



## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ACTED STAFF**

**Version 7 | 2023**

Independent, private and non-profit, Acted respects a strict political and religious impartiality, and operates following principles of neutrality, non-discrimination and transparency, according to its core values: responsibility, impact, enterprising-spirit and inspiration.

Acted is committed to immediate humanitarian relief to support those in urgent need and protect people's dignity, while co-creating longer term opportunities for sustainable growth and fulfilling people's potential. Acted endeavours to respond to humanitarian crises and build resilience; promote inclusive and sustainable growth; co-construct effective governance and support the building of civil society worldwide by investing in people and their potential. Finally, Acted is committed to the promotion of a 3Zero world: zero exclusion, zero carbon, zero poverty.

The commitment of Acted is guided by 4 core values:

- **Responsibility:** we ensure the efficient and responsible delivery of humanitarian aid with the means and the resources that have been entrusted to us.
- **Impact:** we are committed to having the most sustainable impact for the communities and the people with whom we engage.
- **Enterprising-spirit:** we are enterprising and engage in our work with a spirit that creates value and overcomes challenges.
- **Inspiration:** we strive to inspire all those around us through our vision, values, approaches, choices, practice, actions and advocacy.

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to provide clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are required to abide by.

This Code is governed by:

- Acted's Child Protection Policy;
- Acted's Grievance Policy;
- Acted's Policy against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment;
- Acted's Gender Policy;
- Acted's Conflict of Interest Prevention Policy;
- Acted's Data Protection Policy;
- Acted's Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy;
- Acted's Anti-Terrorism and Anti-money laundering Policy
- Acted's Environmental and Social Protection Policy;
- Acted's procedures, manuals (e.g. Finance, Logistics, Administration & Human Resources, Security & Safety), handbooks (e.g. Transparency & Compliance, Appraisal, Monitoring & Evaluation, Project Management, Project Development) and charters (e.g. Use of Information Systems);
- Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, of which Acted is a signatory;
- U.N. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six core principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Under the terms of this Code of Conduct, Acted staff covers all employees, volunteers, interns and freelance consultants, both international and national, whether they are based in headquarters or in the field of Acted, its sister organisations and the member organisations of the Acted Network.



It is binding on all Acted staff:

- You must read and fully understand the content of this Code. If you have any questions it is your responsibility to ask your supervisor for clarification.
- If you fail to adhere to any of the provisions set out in this document you can face disciplinary action, dismissal or even legal action.
- You have a duty to report any breach of this Code to your supervisor or through Acted's established reporting mechanisms through:
  - [grievance@acted.org](mailto:grievance@acted.org) for personal and professional conduct,
  - <https://transparency.acted.org/> or [transparency@acted.org](mailto:transparency@acted.org) for protection of assets and resources,
  - Security Incident Report (SIR) regarding safety and security,
  - Acted feedback mechanism for beneficiaries.
- You also have a duty to inform beneficiaries and others with whom Acted is working of this Code that Acted staff must adhere to, including the rules relating to the reporting of misconduct and failure by Acted staff. All reports and concerns will be properly considered and treated with discretion. Acted will address any breaches of this Code that are reported through the established mechanisms.
- If you are a manager, you will have particular responsibilities to set a good example and to create a working environment conducive to upholding the standards of the Code of Conduct, as well as to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

In the framework of Acted's "zero tolerance approach" on breaches of the Code of Conduct, it is the duty of all of us to think about and manage our behaviour to fit with the values and principles of Acted and the following requirements at all times.

## 1 – I WILL RESPECT OTHERS

- I will respect all persons equally and without any distinction or discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, tribe, gender, religious beliefs, political opinion or disability.
- I will act fairly, honestly and tactfully and treat people with dignity and respect. I will respect the national law and local culture, traditions, customs and practices that are in line with UN conventions.
- I will contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding.
- I will dress in a manner appropriate to the assignment and the cultural setting.

**Consequently,**

- I will not take part in any form of discrimination, harassment, or abuse (physical, sexual or verbal), intimidation or exploitation, or in any other way infringe the rights of others.



## 2 – I WILL MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT, BOTH PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL ...

...by serving the mandate and values of Acted, by applying Acted manuals, policies, guidelines, handbooks, charters, internal rules and procedures, by striving for high standards in my work, taking responsibility for my actions and not abusing my position of power as an Acted representative. I will refrain from behaving in a way that undermines my ability to do my job or is likely to harm Acted's reputation. I will ensure that my personal and professional performance is always based on a non-racist, non-discriminatory, gender sensitive and environmental-friendly conduct.

