



# **ISTITUTO OIKOS CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Approved by the Meeting of Members  
(27 April 2016)**



## **INTRODUCTION OF THE CODE**

The Code of Conduct is an official Istituto Oikos' document, approved by the meeting of the Board of Director Members. The Code contains principles and rules to be respected by anyone working or dealing with the Organization. The purpose of the present Code is to state and disseminate the values that Istituto Oikos intends to maintain as a reference during its work.

The Code of Conduct is available on the Organization website and is displayed on the wall in the Italian headquarters and in the local offices. Control over the compliance with the code is exercised by the Directors in Italy and the local offices Representatives.

## **GENERAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

Istituto Oikos was founded in 1996 in Milan. It is a non-profit organization that operates in Europe and developing countries to safeguard biodiversity. It promotes a responsible management of natural resources and the widespread adoption of more-sustainable lifestyles as tools for social and economic development and for fighting poverty. Since its creation, Istituto Oikos has devised and developed over 200 projects in Italy, Europe and eleven countries across Asia, Africa and South America.

Istituto Oikos' vision is a future in which ecology, economy and equity come together to reconcile the needs of man and the environment.

Istituto Oikos' mission is to contribute to preserving ecosystems and supporting development through professionalism, innovation and participation.

The general ethical principles that inspire the work of Istituto Oikos represent the founding values through which it intends to achieve its mission.

These general principles are the following:

**Independency.** Istituto Oikos is an independent, non-religious, non-political, multicultural organization.

**Legality.** Istituto Oikos undertakes to respect the laws and regulations in force in all countries where it operates and it will not establish any relation with anyone who does not abide by this principle.

**Equality.** Istituto Oikos rejects any form of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, political or sexual orientation, language or health conditions, providing equal treatment to anyone.

**Responsibility.** Istituto Oikos requires its employees to always act with professionalism, attention and caution, using the best available scientific information and avoiding any misuse or waste of its resources.



**Transparency.** Istituto Oikos ensures and maintains transparency in all its activities. Every operation and transaction is accurately recorded, authorized, verifiable, lawful, consistent and reasonable, according to the law in force, internal regulations and donors requests.

**Privacy.** Istituto Oikos ensures compliance with laws on privacy and confidentiality. Data protection and data security are also guaranteed at all times according to Decree n. 196/2003 of the Italian law.

**Sustainability.** Istituto Oikos, according to its vision and mission, respects, promotes and applies the principles of sustainable development in all its actions and projects in Italy and abroad.

**Diversity.** Istituto Oikos will engage local communities in the planning and implementation of its projects, will respect their cultural and economic needs and empower them to protect natural resources.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR INTERNAL RELATIONS**

Istituto Oikos considers the human resources as its main asset and promotes the development of their skills, aspirations and professionalism. At the same time, it requests to all staff members the observance of its mission, of the ethical principles expressed in this code as well as the respect for the codified set of duties.

- a. *Avoid any type of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, political or sexual orientation, language or health conditions.* In no cases discriminations are accepted.
- b. *Use of drugs and alcohol.* No functions shall be performed under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The distribution or the sale of illegal substances is not allowed, as well as their possession and use.
- c. *Harassment, exploitation and abuse.* No proven attempt to harass, exploit or abuse any person shall be tolerated. Harassment may be physical or verbal.
- d. *Sexual relationship with beneficiaries and minors.* Any sexual relationship with beneficiaries of Istituto Oikos' programs is strongly discouraged since could undermine the credibility of its acts. Any type of sexual relationship with persons under 18 years old (or under-age according to local laws) will be not accepted.
- e. *Prostitution.* As organization based on the principle of respect of human dignity, Istituto Oikos does not tolerate the exploitation of prostitution.
- f. *Child labor.* Istituto Oikos shall make sure that persons working for it, in Italy and abroad, have reached the minimum age imposed by local laws regarding child labor. In the event of services and supplies assigned externally, a self-declaration form should be signed by the contractor.
- g. *Use of vehicles.* Vehicles provided by Istituto Oikos are available for the operations of the organization or the projects. Any other use is not permitted. Only the persons expressly authorized by Istituto Oikos can drive. Volunteers, interns or non-staff members are not authorized to drive vehicles under any circumstances. Each office shall identify the person in charge (Project Managers, Administrators or logisticians according to the local rules) to check that: i) each car has its registration book and maintenance logbook; ii) each car is regularly checked and insured.
- h. *Use of equipment.* Every staff member must ensure proper use of equipment provided for the discharge of their duties. Their loan of equipment to other parties is never allowed, unless for



