



CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS

Effective Date: August 20, 2021

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Document review and approval

This document has been signed on behalf of the AATF Board of Trustees, by:



Ousmane Badiane
Board Chairperson

AATF CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS

CHAPTER ONE: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 Objectives: Service within the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) is subject to compliance with the key ethical values and principles defined in this Code of Ethical Conduct. Strict compliance with the aforesaid is vital for the brand image and reputation of both AATF and that of each of its Staff Members. The Objectives of this Code are to:
 - 1.1.1 Constitute a benchmark and reference point for the ethical attitude and decision-making required of each Staff Member;
 - 1.1.2 Provide first-instance clarification on the interpretation and application of the ethical values and principles; and
 - 1.1.3 Assist Staff Members to maintain the highest levels of good personal behavior and professional conduct.
- 1.2 Scope: This Code is a working tool intended to guide Staff Members in their day-to-day AATF activities. This Code is not exhaustive. It does not contend to provide an answer to all the ethical issues that could arise in the work environment. Neither does it seek to replace common sense nor the existing procedures, rules and regulations of AATF.
- 1.3 Application: This Code applies to all Staff Members (whether full-time, fixed term, temporary or part-time) as well as to interpersonal and professional relations within AATF and relations with third persons. This Code is also applicable to any other person engaged directly by AATF on its projects, programmes and services during their tenure of engagement. Any Staff Member who violates any provision of this Code is subject to disciplinary sanctions (which may include termination among other measures) and may also be subject to law enforcement action if applicable.

CHAPTER TWO: BASIC VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

The Staff Members of AATF subscribe to the principles of Integrity, Dedication and Accessibility, which, under this Code shall be construed as follows:

- 2.1 Integrity shall mean that AATF strives to uphold high levels of integrity in all its dealings and operations. We endeavor to adhere to hallmarks of honesty, transparency, and accountability.
- 2.2 Dedication shall mean that AATF believes that partnerships do not just simply emerge, they must be cultivated and nurtured for them to flourish. AATF is, therefore, committed to building lasting partnerships for delivery of appropriate technologies to smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Staff Members are equally required to demonstrate commitment to AATF Mission, Vision and the interests of the African farmers.
- 2.3 Accessibility shall mean that AATF avails itself for discussions, consultations and sharing of information that will support technology acquisition and transfer in SSA. We unreservedly share knowledge and learnings from our experiences, while complying with confidentiality obligations, to support decision making and shape opinion. As a learning Organization that

believes in innovation, AATF encourages and nurtures new ideas that will support attainment of a prosperous and food secure Africa. Staff Members are called upon to be reachable to all stakeholders.

- 2.4 The three core values outlined above are complimented by other values that speak to reliability, accountability, promptness, teamwork, and respect. Reliability means that AATF Staff Members will endeavor to demonstrate the ability to be trusted, to be dependable and to conduct their day to day activities with accuracy. Accountability means that AATF Staff Members take responsibility for their actions and decisions, that AATF Staff Members will expend AATF's resources responsibly and also protect what is entrusted to AATF by its funders. Promptness means that AATF Staff Members will nurture a habit of timeliness in delivering on the promises of AATF. Teamwork means that AATF Staff Members will collaborate across disciplines guided by the desire to achieve a common goal in an effective and efficient manner. Respect means that AATF Staff Members will treat everyone with respect while ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities and that their dignity is upheld.

CHAPTER THREE: INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS

- 3.1 Equitable, Conducive and Enabling Work Environment: We are committed to creating, upholding and maintaining a conducive working environment consistent with our ethical values and principles; and promoting a healthy work environment conducive to creativity and productivity.
- 3.2 Equal Opportunity and Treatment: We are committed to promoting equal opportunities and treatment for Staff Members and for people who wish to join AATF as Staff Members or service providers. In undertaking their duties, Staff Members ought to recognize and respect ethnic, cultural, gender and other diversities. Decisions on employment at AATF must be based on individual merit and functional and structural needs without regard to ethnic considerations, cultural or religious beliefs, family or marital status, sex, disability or age. AATF shall also not discriminate against anyone based on his or her HIV status. This commitment extends to all aspects of employment including recruitment, performance management, promotion, compensation, training, development, and separation. These provisions also apply to the recruitment of service providers, suppliers, and contractors by AATF.
- 3.3 Unacceptable Behaviours: We are committed to preventing, reporting, investigating and mitigating occurrences of any unacceptable behaviours at the workplace. Without being exhaustive, the unacceptable behaviours include harassment; abuse of power; and violation of health and safety precautions. No staff member shall engage in any activity which is incompatible with the proper discharge of his or her duties with AATF or which may adversely reflect on his or her status or on the integrity, independence, or impartiality which is required of him or her or engage in any abusive verbal or physical confrontation while at work or while representing AATF:
- 3.3.1 Harassment includes workplace harassment, bullying and morale harassment. Workplace harassment and bullying refer to the repeated and habitual use of force, threats or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively dominate others. Morale harassment refers to any form of abusive behavior (including gesture, speech, and attitude) that affects, by being repeated or systematic, a person's dignity or psychological

