

2021

Code of Conduct and Ethics



ICSF

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

This document serves as the ethical road map for ICSF employees and those associated with ICSF and to provide the guidelines by which ICSF conducts its activities

Version 1.0

Last updated/ revised on 20-Mar-21

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I. Financial Transparency, Accountability, Reporting and Records

- 1) The Board of Directors (Board) hold ultimate fiscal responsibility for ICSF and are required to understand ICSF's financial statements and reporting requirements.
- 2) ICSF's annual budget and plan of activities shall be approved by the Board and the General Assembly of Members (GAM). ICSF shall operate in accordance with the budget.
- 3) ICSF shall have established financial policies regarding receiving and disbursement of financial resources, investment in assets, purchasing practices and internal control procedures.
- 4) ICSF will act in line with the organizational policy of not accepting funds that might impair the independence of ICSF to achieve its goals. To this end, ICSF will accept resources only from donors who share ICSF's objectives and who respect ICSF's independence.
- 5) ICSF shall prepare and maintain its accounts fairly and accurately and in accordance with the accounting and financial reporting standards which represent the generally accepted guidelines, principles, standards, laws and regulations applying to civil society organizations like ICSF. Also, in line with the terms of grant from the Donors, ICSF shall meet Donor specific financial reporting requirements [in line with 4) above].
- 6) Internal accounting and audit procedures shall reflect, fairly and accurately, all of ICSF's transactions and disposition of assets, and shall have internal controls to provide assurance to ICSF's Board and members that the transactions are accurate and legitimate. All required information shall be accessible to the Auditors and other authorised parties and government agencies. There shall be no wilful omissions of any of ICSF's transactions from the books and records and no hidden bank account and funds.
- 7) Any wilful, material misrepresentation of and/or misinformation on the financial accounts and reports shall be regarded as a violation of the Code, apart from inviting appropriate civil or criminal action under the relevant laws. No employee shall make, authorise, abet or collude in an improper payment, unlawful commission or bribing.

II. Human Resources

1. Responsibilities of ICSF:

- a) ICSF shall seek capable and responsible employees, volunteers, consultants, advisors and associates (collectively, "Staff"), who are committed to the mission and shared values of the Organization.
- b) ICSF considers shared values as (a) Strength from cultural and social diversity, (b) Integrity, (c) Commitment to each other, (d) Responsibility to the membership, (e) Trust respect support and encourage each other, (f) Openness, (g) Accountability, (h) Initiative/Performance, (i) Collaboration, (j) Quality.
- c) ICSF shall provide equal opportunities to all its employees and all qualified applicants for employment without regard to their race, caste, religion, colour, ancestry, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, nationality, ethnic origin or disability. It shall provide proper training and orientation to new staff and provide them with suitable working conditions.
- d) ICSF shall provide opportunities for individual growth and staff development, and foster an atmosphere whereby personal growth of staff is encouraged.
- e) Human resource policies shall promote diversity and equality in the workplace, as well as compliance with all local labour laws, while encouraging the adoption of international best practices.
- f) Staff shall be treated with dignity and respect and in accordance with ICSF's policy of maintaining a work environment free of all forms of harassment, whether physical, verbal or psychological. Employee policies and practices shall be administered in a manner consistent with applicable laws and other provisions of this Code, respect for the right to privacy and the right to be heard, and that in all matters equal opportunity is provided and decisions are based on merit.
- g) Staff shall be encouraged and guided in maintaining the highest standards of professional and personal conduct, and in taking personal and professional responsibility for their actions and decisions.
- h) ICSF shall strive to provide a safe, healthy, clean and ergonomic working environment for its people. It shall prevent the wasteful use of natural resources and be committed to improving environment.

2. Ethical Conduct:

- a) Every employee of ICSF, including Executive Director and advisers/associates shall exhibit culturally appropriate deportment in the countries they operate in, and deal on behalf of ICSF with professionalism, honesty and integrity, while conforming to high moral and ethical standards. Such conduct shall be fair and transparent and be perceived to be so by third parties.
- b) Every employee of ICSF shall respect the human rights of every individual and community with whom they have contact, and shall strive to honour commitments.
- c) Every employee shall be responsible for the implementation of and compliance with this Code. Failure to adhere to the Code could attract severe consequences, including termination of employment/contract.

3. Regulatory Compliance:

- a) Employees of ICSF, in their professional and personal conduct, shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations, in letter and spirit, in all the territories in which they operate. If the ethical and professional standards of applicable laws and regulations are below that of the Code, then the standards of the Code shall prevail.
- b) Key Managerial personnel of ICSF shall comply with applicable laws and regulations of all the relevant regulatory and other authorities. As good governance practice they shall safeguard the confidentiality of all information received by them by virtue of their position, and in line with transparency and accountability requirements.

4. Concurrent Employment:

- a) An employee of ICSF shall not, without the requisite, officially written approval of ICSF, accept employment or a position of responsibility (such as a consultant or otherwise) with any other company/organization, nor provide freelance services to anyone, with or without remuneration. In the case of Executive Director, such approval must be obtained from Board.