### Consequently,

- I will neither support nor take part in any form of criminal, illegal, exploitative or abusive activities, including, for example child labour, paedophilia, forced prostitution, trafficking of human beings, commodities and intoxicants.
- I will never knowingly support, tolerate or encourage terrorism or the activities of those who embrace terrorism;
- I will not ask for or invite any kind of personal payment, service or favour from others, especially beneficiaries, in return for our help, support, goods or services of any kind.
- I will not be in possession of, nor profit from the sale of, illicit/illegal goods or substances.
- I will not drink alcohol or use any other substances in a way that affects my ability to do my job or affects the reputation of Acted. Likewise, I will under no circumstances drive an Acted vehicle<sup>1</sup> under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal intoxicants. I understand that any knowledge of staff handling any kind of Acted motorized transportation means under such influence should be reported and will be dealt with as a breach on the Code of Conduct and security regulations, and lead to disciplinary measures.
- I will not accept bribes or significant gifts (except small tokens of appreciation valued less than 30 USD that I will immediately notify to my line manager) from governments, beneficiaries, donors, suppliers or others.
- I will not enter into any sort of business relationship on behalf of Acted with family, friends or other personal/professional contacts for the supply of any goods or service to Acted or any employment related matters without authorisation.
- I will not use the organisation's computer or other equipment to view, download, create or distribute inappropriate material, such as pornography and paedophilia.
- I am aware that sexual exploitation and abuse constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of my employment.
- I will not engage in any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) and am aware that this is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
- I will not exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour and am aware that it is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

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1. Authorized drivers only as per the ACTED Global Security & Safety manual.



- I am obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of this code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.
- I will not carry weapons or wear military uniforms within Acted premises and vehicles and when on duty.
- I will use due care, skill and foresight to minimize environmental harm and comply with environmental regulations and standards applicable to both my work and personal behaviour to minimise environmental pollution and to contribute to the protection of the environment.

### 3 – I WILL COMMIT TO PROTECT ACTED’S BENEFICIARIES

...by taking into consideration the difficult experiences that victims of disasters have faced and the disadvantaged position in which they may find themselves in relation to those who hold power or influence over certain aspects of their lives, **I will** always seek to care for and protect the rights of the most vulnerable, e.g. children, in particular orphans and separated children, women, single parents, elderly, disabled, chronically sick and vulnerable minority groups. **I will** do my utmost to support Acted’s assistance and protection work and act in a manner that ensures that beneficiaries’ interests are my paramount consideration.

#### Consequently,

- I will not act in a way that breaches Acted’s operational guidelines, manuals, handbooks and procedures, in particular Acted’s child protection policy or in any way place our beneficiaries at risk of harm.
- I will not abuse the power and influence that I have by virtue of my position over the lives and well-being of beneficiaries. I will never request or receive any service or favour from beneficiaries, staff members or other persons in return for assistance or protection. I will never engage in any exploitative relationships – sexual<sup>2</sup>, emotional, financial or employment-related – with beneficiaries.
- I will not engage in any sexual relationship with a person benefitting from humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position and am aware that this is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- I will not withhold information about any current criminal convictions, charges or civil proceedings, in particular relating to child abuse, either prior to my hiring with Acted as well as when I join Acted or arising during the time of my employment.
- I will avoid, minimize and manage the damage I cause to the environment and the climate in line with the principle of “do no harm” on our beneficiaries who are often heavily affected by climate change and environmental degradation yet they have contributed the least to it.

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2. The term ‘sexual exploitation’ is here defined as any 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. Similarly, the term ‘sexual abuse’ means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.



## **4 – I WILL ENSURE TO BE ATTENTIVE TO THE SAFETY & SECURITY OF MYSELF & OTHERS...**

... by being aware of and complying with Acted security & safety policies and practices and highlighting to my line manager any areas of concern.

**Consequently,**

- I will make myself familiar and comply with all global and local Acted security & safety and health rules and procedures.
- I will not behave in a way, which creates unnecessary risk to my security or the security of others.