health or physical integrity, putting at risk the work or degrading the work climate. It is the health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct which prevents work from getting done and presents itself as threats, humiliation, intimidation, work interference, sabotage, and verbal abuse.

- 3.3.2 It is important to identify these types of conduct, which initially are uncivil attitudes and culminate into improper behaviour. They could take, inter alia, the form of: a belittling non-verbal attitude, attempts to discredit a person, efforts to isolate a person, aggravating incivilities, intimidation and threats, excessive administrative demands, attempts to prevent a person from expressing himself or herself, and excessive intrusion into a person's work.
- 3.3.3 Sexual harassment is defined as unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, gestures or physical conduct of a sexual nature that are found personally offensive and that might create a hostile working environment. It could take the shape of suggestive messages, sneering, fondling, allusions of a sexual nature, and repetitive invitations to meetings outside work. Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature. Displaying, sharing and downloading offensive materials on office computers and phones are also forms of sexual harassment or misconduct.
- 3.3.4 Sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, trafficking of adults or children, and other abuse by AATF staff members constitute acts of gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment. In addition, any evidence of such behaviours would be passed to the relevant authorities for appropriate action including further investigation and prosecution. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior, is prohibited.
- 3.3.5 In accordance with international law, sexual activity with a child (a person under age 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief about the age of the child is not a defense.
- 3.3.6 Staff members are prohibited from having sexual relationships, including asking for sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior, with beneficiaries. These relationships are often based on unequal power dynamics and may undermine the credibility and integrity of our work.
- 3.3.7 When an AATF staff member has concerns or suspicions of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse committed by a fellow colleague, he or she must report such concerns in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Whistleblowing and Protection Against Retaliation Policy.
- 3.3.8 Abuse of Power is constituted by any kind of improper use of a position of power, authority, or influence by any individual against another colleague or group of colleagues. Such behaviour is forbidden and becomes particularly serious when used to negatively influence the employment conditions of a Staff Member. Abuse of power can reflect adversely on a Staff Member's professional capability to deliver. Therefore, Management and Staff Members must not under any circumstances engage in any form of abuse of power.

- 3.3.9 Health and Safety: AATF is committed to provide a safe and healthy working environment. The health and safety of Staff Members and all persons in the service of AATF are at the heart of our concerns and are of the utmost importance. Accidents due to negligence may seriously undermine the physical well-being of persons who are inside AATF. It is imperative to follow all health and safety precautions including those relating to infectious diseases and fire prevention.

CHAPTER FOUR: AATF RESOURCES AND PROPERTY

- 4.1 Accountability: The objective of AATF in putting its resources and property at the disposal of a Staff Member is to allow the latter to discharge his or her professional duties under the best possible conditions. They should be used exclusively in the service and best interest of AATF in a responsible, diligent and efficient manner. AATF Staff Members must properly account for AATF resources and property for which they are responsible. These resources and property include financial resources, assets, services, benefits, intellectual property, know-how, equipment, vehicles, the name of AATF and any other resources that contribute to the attainment of AATF's objectives. Any unauthorized, irresponsible, inefficient or diverted utilization shall be deemed as inappropriate utilization.
- 4.2 Intellectual Property: AATF has full, exclusive and unencumbered ownership over the intellectual property rights generated by its Staff Members in the discharge of their professional duties. Staff Members shall renounce, in favour of AATF, intellectual property rights emanating from the professional activities performed at AATF, except unless there is an express and prior agreement to the contrary.

CHAPTER FIVE: INFORMATION USAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS

We are responsible for the confidential data that we manage.

