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Strasbourg 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2020

## ALDA

### ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES

#### CODE OF ETHICS AND CODUCT

##### 1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct has the purpose of outlining values and standards we expect staff and other people associated with ALDA to uphold, improving the working environment, protecting staff and other stakeholders from exploitation and any other type of abuse, encouraging staff retention and ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of ALDA.

The Secretariat's staff are personally and collectively responsible for upholding and promoting the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior. For this reason, our staff should, at all times and in every circumstance, refrain from acts of misconduct and they should respect the organization's values and the dignity of those we assist and are in contact with.

##### 2. Scope and Purpose

This code applies to all employees and any other individuals working ALDA. This code also applies to ALDA's Governing Board.

The Code of Conduct will take immediate effect and will be signed by every member of staff. Staff are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the Code and they should be aware of the existing mechanisms to report any breach of this Code.

The Code of Conduct covers the following areas:

- Key organisational and team values
- Integrity and commitment
- Individual and collective responsibilities
- Relationships with other staff, external partners and other stakeholders
- Misconduct of any kind
- Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Conflicts of interest

- Disciplinary procedures
- Implementation

### 3. Key organisational values

The reputation on our work and on the behaviour of its staff. The organisation identifies itself with primarily the following values:

- Openness: We are transparent in all our activities and practice an open culture of feedback between staff members regardless of their position and also externally with any other stakeholders of the organisation.
- Horizontality: We practice a culture of horizontal hierarchies and responsive decision making internally and externally.
- Respect: We are respectful of people's nationality, gender and religious background. We respect and value every person's opinion.
- Self-critical: We have an open culture of discussing failures and improving our work through continuous learning.
- Partnership: We value the expertise of others and want to establish mutual partnerships with everyone we interact with and break up common power structures.

### 4. Integrity and Commitment

Our staff is recruited on the basis of their expertise, integrity, competence and commitment to the mission and values of the organisation. Staff are expected to:

- Live our organisational values by being respectful to others, trusted, dependable, honest, efficient and work in solidarity within the team and outside
- Respect, implement and promote the values and principles established in ALDA.
- Conduct all tasks with integrity and strive to attain high standards of quality and professionalism.
- Maintain standards of integrity in all work relationships both internally and outside our member-based platform.
- Optimise the use of resources.
- Minimise negative impact on the environment.
- Respect all people, taking into account the sensitivities of their context, customs, habits and religious believes.

- Recognise the richness of a diverse workplace and value the unique skills and perspectives of every individual, irrespective of their cultural, social and educational background.
- Promote and respect women's rights and gender equality in the workplace and also in the events we organise and attend.
- Contribute to removing barriers to advancing gender equality and justice.
- Contribute to the inclusion of disable people.
- Represent ALDA positively and professionally in all work areas.
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest or bias as soon as they become aware of them.

## **5. Individual and Collective Responsibilities**

### 5.1. Individual Staff Responsibilities

As a member of staff or an individual representing ALDA you are expected to:

- Follow all of ALDA's policies and procedures.
- Perform to a satisfactory standard the duties and responsibilities that you have taken on.
- Be responsible and accountable for your words and actions at all times.
- Work in a professional manner.
- Listen to others respectfully and deal with disagreements professionally.
- Value and welcome diversity of all kinds.
- Pay due respect to the customs, habits, religious beliefs of the country you are visiting or working in.
- Pay due respect and value the cultural differences of people from other countries with whom we work.
- Use language that welcomes and does not offend, alienate or patronise others.

### 5.2 Responsibilities towards colleagues

As a member of staff or an individual representing ALDA you are expected to:

- Support colleagues in achieving the organisation's standards and targets.
- Welcome and listen to feedback.
- Take an active part in all teamwork, meetings and activities.
- Refrain from any acts of misconduct.
- Not engage in bullying or harassment towards any colleagues, partners or any other person that you engage with.

- Contribute to the maintenance of an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and any other behavior that can harm others.
- Declare any conflict of interest or bias as soon as you are aware of it.
- Not abuse or misuse your position, power or influence for personal benefit.

### 5.3 Relationships with other staff, external partners and other stakeholders

- Differences in culture, religion and politics should be respected.
- Relationships between staff members and other stakeholders must not interfere with organisational objectives.
- Staff must know and fully understand ALDA's policies.

## **6. Prevention of Abuse of Power, Fraud, Corruption and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

### 6.1 Misconduct

All staff members shall refrain from any and all acts of misconduct, especially those noted in this Code.

Staff has the responsibility of bringing any matters of concern to the immediate attention of the Secretary General or to the President of the Governing Board. We will guarantee that every staff report will be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

### 6.2 Abuse of Power

Abuse of power is defined as the act of using one's position of power in an abusive way. This can take many forms, such as taking advantage of someone or manipulating someone into doing something with the ability to punish them if they don't comply. Other forms of abuse include favoritism, nepotism, corruption, bribery and every form of exploitation, including sexual.