## **5 – I WILL PROTECT ACTED'S RESOURCES AND ASSETS...**

... by handling Acted financial resources and assets carefully and by performing my official duties and conducting my private affairs in a manner that avoids conflict of interest. In particular:

- I will ensure Acted's resources are not misused and protect them from theft, fraud or other damage.
- I will disclose potential conflict of interest with a supplier, service provider or business partner (such as family relations or shareholding).
- I will not use offices, Acted property or knowledge gained from functions with Acted for private gain, financial or otherwise, or for the private gain of any third party, including family, friends or those they favour.
- I will protect, manage and utilize Acted human, financial and material resources efficiently and effectively, bearing in mind that these resources have been placed at Acted's disposal for the benefit of beneficiaries and other persons of concern to Acted.
- I will use resources provided to me by Acted efficiently and through careful planning. This includes among others reducing the amount of energy consumed, grouping my journeys with others whenever possible, properly taking care of Acted assets in my daily activities, minimizing the creation of waste, and wherever economically possible reuse, repair and recycle materials.
- I will maintain electronic files and archives in a responsible manner keeping in mind the necessary protection of privacy. Information that may be considered illegal, offensive or inappropriate must under no circumstances be processed, downloaded, stored or disseminated.
- I will use the computer equipment and information systems made available to me in strict compliance with the principles and rules defined in Acted 's Charter for the Use of Information Systems.

**Consequently,**

- I will not seek personal gain from my employment with Acted and will resist any undue political pressure in decision-making. In particular, I will not receive or provide bribes, including kick-backs of any kind.
- I will neither seek nor accept instructions regarding the performance of my duties from any government or from any authority external to Acted. I will not accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any authority; nor will I accept these from any other source external to Acted without prior authorisation, except for minor token items of appreciation valued less than 30 USD.



- I will not engage in any outside occupation or employment without prior authorisation. I will not accept supplementary payments or subsidies from a government or any other source.
- I will not assist private persons or companies in their undertakings with Acted where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment. I will never participate in activities related to procurement of goods or services, or in human resource activities, where a conflict of interest may arise and will always act in strict conformity with related Acted policies, guidelines and instructions.

## **6 – I WILL PROTECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ACTED’S INFORMATION AND DATA...**

... by handling Acted’s information and data carefully and with discretion. In particular:

- I will safeguard and make responsible use of the information to which I have access as a result of my employment with Acted.
- I will exercise due care in all matters of official business, and not divulge any confidential information about beneficiaries and persons of concern to Acted, colleagues and other work-related matters.
- I will exercise necessary caution and discretion with regard to political, military or security matters in official or private communications, including telephone calls, radio messages, e-mails, social media and letters.
- I will ensure, when engaged in communication activities, that portrayal of individuals and their circumstances are fairly represented in terms of their capacities and vulnerabilities. I will make all necessary efforts to explain how photos and stories will be used and to obtain permission from the individuals for the use of their photos and stories.

### **Consequently,**

- I will not reveal, both while working for and after leaving Acted, any confidential information I have obtained while working for Acted to any third party unless legally required to do so. I am aware that the breach of professional confidentiality, both while employed and after leaving the organization, might lead to a claim for compensation and/or prosecution.
- I will not make comments to the media or to journalists on behalf of Acted without prior agreement with the Country Director or Communication Department in Paris.
- I will not issue statements to the press or other agencies of public information or submit articles, books or other material for publication, including on internet blogs, websites, online media, social media and any public electronic forums, if such act relates to the activities or interest of Acted, without prior necessary approval from the HQ Communication department. I am committed to a responsible management of any personal social media platform, including Facebook and Twitter, in accordance with the law and the standards listed in the present Code of conduct, on which I will not disclose any confidential professional matters, nor divulge any confidential information about beneficiaries and persons of concern to Acted, colleagues and other work-related matters, nor represent Acted in any way.



## 7 – I WILL REPORT ANY INCIDENT OR CONCERN RELATING TO THIS CODE

In order to create the conditions for this Code of Conduct to enter into force, we must not only apply it individually but all Acted staff have a duty to report within Acted any potential incident, abuse or concern that we witness or are made aware of.

### **Consequently,**

- If I develop concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same organization or not, I must report such concerns via established organizational reporting mechanisms ([grievance@acted.org](mailto:grievance@acted.org)).
- I will report through appropriate channels any matter which appears to break the standards contained in this Code of Conduct.



I am aware of the fact that any breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, dismissal or even legal action and that intentionally false accusations and reports are seen as a breach of the Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Date: .....

Location: .....

Staff member's first and last name: .....

Signature.....

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