- 5.1 Confidentiality of Information and Data Privacy:
- 5.1.1 Staff Member Responsibility: Staff Members have specific legal and ethical responsibilities in the workplace to protect the interests of AATF, maintain confidentiality and prove that they are worthy of its trust. Staff members should not communicate to any person any privileged or Confidential Information known to them by reason of their employment with AATF, except where they are authorized to do so in the course of their duties or they are legally obliged to disclose by a court of law.
- 5.1.2 Usage and Approvals: In order to clarify the definition of confidentiality, confidential data are those generated or accessed and utilized for official duty by Staff Members and whose use is not made public, or information which is confidential or privileged because of its sensitive nature, such as medical information, salary and personal data. Confidential data also includes data on the locations, Internet Protocol addresses and other data on internet usage and data decoders. Information gathered during investigations on a Staff Member or the co-contracting companies of AATF is also included in this category. This information will remain confidential and will only be disclosed according to policies in force at AATF. Barring prior formal authorization by a supervisor, disclosure of confidential information to colleagues inside or outside AATF, for reasons other than professional, is strictly prohibited. Utilization, disclosure or publication of information or documents for personal ends, without prior authorization, are prohibited.

- 5.1.3 Third Parties: Staff Members shall take all necessary measures to ensure that third parties with whom they collaborate also comply with the information confidentiality requirements, as appropriate.
- 5.1.4 Media, Social Networks and Blogs: During the professional or personal utilization of communication tools via the internet, Staff Members shall be responsible; preserve the reputation and image of AATF; express themselves on behalf of AATF only in the professional and technical context, uphold the confidentiality of information as stipulated in 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 above and strive to keep AATF related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.
- 5.2 Internal and Public Communications: Communication is a key element in building and maintaining the good reputation of AATF. The internal and external communication policy is defined by the Communication and Advocacy Unit. Staff Members can communicate on the technical aspects of their work in the best interest of AATF. However, the Executive Director is the only person allowed to communicate on behalf of AATF. His interventions in the media as well as internal communication to Staff Members should be previously reviewed by the Communication and Advocacy Unit.

CHAPTER SIX: FIGHTING CORRUPTION AT THE WORKPLACE

Zero Tolerance for Corruption: The Management at AATF is committed to the highest standards of accountability, openness and integrity. Staff Members of AATF at all levels, are required to lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, and rules, policies and procedures that promote the principles of good governance. Staff Members who engage in corruption will be in violation of AATF core values and the complimentary values. AATF recognizes the adverse effect of such a violation on its activities and operations and is committed to preventing them and taking robust action to prevent fraud and corruption as well as any arrangements among two or more parties designed to achieve an improper purpose, including but not limited to influencing improperly the actions of another party or engaging in price-fixing.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINANCIAL BUSINESS

- 7.1 Sincerity in Financial Business Transactions: AATF is funded by development partners and therefore committed to ensuring that all funds are used for the intended purpose. We owe this to our development partners and our beneficiaries. AATF is bound by accounting requirements and traceability obligations with respect to financial business transactions, which are clearly established. We must absolutely comply with them. All our books, records, accounts and financial statements must be kept meticulously. We must increase our internal controls to allow us to show that our institutional and project partner financial records are accurate and made in accordance with applicable regulations.
- 7.2 Attitudes to Avoid: Some of the attitudes to avoid (though not exhaustive) include: falsifying mission reports; approving or making a payment when you know that a portion of that payment will be used for purposes other than those described in the financial report; and committing fraud in the preparation, evaluation, review or audit of any financial document, including concealment or falsification of data.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Environmental Responsibility: AATF recognizes environmental responsibility is fundamental and integral to designing and delivering development projects and AATF operations. In AATF's operations, adverse effects on the community, the environment and the natural resources are to be minimized while complying with the relevant laws and safeguarding the health and safety of Staff Members, stakeholders and societies at large.

CHAPTER NINE: ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

- 9.1 **Tone from the Top:** The members of the Management have increased ethical responsibility. They should act as role models by upholding the highest standards of conduct in order to ensure a good work environment. AATF is an international organization entrusted with funds of development partners to ensure that small holder farmers throughout SSA can access better farming technologies to alleviate poverty and hunger. The success of AATF in the realization of its mission requires compliance with a set of ethical principles and values in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. The behavior of directors and managers should at all times reflect the principles and values of AATF. The exercise of authority shall be normal, reasonable and devoid of abuse. This authority shall include the right to supervise and control the discharge of duties and to give instructions for the performance of assignments.
- 9.2 **Lead by Example:** The members of the Management shall "lead by example" and adopt a set of behaviors which shall serve as models of good conduct, proper attitude and ethical decision making. They shall ensure that those under their supervision shall comply fully with this Code. A good work environment is one where there is fairness, impartiality and respect, essentially an environment free of favoritism, intimidation, hostility, any form of harassment and abuse of authority.

