minor token gifts such as pens, calendars, desk diaries, etc. can be accepted.⁵

⁵ It is recommended here that staff and beneficiaries establish a clear maximum value that is thought to be acceptable.

- Never use, nor tolerate partners' use of, illegal labour, child labour and forced labour in any work area
- Always strive for the highest health, safety and environmental standards in all programme work.
- Never use or distribute known unsafe products or supplies.

Security

CBF places the security and safety of all staff and those with whom we work as a top priority and will strive to do all that it reasonably can to ensure that staff are secure as they go about their work. Security is an individual as well as an organisational responsibility, therefore all staff shall:

- Adhere to their own organisation's security policy and procedures.
- CBF staff visiting partner countries will adhere to the security policy and procedure of the host agencies.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Violation of this Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and may, in accordance with relevant legislation, lead to internal disciplinary actions, dismissal or even criminal prosecution. Each staff or beneficiary of CBF has a responsibility to handle and respond to any allegations of misconduct they receive from their stakeholders about their employees in line with their organisational policies and related disciplinary measures.

Management of CBF beneficiary organisations establish proper systems for investigating, recording and dealing with misconduct. A mechanism should be in place where aints are investigated promptly, while maintaining discretion and confidentiality and protecting the rights of all individuals involved. Breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported immediately to senior management and in line with the organisation's internal reporting mechanisms. Those who wish to lodge a complaint about an alleged breach of this Code by a member of CBF staff should lodge their complaint to their line manager as soon as possible after they become aware of the concern. Any CBF staff or beneficiary staff purposely making false accusations on another member of staff will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the employer. false accusations on another member of staff will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the employer.