Code of Conduct

for Contractual Partners of the FDFA

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and its foreign policy are guided by the general objective of defending the independence, security and prosperity of Switzerland. In pursuing these interests, the FDFA promotes in particular the following values:

- combating hardship and poverty
- respecting human rights
- democracy
- peaceful coexistence
- the preservation of natural resources
- gender equality.

All individuals, companies or other entities that work together with the FDFA are obligated to contribute to the promotion of these values and to act in accordance with them, as well as with the legal order. This applies both to professional contexts and to private matters that have an influence on the professional domain.

The Code of Conduct outlines the attitude and the behaviour that the FDFA expects from its contractual partners (providers of goods and services, consultants, contractors, organisations responsible for implementing projects and/or recipients of contributions, etc.) in Switzerland as well as abroad.

It is binding, and an integral part of all contractual agreements made between the FDFA and its partners. In signing their contract, partners take on the commitment to observe the Code of Conduct, to ensure observance by their personnel and their subcontractors, and to behave accordingly. Any action violating the Code of Conduct may entail an enquiry and the imposition of measures relating to non-compliance with contractual obligations, or of other measures.

The FDFA does not tolerate any behaviour that is punishable by law or an infringement of the rules, in particular those of good governance, whether on the part of its employees, or of third parties with which it has a contractual agreement.[1]

[1] **Cf. Art. 6 of the Code of Conduct of the Federal Administration**:
https://www.epa.admin.ch/dam/epa/de/dokumente/dokumentation/publikationen/370_verhaltenskodex_e.pdf.download.pdf/370_verhaltenskodex_e.pdf

The Components of the Code of Conduct

Values and interests of the FDFA

The contractual partners of the FDFA always provide their full support for the success of the activities of the FDFA, and for the effective implementation of the policies and strategies adopted by it.

They regularly reflect upon their actions and behaviour, and on those of their employees, colleagues and subcontractors. They ensure that they act in conformity with the values of the FDFA.

Exercising power

The contractual partners of the FDFA are fully aware of the power inherent in their role. They make decisions in a responsible manner, giving due consideration to their cooperation with the FDFA and to its interests.

Their decisions are transparent and entirely unprejudiced.

Conduct abroad

The contractual partners of the FDFA respect foreign laws.

They adapt their behaviour, appearance and verbal expression to the function that they exercise and to the customs of the host country.

Conduct towards the population and colleagues

The contractual partners of the FDFA demonstrate respect in their relations with others. They reject any form of disrespectful social contact and abstain from any activity that could be interpreted as disparaging, degrading, threatening, such as sexual harassment.

They respect the privacy of their partners, acquaintances and colleagues, and pay attention to local norms and conventions.

In both word and deed, the contractual partners of the FDFA refrain from abusing their hierarchical, material or social position in any way, and decisively strive to counter all forms of discrimination, particularly those relating to ethnic or religious background, gender, age, language, illness or physical or mental disability, as well as all forms of sexual exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents. In addition, the contractual partners of the FDFA abstain from any incitement to violence or hatred.

Public appearances

The contractual partners of the FDFA are aware that, even as private individuals, they are subject to public interest and that their statements may elicit undesired consequences.

They refrain from making accusations, provocative statements or spreading rumours. They give due consideration to their cooperation with the FDFA and to its interests in their communications, particularly via the internet or social media.

Transparency

The contractual partners of the FDFA ensure that their professional actions and their motivations are comprehensible and transparent.

Means, assets and confidentiality

The contractual partners of the FDFA make use of the means and assets of the FDFA and its partners according to the contractual agreements and legal stipulations, and ensure that the financial means entrusted to them are employed in a legal, economic and efficient manner in the pursuit of the agreed objectives. Within the field of cooperation and development, they are particularly attentive to achieving the expected impact on the population, institutions and systems at local level, within the agreed budgetary framework.

They use the materials entrusted to them and the official logo of the Swiss Confederation solely for professional purposes, any private use being subject to a formal agreement. In all cases, they treat them with care and diligence.

The contractual partners of the FDFA share their knowledge, while paying attention to confidentiality in matters of data protection and sensitive information brought to their attention within the context of their cooperation with the FDFA.

Conflicts of interest and duty of disclosure

The contractual partners of the FDFA are able to fulfil their professional obligations without being influenced by their personal interests.

They avoid any conflict between their personal interests and those of the FDFA. They forego their own interests and contribute to the resolution of potential conflicts of interest, giving due consideration to their cooperation with the FDFA and to its interests.

If a conflict or an apparent conflict of interests is unavoidable, they immediately inform the FDFA.

Use of non-public information

The contractual partners of the FDFA do not use non-public information that they have acquired within the context of their cooperation with the FDFA to their own direct or indirect personal advantage, nor do they use it to give such an advantage to third parties.

They do not give recommendations or hints based on such information to anyone. This rule is particularly applicable when it can be expected that divulging non-public information will influence the prices of securities or currency exchange rates.

Corruption and accepting gifts or other benefits

The contractual partners of the FDFA do not misuse their position to obtain personal benefit, nor to give advantages to third parties.

They avoid passive or active corruption in any form.

They do not accept gifts, invitations or other favours that may afford them or third parties an unfair material or immaterial advantage, or that may compromise their integrity, freedom of action, or impartial judgement.

Security

The contractual partners of the FDFA abstain from any actions that may place them and/or others in a dangerous situation, or that may compromise their relationship with the FDFA and its interests.

Health

Within the context of executing their contractual obligations to the FDFA, the contractual partners strive to maintain a healthy balance between their professional and private life.

Reporting a violation of the Code of Conduct

The Compliance Office of the FDFA is the centralised body that is responsible for dealing with cases of offenses and irregularities reported by employees, contractual partners or third parties.

Any contractual partner of the FDFA who feels under pressure to act in a way that runs counter to the Code of Conduct, or who witnesses violations of the same, must inform the Compliance Office of the FDFA (compliance@eda.admin.ch).

Every report made in good faith is treated in confidence, and the identity of the whistleblower is protected. Acts of a criminal nature will be passed on to the competent authorities, in accordance with the obligation to report under Article 22a of the Federal Act on the Personnel of the Swiss Confederation.

Anonymous reports are permitted; however, they are dealt with in a manner befitting the available information.

The FDFA encourages its contractual partners to create an internal reporting procedure that enables their employees and subcontractors, as well as third parties, to report instances of wrongdoing to the management or to an independent body, whilst guaranteeing them confidential treatment and protection against retaliatory measures.

The Compliance Office of the FDFA is available for consultation in cases of doubt or questions relating to the Code of Conduct.

1 August 2018