CHAPTER TEN: RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

- 10.1 **Responsible Citizen:** AATF respects the private life of its Staff Members. It strives to ensure a balance between work and private lives of its Staff Members. The Staff Members are encouraged to act with discretion and simplicity outside working hours during social interactions and in public places. Staff Members should act responsibly in their private lives and refrain from any conduct that could tarnish the image, reputation, credibility and integrity of AATF. A proper civic behaviour shall mean, in particular abiding by the law; honoring personal, legal and financial obligations; refraining from indulging in or making oneself guilty of criminal offenses, such as physical aggressions, domestic violence, counterfeit activities, use or possession of illicit drugs or other prohibited substances; and avoiding public expression of one's convictions on controversial issues.
- 10.2 **In the Community:** Being a responsible member of the community implies adopting a proper civic conduct in society. This shall mean, in particular, abiding by the laws as well as the common standards, customs and traditions of the societies and communities in which the Staff Member lives. During her or his social interactions, a Staff Member shall ensure that her or his attitude and behavior do not create tensions or conflicts that could escalate to a level which would be prejudicial to the Staff Member, AATF or both. In the interests of AATF, the Staff Member shall not abuse the privileges and immunities conferred on her or him for professional reasons.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: ETHICS VIS-À-VIS THIRD PARTIES

- 11.1 Governments, Local Communities, Clients, Partners, Suppliers, and Other Third Parties: AATF in its business relations, shall ensure compliance with good governance, gender equality, and environmental protection. AATF's Staff Members shall maintain professional and courteous working relations with third parties. A Staff Member shall not benefit directly or indirectly from their AATF professional relations with third parties. He or she shall place the interest of AATF above his or her personal relations. This implies that Staff Members shall not accept instructions or directives from third parties to influence the performance of their duties.
- 11.2 Selection and Fair Treatment of Business Partners: The relations of AATF with its business partners go beyond the purchase of goods and services. Therefore, we collectively must encourage the selection of business partners on the basis of open and competitive bids.

CHAPTER TWELVE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 12.1 Conflict of interest situations: To preserve her or his credibility and impartiality as well as that of AATF, the Staff Member must act with all due diligence and prudence to avoid conflict of interest. The conflict disqualifies the Staff Member from taking any decision on behalf of AATF on any question or any decision, to which the conflict relates. Conflict of interest refer to situations in which a Staff Member's personal interest or that of a person connected to the Staff Member are incompatible or in competition with those of AATF. Conflict of interest can either be potential, apparent or actual. Potential conflict of interest is one which is not in existence but a change in situation can give rise to the conflict. An apparent conflict of interest is one that is not proven but it is possible. An actual conflict of interest is one that actually exists and needs no additional analysis to ascertain.
- 12.2 Disclosure of Declaration of Conflict of Interest: In the event conflict of interest arises, the Staff Member, in good faith, should declare it to the tasked officer, who offers advice and guidance on issues of conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of a Staff Member to disclose any ties that may be considered as actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest. Failure to comply with these conditions may give rise to disciplinary action. The declaration allows the accountable officer to reduce the risks and consequences that could emanate from inappropriate or late handling of such cases.
- 12.3 Personal Interests vis-à-vis AATF Interests: The source of conflict could be an interest or relations with a person, a body corporate or an activity. Examples of situations in which personal interest could be in conflict with those of AATF and give rise to conflict of interest are: family or marriage ties; these concern biological and adoptive families as well as family by marriage and affinity. Marriage ties are created by marriage or living together.
- 12.4 Family ties can be considered a source of conflict of interest. In such case, the concerned person shall not be offered any type of employment contract whatsoever by AATF.
- 12.5 Staff Members who become related to each other through marriage or living together shall inform the Head of Human Resources of their relationship in order to prevent any conflict of interest. He or she shall not perform professional activities in the same unit. There will not be a hierarchical relationship between the spouses.

