



WFSJ

Anti-corruption Policy

The target group of this anti-corruption policy is all World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) employees.

As WFSJ employees, we are obligated to follow this anti-corruption policy and any breaches of this policy shall be reported through the WFSJ complaint mechanism (specified below).

Corruption threatens good governance, sustainable development, democratic process, and fair business practices.

According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index the countries that WFSJ operates in are among the countries most at risk to corruption in the world. WFSJ must secure that the funds it manages do not end up in the wrong hands.

WFSJ is entrusted with funds from a variety of donors and works to secure they are spent correctly and transparently.¹

WFSJ holds a great responsibility to avoid corruption and secure that the funds are spent correctly toward donors, partners and beneficiaries. As employees of WFSJ we are responsible for upholding and promoting the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. Working in different countries, sometimes in complicated and difficult situations, among different languages, cultures and religions requires a lot from the employees. Knowledge, respect and common sense are some of the keywords that should be guiding our work.

The purpose of this anti-corruption policy is to support a behavior characterised by high standards of personal and organisational integrity, both internally and with other external stakeholders (partners).

¹ Vision & Plan: Subobjective C: "To ensure correct and transparent handling of the financial resources entrusted to WFSJ".

General

Corruption is defined as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption is best known as bribery, fraud, embezzlement and extortion, and some of the examples will be listed in more detail below.

Corruption has many faces. It may be in the form of money or of providing services in order to gain advantages such as favourable treatment, special protection, extra services, or reduced delays. It is important to realise that corruption is not exclusively a matter of money. To provide a person with a job, services or other favours, can in certain circumstances also be construed as corruption.

Personal security and safety should never be compromised to live up to this policy.

As WFSJ staff we are responsible for following and abiding by the rules and regulations of national and international law. Furthermore we have to abide by the international conventions signed by the country, in which we operate.

It is the responsibility of WFSJ to inform partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders about this policy.

Anti-corruption principles

The following is a listing of the principles in WFSJ's anti-corruption policy:

1. Conflicts of interest
2. Abuse of power and extortion
3. Fraud and Embezzlement
4. Bribery
5. Nepotism and favouritism
6. Gifts

1. Conflict of interest

We will avoid any inexpedient conflicts of interest – real or potential – between our personal interest and the interest of WFSJ.

Avoiding conflicts of interest is the overall principle in fighting corruption. Conflict of interest arises from situations in which you as a WFSJ employee have a private interest that could influence your professional performance.

Conflicts of interest can occur quite frequently and are not necessarily corrupt. It is how they are identified and managed that is important. If conflict of interest situations are not properly identified and managed, they can endanger the integrity of WFSJ and can result in corruption. The staff member is expected to show good judgment and when in doubt, contact the superior. In questions of conflict of interest it is important to use personal judgment and common sense to make the right decisions.

The following principles are all in some ways examples of conflict of interests.

2. Abuse of power and extortion

We will not seek to influence any person or institution for private purpose by using our official position or offering them personal advantages. Likewise, we will not use WFSJ property, facilities, services and financial resources for private purposes except when permission is given. We will not use any forms of extortion as a method to gain advantages.

This principle implies that you should not use your professional status for private gain. Misuse could be to gain advantages that you would not have gained otherwise. Relations to suppliers must not be used to gain reduced price on e.g. computers, cars, food, consultant support or travelling for private use. You are also not allowed to abuse your power as a manager to get personal favours or services done by employees.

3. Fraud and Embezzlement

Fraud and embezzlement are illegal and must not be used as methods to gain personal or professional advantages or property in relation to WFSJ, partner organisations or any other stakeholders.

Fraud is defined as economic crime involving deceit, trickery or false pretences, by which someone gains advantages or funds unlawfully. Embezzlement is defined as the misappropriation of property or funds legally entrusted to someone in their formal position as an agent or guardian.

Examples of fraud and embezzlement are false documentation, lying about qualifications and abusing power/knowledge to steal cash and equipment from the office, misusing funds entrusted to us.

Rules for accounting and documentation shall therefore be applied to at all times.

4. Bribery

We will not give or accept bribery in any form.

Bribery is defined as the act of offering someone money, services or other valuables, in order to persuade him or her to do something in return. (Bribes are also called kickbacks, baksheesh, payola, hush money, sweetener, protection money, boodle, gratuity.)²

One example is that we do not receive bribes from potential partners to make contracts with them and we do not give bribes to our partners as a way of influencing. We base our cooperation with partner organisations on mutual ownership, accountability, participation, equality, harmonisation and alignment.

² Facilitation payments: Facilitation payments are small payments made to public or other officials in order to expedite or secure activities and actions of a routine nature. Routine nature is here defined as activities and actions that are a part of our staffs daily duties and functions. WFSJ strongly opposes facilitation payments and this type of payment should not be paid. WFSJ, however, acknowledges that we work in parts of the world where it can be extremely difficult to avoid these transactions altogether. Facilitation payments must be documented with receipts and should (as all breaches of the anti-corruption policy) be reported using the complaint mechanism. This is done in order to ensure transparency and accountability, but also to learn from these examples so that WFSJ can avoid similar situations in the future.

5. Nepotism and favouritism

We will not favour board members, friends, family or other personal relations in recruitment, procurement, aid delivery or other situations.

Nepotism is favouritism toward relatives and friends, based upon that relationship, rather than on an evaluation of ability or suitability. For instance, offering employment to a relative or friend, despite the fact that there are others who are better qualified and willing to perform the job, higher earnings, and other benefits to employees who are relatives of management.

6. Gifts

We will not give or receive, directly or indirectly, any gift or other favour that may influence the exercise of our function, performance of duty or other ways of possibly harming WFSJ. Gifts are defined as but not limited to: services, travel, entertainment, material things or favours. In order to respect local traditions and conventional hospitality minor gifts are accepted.

The value of an acceptable gift varies over the countries in which WFSJ operates. Cash gifts are never accepted. All employees are expected to show good judgment and when in doubt, contact the superior. A rule of thumb is that a gift should never influence your independent judgment and share the minor gifts that you accept with you colleagues.

Complaints

As WFSJ employees, we are obligated to follow this anti-corruption policy and report breaches of the policy. All corruption incidents in WFSJ, partner organisations or other incidents related to WFSJ activities must be reported into the complaint mechanism. If you get suspicion, hear rumours about corruption or experience any other doubt you can ask for advice here as well.

You need to file an official complaint by sending an email to complaints@wfsj.org. No anonymous complaints are accepted.

The complaint will be handled confidentially and with great respect for the complainant and the persons/organisations the complaint is pointing at.

On the basis of the complaint, it will be considered if an investigation committee will be set up and an investigation take place.

All incidents of corruption shall be reported in the complaint mechanism, also in the cases where investigation has taken place regionally. Cases where personal security was at risk shall as well be reported in the complaint mechanism.