



AfricaRice

Policy on Protection Against and Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination

Version 1

Effective Date: 10 June 2026

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Document Management

Functional Area:	Business Ethics
Owner/Contact:	Ethics/Legal Officer
Directorate	Office of Director General
Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date of approval:	10 June 2026
Date of Next Review:	09 June 2029
Title in English:	Policy on Protection Against and Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination
Title in French:	
Related Policies and Procedures	• Code of Ethics and Business Conduct for Personnel. • Protection Against and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation and Abuse, and Human Trafficking. • Policy on Whistleblowing and Protection from Retaliation • Staff Management Policy • Ethics & Business Conduct Escalation Framework • Manual of Procedures for General Services Staff • Internationally Recruited Staff Manual of Procedures • CGIAR Integrated Partnership Anti-harassment and Discrimination Policy • CGIAR Integrated Partnership Ethics & Business Conduct Escalation Framework
History of versions	Version 1
Key points	This is the first version of this policy This policy has been developed and aligned to the CGIAR Integrated Partnership Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. AfricaRice as a member of CGIAR is committed to providing an inclusive and safe working environment that is free of all forms of harassment and discrimination, and to fostering a work culture where AfricaRice Staff feel empowered to report concerns of improper conduct.
- 1.2. Empower AfricaRice staff to report misconduct with the assurance of confidentiality and protection from retaliation.
- 1.3. AfricaRice is guided by a zero-tolerance principle to any form of harassment, including abuse of authority, bullying, sexual harassment, or discrimination as defined in this Policy. Zero tolerance means that all reports of improper conduct are taken seriously and that perpetrators of misconduct are held accountable for their actions. This principle also means that retaliation against those who speak up against violations of AfricaRice' Code of Ethics and Business Conduct, including those specified in this Policy, is prohibited.
- 1.4. AfricaRice takes the necessary steps to prevent improper workplace conduct and to respond appropriately where prevention has failed to ensure the well-being of its workforce and protect AfricaRice' reputation for excellence and integrity. To this end, the overall purpose of this Policy is to:
 - 1.4.1. Provide a clear understanding of the types of behaviors that are prohibited
 - 1.4.2. Outline the obligations on Staff, and the special responsibilities on managers and supervisors in preventing and addressing workplace conflicts and inappropriate behaviors.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This is a Centre-wide Policy applies to all AfricaRice staff, temporary staff, consultants, trainees, interns, and students (referred to as "Staff" or "Staff Members" throughout this Policy). Third parties, including contractors, vendors, representatives, collaborators and partners are expected to adhere to the standards set out herein.
- 2.2. This Policy covers conduct that occurs at the workplace, or outside the workplace, including on official travel, work-related training, and social events, and in a private context outside working hours where the conduct impacts the work environment.
- 2.3. AfricaRice recognizes that it may not be able to mandate this Policy for certain partners such as governments and independent external agencies. However, AfricaRice shall seek the understanding of such partners to adhere to specific conditions in partnership agreements relating to the intents and purposes of this Policy.
- 2.4. AfricaRice may include specific conditions in such partnership agreements, or end partnerships based on a partner's failure to follow the standards described in this Policy or an equivalent Policy of the partner. If it is not possible to include such provisions in the agreement, AfricaRice shall assess the partner's policies and standards relating to this Policy to determine whether AfricaRice can work with the specific partner.
- 2.5. This policy is written to complement and coexist with policies of sponsors and funding agencies and will be interpreted consistently where possible, with guidance sought internally from the ethics advisor, legal office, or other designated representative within AfricaRice.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Prohibited or Improper Conduct:** refers to all forms of harassment and discrimination. Annex I to this Policy provides a non-exhaustive list of behaviors that may constitute prohibited conduct.
- 3.2. **Discrimination:** is any unjustifiable differentiation between individuals or groups or the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of Staff, based on such grounds as a person's race, gender, gender identity/gender expression, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, or any other protected characteristics under applicable law. Discrimination involves direct or indirect actions that are based on distinctions or prejudices which have the purpose or effect of treating one person or a group of people inequitably or unjustly. Discrimination may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority
- 3.3. **Harassment:** refers to any unwelcome or offensive conduct that has had, or might reasonably be expected to have, the effect of:
 - 3.3.1. offending, humiliating, embarrassing, or intimidating another person(s),
 - 3.3.2. Creating an intimidating or hostile work environment and/or unreasonably interfering with another person(s)' ability to carry out their functions at work.
 - 3.3.3. Harassment may occur through words (written or spoken), gestures or actions, and can be directed at one person or several people, at any level. There are different types of harassing behaviors, including abuse of authority, bullying/mobbing, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Any person of any gender identity may be the victim of any type of harassment.
 - 3.3.4. **Frequency:** Harassment normally implies persistent or repetitive events rather than a single or isolated occurrence. However, a one-off incident might be considered harassment depending on its nature and gravity.
 - 3.3.5. **Intent:** The intention of the perpetrator is not determinative of whether harassment occurred; an act which is reasonably perceived by a person as offensive may constitute harassment regardless of whether it was so intended
- 3.4. **Sexual Harassment:** is any unwelcome and unwanted behavior of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, that is offensive or creates a hostile or intimidating work environment. Sexual harassment may include unwanted sexual advances, unsolicited requests for sexual favors, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or perceived to intimidate, cause offense or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work or is made a condition of employment. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite sex or the same sex and regardless of the ranks and status of the individuals involved.
- 3.5. **"Quid pro quo" sexual harassment:** where sexual harassment is committed by a person in a position to influence the career or employment conditions of the victim, the conduct is referred to as quid pro quo harassment and may also constitute an abuse of authority. Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when sexual favors are sought, either under the express or implied promise of a reward for acquiescence or express or implied threats of detrimental action for refusal. While this form of sexual harassment typically arises when a more senior person takes improper advantage of their position to try to elicit sexual favors from a subordinate, it may also occur between colleagues irrespective of their seniority.
- 3.6. **Abuse of Authority:** is the improper use of a position of influence, power, or authority by an individual towards others, whether through a one-time incident or series of