12.6 Conflict of interest can also concern financial ties; gains, gifts or benefits; and former, potential and subsequent employment.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: EXTERNAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

- 13.1 External Activities: This Chapter applies to a Staff Member on duty or on leave. External activity shall mean any occupation that is different from the professional duties of the Staff Members within AATF. Staff Members shall also ensure that the exercise of external activities: does not create conflict of interest; does not interfere with the performance of professional duties within AATF; takes place outside working hours; does not give rise to the utilization of AATF resources and property; and does not generate material and financial gains which could influence the Staff Member's independence, efficiency, dedication or loyalty with respect to the discharge of his or her professional duties within AATF.
- 13.2 Political Activities: It is normal for a Staff Member to take interest in the civic and political affairs of her or his country. However, the participation of a Staff Member in such activities could create a perception that AATF is partisan or seeks to influence the domestic politics of a project country. Consequently, a Staff Member who plans to actively engage in politics should beforehand, seek advice and guidance from the Director of Legal Affairs or Head of Human Resources.
- 13.3 Media, Conferences and Similar Events: In principle, the Executive Director is the institutional spokesperson of AATF. However, in the drive to enhance openness and transparency and to strengthen agricultural development effectiveness in SSA, AATF encourages all Staff Members to disseminate information relating to its operations in keeping with the Confidentiality Policy. Staff Members should express themselves publicly in a diligent and responsible manner on the purely technical aspects of their professional activities inside and outside AATF which are neither confidential nor sensitive. In contrast, a Staff Member is not allowed to express herself or himself in the name of AATF or represent the institution without the explicit authorization or delegation of AATF.
- 13.4 Books, Articles or Other Publications: A Staff Member who wishes to publish a book, article or other publications shall be required to: obtain prior written authorization to use information belonging to AATF, and indicate in the publication: "that the opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of AATF".

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

- 14.1 Key Principle regarding Gifts: The ethical principle is that the Staff Member should decline receiving any type of gift proposed or offered both within the context of official duties and outside the work environment. The objective of this principle is to safeguard the independence and impartiality of Staff Members and to preserve their reputation as well as that of AATF.
- 14.2 Definition and Declaration: Gift shall mean any benefit, favour, promise, loan, advance, compensation, commission, cash, honorarium, costs, free service, payments, decoration, honour, discount for the purchase of goods or services, or any other property (movable or immovable), any article or object supplied, proposed or offered to the Staff Member or to a member of his or her family.

- 14.3 Prohibition: Unless an exception is otherwise formally granted by the Executive Director, a Staff Member shall be prohibited from accepting within the professional context gifts of a value in excess of USD 100; offering gifts within the professional context; and accepting cash in any form whatsoever (cheque, bank transfer or other), even for an amount less than USD 100.
- 14.4 Acceptable Gifts: Subject to the conditions listed below, certain gifts can be accepted, provided that they are not offered in a continuous, frequent or repetitive manner. However, they should be reported immediately. These include non-monetary gifts of a value less than USD 100; gifts offered under circumstances where refusal or non-acceptance by the Staff Member could constitute a breach of protocol or a diplomatic embarrassment to AATF; medals, decorations and honorific distinctions offered for authorized external activities or activities which preceded the Staff Member's assumptions of duty in AATF; gifts between colleagues, unless otherwise formally prohibited; and perishable gifts.
- 14.5 A Gift Register shall be kept and clearly indicate how the gift was treated.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: ETHICS HOTLINES

AATF shall make available Hotlines for advisory services under this Code. The existence of such facilities is a strong reminder to AATF's Staff Members of an organisational commitment to ethics. The available facilities shall include secured telephone and secured e-mail addresses. The facilities shall be operated by the offices of the Head of Human Resource and the Director of Legal Affairs and shall entail round-the-clock confidential service available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Reports will be receivable in English and French or an official language of the country from where the advice is received. In the event any of the following persons is no longer with AATF the Hotline contacts should be updated to reflect the new office holders. The secured email and telephone numbers are as follows:

1. Head of Human Resource
Email: j.mailu@aatf-africa.org
Mobile No. +254 780 534 027

2. Director of Legal Affairs
Email: a.tejancole@aatf-africa.org
Mobile No. +254 735 992 205

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: ADOPTION AND REVISION OF THE CODE OF ETHICAL CODE

Adoption and Revision: This Code shall be part of AATF policies. It shall also form part of the employment contract of a Staff Member. This Code can be modified or revised at any time on the initiative of the Executive Director. This Code is adopted on the date of execution and shall thereafter enter into force forthwith.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge, having read the AATF Code of Ethical Conduct. I understand that it is my responsibility to have read this Code and to ask the Director of Legal Affairs or the Head of Human Resources any questions that I may have about AATF’s policies, rules or practices.

I agree to accept this Code as amended from time to time by AATF, as a condition of my services.

I understand and recognize that this Code, though forming binding terms of my employment, is not to be construed as a contract of employment, either for an indefinite or fixed period of time.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to have read, understood and adhered to AATF policies and to have familiarized myself with the contents of this Code.

Staff Member Name

Signature

Date: _____