Acts that will be considered as abuse of power include:

- Harassment, mobbing<sup>1</sup>, bullying<sup>2</sup>, and discriminatory or racist behavior.
- Using the position to commit ALDA legally, financially or morally without authorisation.
- Stealing or misappropriation of funds, property or human resources.
- All forms of exploitation as defined by the UN Secretary General<sup>3</sup>.

### 6.3 Fraud and Corruption

As in any other organization, fraud is an ever-present threat to the assets, resources and reputation of ALDA. It has the potential to undermine the achievement of its aims and objectives.

To prevent this, ALDA promotes a high standard of accountability and culture of compliance and internal control.

ALDA is committed to prevent fraud and corruption from occurring, and to developing an anti-fraud and anti-corruption practice.

### 6.4 Conflict of Interest

Every staff member and any other person associated with ALDA must:

Put the interests of ALDA before his or her own when carrying out his or her duties on behalf of ALDA.

Refrain or withdraw from any transaction or relationship, and from any consideration regarding ALDA that might concern any matter that could constitute or involve an actual or potential, direct or indirect conflict of interest.

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<sup>1</sup> "Mobbing" involves a group of people whose size is constrained by the social setting in which it is formed, such as a workplace. The group members directly interact with a target in an adversarial way that undermines or harms the target in a physical or psychical way.

<sup>2</sup> "Bullying" is used to describe a repeated pattern of negative intrusive violational behaviour against one or more targets and comprises constant trivial nit-picking criticism, refusal to value and acknowledge, undermining and discrediting a person.

<sup>3</sup> UN Secretary's Bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13). Available online:

<http://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/405ac6614/secretary-generals-bulletin-special-measures-protection-sexual-exploitation.html>

Disclose in writing any actual or potential, direct or indirect conflict of interest.

### 6.5 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Staff must behave according to international human rights standards and laws with regard to sexual conduct. Furthermore, staff must comply with the national law and prohibitions in the country in which they are traveling.

ALDA will take all appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse of any of its staff and to protect people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty. For this purpose, staff must:

- Understand that sexual exploitation and abuse by staff constitute gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- Never engage in any sexual activity with children (persons under 18 years of age).
- Given the increased vulnerability of populations in situations of natural disasters or conflict, staff are forbidden to engage in sexual relationships with members of crisis-affected populations since such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.
- Never accept, solicit or engage in the “buying“ of or profiting from sexual services.
- Know that the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex is prohibited.
- Never abuse a position to withhold assistance or give preferential treatment.
- When working with children, never act in ways that might put a child at risk of abuse.

If a staff member has concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation, he or she must report their concerns to their line manager, the Secretary General or to the President of the Governing Board.

Any allegations regarding sexual exploitation or abuse will be systematically investigated.

### 6.6 Bullying and Harassment

ALDA is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated equally and with respect.

ALDA does not tolerate any form of workplace violations such as bullying or harassment (including sexual, gender-based, ethnic and racial) or discrimination,

including any unwelcome comments or behavior that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating or derogatory, or any other behavior that fails to respect the dignity of an individual.

Any allegation of bullying and harassment will be investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. We will also not tolerate the victimization of a person for making allegations of bullying or harassment.

## **7. Representation and Representational Breaches**

It is the responsibility of ALDA's staff to ensure that publications and communications bearing the ALDA name do not contain material that is inaccurate or detrimental to the good reputation of the organisation.

When producing publications or communications on behalf of ALDA it is the responsibility of staff to:

- Make sure the planned content of the document is approved by the Secretary General.
- Submit the content of anything that will be published to the Communications Officer for final review.
- All other dissemination materials such as articles and ad hoc blogs should be reviewed by the Communications Officer or the direct supervisor.
- If any of the documents or dissemination mechanisms contain anything that might seem contentious, it must be discussed with the Secretary General and if needed, with the President of the Governing Board.
- Public statements relating to any of our members must be discussed with the Secretary General and the President of the Governing Board.

## **8. Confidentiality**

It is prohibited to divulgate any confidential information acquired while carrying out duties for ALDA.

## **9. Civil or penal responsibility**

Any action taken under these disciplinary procedures does not preclude further administrative, civil or penal responsibility or action.

## **10. Implementation of this Code of Conduct**

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Every staff member has the responsibility of familiarising themselves with this Code of Conduct, the complaints mechanisms they can use and the disciplinary procedures in place. The Code of Conduct will be an element of induction for staff and board members.

All persons to whom this Code applies are obliged to ensure and maintain an environment that prevents abuse of power and promotes the implementation of these principles of behavior.

This document automatically forms part of all contracts of employment or contractual conditions of service.



# alda\*

\* European Association  
for Local Democracy

\* 20  
years

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