incidents. It is particularly serious when the alleged offender uses influence, power, or authority to improperly influence the career or employment conditions of another (e.g., through decisions on assignments, contract renewal, performance evaluation or promotion). Abuse of authority or misuse of power may include intimidation, express or implied threats, blackmail, or coercion.

- 3.7. **Bullying:** is repeatedly offensive, cruel, intimidating, insulting, or humiliating behavior that undermines an individual or group of individuals. Bullying may be physical, verbal, visual or written.
- 3.8. **Cyber-bullying:** refers to situations of unwanted or aggressive conduct, perpetrated through electronic or social media that may harm, threaten, or demoralize the recipient(s), and can occur during and/or outside working hours.
- 3.9. **Mobbing:** is the term used when a group of individuals subject a person to bullying. Like bullying, mobbing typically occurs repeatedly and regularly over a period.

4. Policy Statements

- 4.1. AfricaRice recognizes that harassment in any form has the potential to severely impact mental health and physical well-being, lower productivity, create divisions within teams, and is costly to the organization.
- 4.2. Staff are responsible for creating a safe culture for everyone and must refrain from any prohibited conduct as defined in this Policy
- 4.3. AfricaRice has zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination.
- 4.4. Incident may be considered harassment depending on its nature and gravity, regardless of the frequency and intentions of the perpetrator.
- 4.5. All reports will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, with information shared on a need-to-know basis, ensuring the protection of due process, adherence to applicable law, and the rights of individuals involved, including the victim and the accused, subject to the immunities and privileges accorded to AfricaRice in the hosting country.
- 4.6. Conduct not considered Harassment: Managers and supervisors may need to make assessments or decisions with which their supervisees may not agree; for example, about performance or work tasks. In doing so, they have a responsibility to give balanced, frank, clear and constructive feedback and, where necessary, to take appropriate corrective action in accordance with AfricaRice' policies. Unless such assessment, decisions or actions are made in a manner that is offensive or intimidating, or used to retaliate against their supervisee, such actions would not normally constitute harassment.
- 4.7. Every Staff Member that experiences harassment of, and/or discrimination against him or herself, or witnesses a Staff Member being harassed or discriminated against, must take prompt action, including encouraging them to seek advice or report the offensive conduct, tell the offending person that their conduct is inappropriate; or seek advice without disclosing the names of those involved.
 - 4.7.1. Staff are encouraged to undertake efforts to resolve disputes and to discuss inappropriate behavior at an early stage, if possible, with their managers or dignity advisors. Managers must make themselves available to anyone who wishes to raise a complaint and should recognize the seriousness of any complaints raised and respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of the matter. With the consent of the person reporting concerns to them, Managers may

approach any of the designated Ethics Focal Point to seek further guidance or to make a formal report of the matter.