5. Government Agencies:

- a) ICSF and its employees shall not unless mandated under applicable laws, offer or give any of ICSF funds or property as donation to any Government agency or its representative, directly or through intermediaries, in order to obtain any favourable performance of official duties. ICSF shall be transparent in all its dealings with Government agencies.

6. Third Party Representation:

- a) Parties which have dealings with ICSF, such as consultants, agents, associates, advisors, contractors and suppliers, shall not be authorised to represent ICSF without the written permission of ICSF, and/or if their professional conduct and ethics are known to be inconsistent with the Code. Third parties and their employees are expected to abide by the Code in their interaction with, and on behalf of ICSF.

III. Gifts, Donations and Conflicts

1. Gifts and Donations:

- a. ICSF and its employees shall neither receive nor offer or make, directly or indirectly, any illegal payments, remuneration, gifts, donations or comparable benefits that are intended, or perceived, to obtain uncompetitive favours for the conduct of its business. ICSF shall cooperate with governmental authorities and other agencies in efforts to eliminate all forms of bribery, fraud and corruption.
- b. However, ICSF and its employees may, with full disclosure, accept and offer nominal gifts, provided such gifts are customarily given and/or are of a commemorative nature. The position with respect to gifts and entertainment are contained in the Anti Corruption Policy and to be used as guidance by the employees.

2. Conflict of Interest:

- a. An employee or Executive Director of ICSF shall always act in the interest of the organization, and ensure that any business or personal association which he/she may have does not involve a conflict of interest with the operations of ICSF and his/her role therein. An employee, including the Executive Director of ICSF, shall not accept a position of responsibility in any other company or not-for-profit organization. However, specific permission may be granted by the Executive Director in respect of employees below the managerial level depending upon the merits and circumstances.
- b. The above shall not apply to (whether for remuneration or otherwise):
 - i. Memberships/Positions of responsibility in educational/professional bodies, wherein such association will benefit the employee/ICSF and it does not result in any conflicts with ICSF and its functioning.
 - ii. Nominations/Memberships in Government committees, bodies or organizations only when it does not result in any conflicts with ICSF and its functioning.
 - iii. Exceptional circumstances, as determined by "Competent Authority"

Competent Authority, in the case of all employees, shall be the Executive Director, who in turn shall report such exceptional cases to Board and in the case of Executive Director; Board will be the competent Authority.

- c. Members of Board shall always act in the interest of the organization and ensure that any business or personal association does not involve a conflict of interest with the operations of ICSF and his/her role therein, or to secure special privileges, gain or benefit for themselves

- d. A conflict of interest, actual or potential, may arise where directly or indirectly:
 - i. An employee of ICSF engages in business, relationship or activity with anyone who is a party to a transaction with ICSF
 - ii. An employee of ICSF engages in business, relationship or activity with anyone whose aims, objectives, programmes, policies, mission/vision are detrimental to that of ICSF.
 - iii. An employee is in a position to derive an improper benefit, personally or to any of his/her relatives, by making or influencing decisions relating to any transactions.
 - iv. An independent judgement of ICSF's best interest cannot be exercised.
- e. Indicative common types of conflict of interest are:
 - i. General financial interest
 - ii. Interest in customer or supplier or Donor and Associates
 - iii. Gift and entertainment
 - iv. Interested fiduciary transactions and self- dealings
 - v. Competing with organization
 - vi. Usurping organization opportunities
 - vii. Offer of employment by customer, supplier, donor or other NGOs
 - viii. Overt Bribes or Kickbacks
 - ix. Subtle "Bribes"
 - x. Influence
 - xi. Privileged Information
- f. If an employee becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest at a later point in time, such employee shall immediately report to the management such instances and be guided by management's directions.
- g. Each officer shall disclose each institutional affiliation that he or she has that might possibly involve a conflict of interest.
- h. Staff members shall refrain from using their official position either regular or volunteer, to secure special privilege, gain or benefit for themselves.

IV. Fund Raising

1. General:

- a) ICSF will be truthful and honest in all matters relating to the raising of funds and their use. Programmes shall be designed to meet ICSF's mission and never designed to meet the needs of a funding source. ICSF shall only accept funding that is consistent with its mission, does not compromise its core principles and does not restrict its ability to address relevant issues freely, thoroughly and objectively.
- b) ICSF will not tolerate any unethical activities such as double funding for one programme, diversion of dedicated funds to uses other than the programme for which funds were approved or overstatement of achievements.
- c) ICSF or its agents will not use excessive pressure, coercion, undue influence or other unethical means in their solicitations.

2. Use of Funds:

- a) ICSF shall ensure that contributions are used as promised or implied in fundraising proposals or for the purposes intended by the donors.
- b) ICSF upon accepting a grant is entering into a contract to carry out the programme activities in an agreed-upon manner and ICSF has an ethical and legal responsibility to honour that commitment.
- c) ICSF may alter the conditions of a gift or grant by obtaining explicit consent by the donors.
- d) ICSF shall ensure efficient and effective use of grants and charitable contributions.