specific exceptions expressly authorized. Any assets shall be returned at the termination of the tasks.

- i. *Use of guest houses.* It is forbidden to accommodate non-staff members in the Istituto Oikos guest houses, unless for specific exceptions expressly authorized.
- j. *Risks prevention.* Each staff member is required to know and comply with the Security Plan relating to the country in which he/she operates for long or short missions.
- k. *Impartiality.* As a non-political organization, Istituto Oikos forbids to carry out directly or indirectly political activities that can jeopardize the credibility or the security of the organization.
- l. *Privacy.* It is not permitted the disclosure of confidential information and data of the organization or other staff members.
- m. *Adequacy.* All Oikos' staff members are required to respect a dress code appropriate to the workplace according to their role and responsibility in the organization and in consideration of the customs and the culture of the communities in which we operate.
- n. *Respect for the environment.* Istituto Oikos, according to its vision and mission, does not accept actions that degrades the environment or the natural resources of the countries where it operates.
- o. *Respect for the animals.* All Oikos' staff members are expected to respect the rights and dignity of animals. It will not be allowed to leave their own animals at Oikos' structures for a short or longer period. In any case is not accepted the delegation of their custody to the organization by the staff leaving the country.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

The rules of conduct, deriving from the general ethical principles, regulate also the relations with donors, partners, suppliers, beneficiaries, press/media and auditors.

### **Relations with Donors**

Transparency and fairness must be ensured in the relations between Istituto Oikos and its international or local donors. For this reason:

- it is prohibited to give, offer or promise any money or other non-cash benefit to receive funds;
- it is prohibited to submit untruthful statements with the purpose of receiving funds or benefits;
- it is prohibited to use money received as donation for any purpose other than the ones for which it was originally given.

Istituto Oikos will reject any donation in materials, money or services from companies that manifestly violate human rights, workers or the environment, that produce or trade weapons, pornographic material or any other product that would degrade the human person.

### **Relations with Partners**

Partners must be carefully chosen for common activities according to Istituto Oikos' ethic principles.

### **Relations with Suppliers**



Istituto Oikos will award contracts for goods, works and services in accordance with internal or donors' tender procedures, on the basis of objective evaluations and in full compliance with the standards of free competition, quality and low price. The suppliers must respect the local laws and the ethical principles contained in this code.

### **Relations with Beneficiaries**

Beneficiaries must be fully informed of the ethical principles that inspire the Istituto Oikos' field work, as well as of the resources used in the activities that affect them.

### **Relations with Press and Media**

Communications with Press and Media must be based on the principle of truthfulness and always coordinated by the Communication Department in the Headquarter. No one can speak on behalf of Istituto Oikos without a prior authorization.

### **Relations with Auditors**

Relations with auditors must be conducted cooperatively and with total transparency. It is strictly prohibited to obstructing the auditors in the performance of their duties.

### **VIOLATION OF THE CODE**

Compliance with the Code of Conduct is part of the contractual obligations of anyone working for Istituto Oikos. In case of a probated violation of the Code of Conduct, Istituto Oikos must prosecute those responsible, according to the contract in force. In case they are external subjects, it must resort to all necessary/appropriate measures in order to prevent such violation from ever happening again.

Measures can include dismissal (resolution of contract) or interruption of commercial/professional activities with a supplier/collaborator, with consequent mandatory compensation.