

## **Ethical guidelines - Guide for Norad's grant recipients**

Valid from January 2014

### **1. Introduction**

The requirement for all of Norad's grant recipients to have ethical guidelines for their activities is incorporated in Norad's Grant scheme rules.

Ethical guidelines derive from universal values such as respect, justice, loyalty, reliability, truthfulness, and the notion that one should treat others as oneself would like to be treated. This guide sets a minimum level for such standards. Each grant recipient must consider whether they need to add additional standards adapted to their organisation's needs.

Ethical guidelines may be part of a strategy or an action plan, or be prepared as a separate document.<sup>1</sup> Grant recipients may choose the scope and setup of the guidelines adapted to the size of the organisation, its work methods and approach. The ethical guidelines are not meant to replace, but rather to complement existing legal rules in Norway and abroad (e.g. criminal law and labour law).

### **2. Purpose**

The requirement for ethical guidelines and the practical implementation must be seen in relation to the fact that development organisations that manage funds often dispose significantly more resources than their partners and target groups. This vests power in the organisations, and experience shows that such power can be abused. Poverty, conflict and persecution make people more vulnerable to such abuse. Managers of aid funds are dependent on public trust to carry out their activities. Abuse of power by taking advantage of colleagues, beneficiaries or others for financial, political, sexual or other gain, undermines public trust.

The purpose of setting ethical standards for the use of Norad's funds is to;

- counteract abuse of power, and prevent people in vulnerable situations from being exploited by persons linked to Norwegian development assistance
- ensure necessary follow-up procedures when abuse of power occurs, with the aim of justice for the victim, and to restore confidence in the organisation

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<sup>1</sup> Grant recipients covered by the Code of Ethics for the Norwegian Public Service or the UN Code of Conduct will not be required to document this.

- establish public trust in the management of Norwegian development assistance, support the integrity and credibility of development assistance in general, and protect Norad's and its partners' reputation.

### 3. Content

At the overall level, the guidelines should contain provisions on the organisation's work in accordance with the ethical standards required by **relevant UN and ILO conventions**.

The guidelines should contain rules of conduct for persons taking part in the grant recipient's activities in that they perform work for, or on behalf of, the grant recipient or its local partner(s) on a permanent or temporary basis, paid or unpaid.

The guidelines shall as a minimum contain provisions which:

- stipulate the duty to act in accordance with the **organisation's core values**.
- demand **respect for human rights**, e.g. that work should be carried out without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, social status, sexual orientation, disability, religious or political affiliation, etc.
- encourage **respect for the host country's laws, culture and religion**, insofar as these are not in conflict with international human rights standards.
- are strict regarding **sexual abuse**, sexual exploitation and harassment.<sup>2</sup> This kind of exploitation often involves providing material goods or privileges in exchange for sexual favours. Sexual acts with children (persons under 18) must not occur, regardless of local age of majority and/or local age of valid consent. Ignorance or wrong perception about the child's age shall not exempt from liability. This also applies to the spread or use of material that exploits children. Grant recipients should consider obtaining attestation of good conduct from employees who are in direct contact with children in connection with their work.
- combat **corruption** and other misuse of aid funds, i.e. to provide oneself, one's organisation or a third party an undue advantage, e.g. by giving or receiving gifts, travels, discounts, bonuses or other benefits that could potentially influence one's own or the recipient's actions in service.<sup>3</sup>
- identify requirements for notification of **unacceptable working conditions**.
- make it clear that rules for the **possession and use of drugs** shall be followed. In countries with particularly liberal rules, one should consider adding more stringent standards. Use of drugs whilst driving should be addressed.

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<sup>2</sup> "Sexual abuse" meaning to acquire, or attempting to acquire for oneself or others sexual acts by violence or threatening behavior. "Sexual exploitation" meaning to provide for oneself or others sexual acts by abuse of position, relationships of trust and/or dependence, or exploiting someone's vulnerable position.

<sup>3</sup> Gifts which in value follow local norms of politeness will normally be accepted.

For grants to research and higher education, the following ethical checklist shall be reflected:

[http://www.forskningradet.no/en/Article/Research\\_Ethics\\_checklist/1182736871270](http://www.forskningradet.no/en/Article/Research_Ethics_checklist/1182736871270)

#### 4. Follow-up

The development of ethical guidelines should be an inclusive and ongoing process. Each organisation should develop and strengthen its **ethical competence and awareness** at all levels. This can for instance be by using examples from situations that arise which may stimulate reflection about the ethical boundaries of proper conduct (dilemma training).

The ethical guidelines should constitute a part of the employees' conditions for employment. For consultants and collaborators, the ethical guidelines should be integral to contracts. It should be a requirement to submit a signed declaration that one has read and understood the contents, along with a pledge to comply with the guidelines.

The guidelines should cover the **consequences of violations** - from warning, a consideration of dismissal / termination / exclusion without undue delay, to handing over of the case to police authorities.

Grant recipients should have clear procedures for **notification** of violations of the ethical guidelines. The procedures shall establish all employees' right and duty to notify. Examination of such notifications should be undertaken as soon as possible. Investigations should be executed professionally and confidentially, with regard to any whistleblower's anonymity.

It must be clear which staff members or positions at the organisation's various levels shall be **responsible** for information and follow-up of the ethical guidelines, as well as for the implementation of necessary measures when violations are detected. Transparency in grant management is an important prerequisite.

It is also important that the grant recipient provides **follow-up and support** to victims of e.g. sexual exploitation, and prevents retaliations against persons who have notified the organisation of violations of the ethical guidelines.