3. Relationship with Donor:

- a) The executives, management, staff and members of the Board of the organization shall not exploit any relationship with a donor or prospective donor for personal benefit or the benefit of any relative, friend, associate, and colleague.
- b) Privileged or confidential information regarding the donor or donation must not be disclosed to unauthorized parties.
- c) A donor's privacy shall be respected and ICSF shall safeguard any confidential information regarding the donor or the gift without compromising regulatory requirements or the requirements of local laws, and in line with ICSF's Code of Conduct and Ethics.

V. Partnerships, Collaboration and Networking

1. Political Non-alignment:

- a) ICSF shall be committed to and support the constitution and governance systems of the countries in which it operates.
- b) ICSF shall not support or promote any specific political party or candidate for political office. ICSF's conduct shall preclude any activity that could be interpreted as mutual dependence/favour with any political body or person, and it shall not offer or give any of its funds or property as donations to any political party, candidate or campaign.

2. Partnerships, Collaboration and Networking:

- a) ICSF may collaborate with other entities only if the relationship is consistent with its mission and on the basis of equitable and genuine mutual benefit to ICSF and the other entity.
- b) ICSF may collaborate with other entities on the basis of shared values, common objectives and for the good of its constituency.

3. Relations with For-Profit organizations:

- a. ICSF shall enter into collaboration with a "For-profit organization" only when it is beneficial to achievement of the ICSF's objectives, does not compromise the independence or self-control of the organization, and does not benefit the entity's financial, commercial or political status.
- b. ICSF shall not enter into collaboration with a "For-profit organization" if motivated by financial reasons that are independent of achieving its mission objectives.
- c. ICSF shall not enter into collaboration with a "For-profit organization" if the main motivation of the for-profit organization is to gain a market advantage over its competitors, or if the collaboration is used to promote the image of the entity.
- d. Having entered into a collaboration with a "For-profit organization", ICSF, if at any time later finds that such an arrangement is likely to benefit the entity predominantly rather than meeting ICSF's mission objectives, then ICSF shall dis-engage from such collaboration after giving due notice of not less than 30 working days.

4. Relationship with Governmental Agencies:

- a. ICSF may enter into a partnership/collaborative arrangement with a Government or Inter-Governmental body only when it is beneficial to achievement of ICSF's objectives and does not compromise the independence or self-control of the organization.

- b. ICSF shall seek to dialogue and cooperate with Government and Inter-Governmental agencies when such cooperation would be both appropriate and mutually beneficial and could increase the ICSF's effectiveness in dealing with issues and priorities in its agenda.
- c. ICSF shall not enter into a partnership with a Governmental or Inter-Governmental body (i) solely to promote the sustainability or competitive advantage of ICSF independent of achieving its mission objectives or (ii) if the main motivation is be part of communicational campaign to promote the image of governmental or Inter-Governmental entity.

5. Relationship with other NGOs, Social Movements and Civil Society Organizations (CSO):

- a. ICSF shall express solidarity with campaigns and actions of other NGOs, social movements and CSOs, and promote the effectiveness and success of other NGOs, Social Movements and CSOs in line with its vision, when it contributes towards achieving its mission, and when it does not compromise its own integrity or values.
- b. ICSF shall collaborate, co-operate, network and partner with other NGOs, social movements and CSOs on issues as a means for promoting those issues, as well as towards the growth, effectiveness and efficiency of these sectors.

VI. Miscellaneous

1. Laws and Regulations:

- a) ICSF's activities, governance and other matters shall conform to the laws and regulations of the locality where those activities take place, and in line with relevant international practice.
- b) ICSF periodically shall arrange for an internal review to be conducted regarding compliance of the organization with relevant laws, regulations and practices, and summaries of this review shall be presented to members of the governing body.

2. Reporting Concerns:

- a) Every employee of ICSF, Board members and regular members shall promptly report to the management on becoming aware of any actual or possible violation of the Code or an event of misconduct, act of misdemeanour or act not in the interest of ICSF.
- b) Any ICSF employee, Board members or regular members can choose to make a protected disclosure under the whistle-blower policy of ICSF providing for reporting to the chairperson of Board or specified authority. Such a protected disclosure shall be forwarded, when there is reasonable evidence to conclude that a violation is possible or has taken place.
- c) ICSF shall ensure protection to the whistleblower and any attempts to intimidate such a person would be treated as a violation of the Code.

3. Protecting assets of ICSF:

- a) The assets of ICSF shall not be misused.
- b) They shall be employed primarily and judiciously for the purpose of conducting the business for which they are duly authorized. These include tangible assets such as equipment, systems, facilities, materials and resources, as well as intangible assets such as information technology and systems, proprietary information, intellectual property etc.

4. Public representation:

- a) ICSF honours the information requirements of the donors, regulators and the public. In all its public appearances, with respect to disclosing information about ICSF including financial and its activities, ICSF, under the directions of Board, shall be represented by the Executive Director.

VII. Amendments

Amendments may be necessary, among other reasons, to maintain compliance with various regulations and/or organisational changes within ICSF.

Amendments to this Code of Conduct due to changes in Law, maybe done at the earliest by the Board with ratification in the immediate following General Meeting of Members and any other amendments shall take effect upon confirming by the Members in the General Meeting of Members.