- 4.7.2. If a situation cannot be resolved informally, the Staff member may decide to make a formal report following the steps elaborated in Annex II to this Policy or use the whistleblowing channel. Where the Staff member finds that no action is taken at the center level, they may use the (anonymous) Lighthouse whistleblowing hotline (Lighthouse Services: Illuminating Corporate Integrity (lighthouse-services.com) to escalate any prohibited conduct to the CGIAR Ethics and Business Conduct. Next steps will be determined in accordance with applicable procedures.
- 4.8. Non-compliance with, or violations of, this Policy may amount to misconduct and, as such, may result in disciplinary measures in accordance with the relevant AfricaRice disciplinary procedures/Staff Management Policy/IRS & GSS Personnel Manuals

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Board of Trustees

- 5.1.1. Review and approve changes and revisions to this policy.
- 5.1.2. Champion an ethical organizational culture by actively embracing this Policy
- 5.1.3. Provide oversight for compliance with this Policy

5.2. Director General

- 5.2.1. Review, approve and implement the provisions of this Policy.
- 5.2.2. Championing an ethical organizational culture by actively embracing this Policy, setting the tone, and leading by example.
- 5.2.3. Ensure that all Staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities pursuant to this Policy.
- 5.2.4. Ensure appropriate measures are in place to protect from reprisal/retaliation anyone who reports wrongdoings and makes a good faith report.

5.3. Executive Management Committee

- 5.3.1. Review and recommend updates and revisions to this policy.
- 5.3.2. Championing an ethical organizational culture by actively embracing this Policy, setting the tone, and leading by example.
- 5.3.3. Support the implementation of this Policy.
- 5.3.4. Participate in training on CGIAR governance officials' obligations for this Policy.
- 5.3.5. Ensure a safe environment for all Staff. All complaints received shall be treated with discretion, sensitivity, and confidentiality. Anyone involved in receiving and handling complaints of alleged breaches of this Policy has a duty to maintain the confidentiality of the process. Information is therefore to be shared on a need-to-know basis only.

5.4. CGIAR Ombudspersons

- 5.4.1. Confidential support and informal resolution options are available to all staff

5.5. Program Leaders/Country Managers/Heads of Units

- 5.5.1. Demonstrate their commitment to providing a safe and respectful work environment by maintaining the highest standard of professional behavior and personal conduct.

- 5.5.2.** Communicate respectful workplace behaviors and hold those who report to them accountable for upholding a respectful work environment. In addition, they should monitor the well-being of their supervisees and take prompt action to stop inappropriate behaviors that others may find offensive or that may contribute to a hostile work environment.
- 5.5.3.** Ensure that potentially offensive material is not displayed or circulated in the workplace.
- 5.5.4.** Undertake efforts to resolve disputes among Staff at an early stage and make themselves available to those who wish to raise concerns of inappropriate behavior by others in confidence and handle those concerns promptly and effectively.
- 5.5.5.** Recognize the seriousness of any complaints raised and respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of the matter. With the consent of the person reporting concerns to them, managers may approach the Human Resources Office to seek further guidance or to make a formal report on the matter.

5.6. Human Resources Manager

- 5.6.1.** Ensure implementation and adherence to this policy
- 5.6.2.** Review and prepare changes, updates and revisions to this policy.
- 5.6.3.** Organize Regular campaigns across AfricaRice promote awareness of prohibited conduct and the available reporting mechanisms.

5.7. Staff

- 5.7.1.** Demonstrate respectful behavior.
- 5.7.2.** Take prompt action if they observe that a colleague may be subject to inappropriate conduct and provide support to those concerned.
- 5.7.3.** Respectively communicate to their colleagues about conduct they find offensive and would like to be stopped. Actively remind colleagues of appropriate conduct and respectful behavior
- 5.7.4.** Report any suspicion, allegation, or evidence of a possible violation of this Policy, whether they have experienced or witnessed the behavior.
- 5.7.5.** Cooperate fully in any commissioned investigations.
- 5.7.6.** Staff are not expected to bring complaints that are found to lack merit or credibility having been made out of bitterness, personal vendetta, or other malicious intent.
- 5.7.7.** Participate in training and support Ethics and Business Conduct in awareness-raising campaigns for staff, collaborators, project participants, and local communities.

6. Review.

- 6.1.** This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required by the Human Resource Office.
- 6.2.** Any changes made to the Policy will be presented to the Executive Management Committee (EMC) for endorsement and thereafter submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

7. Related Documentation

- 7.1. Code of Ethics and Business Conduct for Personnel.
- 7.2. Protection Against and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation and Abuse, and Human Trafficking.
- 7.3. Policy on Whistleblowing and Protection from Retaliation
- 7.4. Staff Management Policy
- 7.5. Ethics & Business Conduct Escalation Framework
- 7.6. Manual of Procedures for General Services Staff
- 7.7. Internationally Recruited Staff Manual of Procedures
- 7.8. CGIAR Integrated Partnership Anti-harassment and Discrimination Policy
- 7.9. CGIAR Integrated Partnership Ethics & Business Conduct Escalation Framework

8. Annexes

- 8.1. Annex 1: Examples of Prohibited Conduct

Annex 1: Examples of Prohibited Conduct

This annex provides examples of behaviors that may constitute harassment, bullying, discrimination, abuse of authority, or sexual harassment. These examples are illustrative, not exhaustive, and are intended to reflect diverse regional and cultural contexts within AfricaRice. Given the worldwide reach of the AfricaRice, cultural norms may also interact with our policies and if this is the case, staff should always seek guidance from the Director responsible for human resources for support in interpreting or understanding this policy.

1. Harassment: General Examples:

- Use of offensive jokes, ridicule, or gossip targeting personal characteristics such as appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin.
- Racial slurs and negative stereotyping of an individual or group.
- Verbal or written comments intended to demean or belittle someone, such as public criticism.
- Persistent unwelcome questions about personal or family matters, especially in contexts where privacy is culturally valued.
- Display of images or written materials that are offensive, obscene or objectionable.
- Making disparaging remarks about someone's accent or language proficiency in multilingual regions.

2. Bullying: General Examples:

- Setting unattainable goals or deadlines to undermine a colleague.
- Publicly humiliating or ridiculing someone in front of their colleagues
- Consistently excluding an individual from work-related discussions or decisions.
- Regular setting of clearly unattainable work goals and deadlines.

3. Cyberbullying - General Examples:

- Sending harassing or threatening messages through email, text, or workplace communication platforms.
- Sharing offensive memes, jokes, or materials about a colleague in group chats or social media.
- Posting derogatory comments about a coworker online.
- Using online forums to spread false claims about someone's professional qualifications.

4. Sexual Harassment: General Examples:

- Making inappropriate comments about a person's appearance or body.
- Persistent unwelcome invitations to social events after being declined.

- Unsolicited physical contact, such as touching or hugging, or unwelcome unnecessarily close physical proximity.
- Sending inappropriate or sexually suggestive messages over messaging platforms.
- “*Quid pro quo*” sexual harassment by a supervisor or person in a position of authority with respect to the target’s employment status.

5. Discrimination: General Examples:

- Denying opportunities for advancement based on race, gender, or disability.
- Excluding someone from a project due to their perceived national origin or religious beliefs.
- Favoring individuals from dominant ethnic groups in hiring or promotions.
- Penalizing employees for not conforming to traditional gender norms, such as dress or behavioral expectations.

6. Abuse of Authority: General Examples:

- Coercing employees into performing personal tasks unrelated to their work duties.
- Threatening non-renewal of contracts if unreasonable demands are not met.
- Using positional power to force employees to accept unethical practices.
- Favoring relatives or individuals from the same community in recruitment or project allocations.