



# **INTEGRITY POLICY**

**Arab Institute for Human Rights  
AIHR**

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## Table of Content

1. Why the Code of Conduct?.....	3
2. The Code of Conduct.....	4
3. AIHR Policy Unacceptable behavior.....	5
4. AIHR Whistleblowing Policy .....	8

## 1. Why the Code of Conduct?

Established in March 1989, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) is an independent regional organization that works for promoting human rights in the MENA. AIHR aims at raising the awareness of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR) and the related international covenants. AIHR further endeavor for promoting and disseminating the culture of human rights and democracy in the MENA by supporting human rights education through creating knowledge, proposing new policies, and developing institutions. Achieving the institute's vision depends on holding universal principles that mean respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights.

AIHR assures that each individual in the Institute is a reflection of AIHR vision and values. Encouraging diversity and paying attention to our differences based on identity, gender, culture, religious or social background. AIHR emphasizes on having an inclusive work environment by unifying set of values and behaviors to be upheld internally and externally, which totally matches the universality of the human rights norms and principles. **The code of conduct is a formal agreement at AIHR includes proper values and behaviors that all staff members, associates, consultants, interns or volunteers should hold through achieving the institute's mission.**

The Code of Conduct provides a coherent picture of the AIHR's integrity policy. It forms the framework for explicitly bringing the main provisions regarding integrity to the attention of staff, thereby contributing to the awareness of integrity-related issues and enhancing trustworthiness within the organization. The Code of Conduct considers as a guideline on AIHR approaches, rules and values.

The Code of Conduct cannot cover every conceivable situation. Therefore, it is the employees' responsibility to reflect on whether they are acting with integrity. Moreover, they can base their actions on the core values of the AIHR. It is also important to continue to discuss these matters with managers and colleagues, especially in cases of doubt.

It is the responsibility of the team leader to go through the Code of Conduct with the employees to secure a holistic comprehension. It is a shared responsibility to familiarize ourselves to practicing every-day human rights through the workplace.

Being a member of AIHR, a legal-position employee, it means you accept the code of conduct without any reservations.

## 2. The Code of Conduct

### **Our Values and Norms:**

#### ***As staff members, associates, consultants, interns or volunteers of AIHR:***

- We uphold the integrity of AIHR Values such as human dignity, human rights and respecting the diversity.
- We do not violate any person's fundamental human rights, with which each person is endowed.
- We do not discriminate; we all are free and equal.
- We respect freedom of believe, religions, customs, traditions, and culture of the communities each one serves that does not violate human rights.
- We do not commit any act of aggression or violence; physical or verbal violence is not tolerated.
- We do not commit nor tolerate any sexual harassment or intimidation.
- We do not have any sexual conduct with people without their consent, or with minors or with people in an unequal position of power.
- We communicate respectfully with AIHR partners, donors and stakeholders in public and via social media or traditional media.
- We do not work under the influence of alcohol or drugs influence.
- We act individually and collectively to keep our work environment safe, healthy and respectful of the environment.

### **Accountability and Transparency**

- We do respect laws and act in accordance with them.
- We do not tolerate any misappropriation or fraud and we combat any act of corruption or attempted corruption coming from AIHR staff members or coming from outside.
- We save AIHR assets (Information, data, money, and equipment).
- We do not accept any form of bribes.
- We act to avoid any kind of conflict of interest whether personal, family or friends.
- We are accountable to report any malpractice or behaviors in the workplace by others in a confidential way to the AIHR administration team or external integrity advisor.

### 3. AIHR Policy Unacceptable behavior

The AIHR supports a good, socially safe work environment, where people behave respectfully towards one another, and where mutual acceptance and trust are important values. A good standard of behavior means that staff take account of one another, listen to each other and respect differences regarding ethnic or national origin, religious beliefs, gender, sexual preference and disabilities.

Following the code of conduct, bring a positive work environment where staff can increase their professional and productive work. Managers should be aware of their own exemplary role and their influence in this area.

AIHR has no tolerance for any unacceptable behaviors in the workplace. Accordingly, Staff members, associates, consultants, interns or volunteers are expected to refrain from any form of undesirable/unacceptable behavior.

**Unacceptable behavior** is any action that threatens or discomforts any individual in the institute; this includes:

- Bullying, whether words or physical gestures
- Discrimination
- Sexual intimidation
- Harassment and victimization
- Aggression and violence
- Corruption and conflict of interest

#### **Procedures addressing unacceptable behavior stated in the CoC**

##### ***Formal procedures:***

Managers and Staff are expected to take action if they suspect that rules and regulations and/or standards in this Code of Conduct are violated. Aforementioned should be addressed by making a formal report of an integrity violation or to lodge a formal complaint in the matter of undesirable behavior.

##### ***Reporting Misconduct/ Unacceptable behavior:***

The **Whistleblower** should send a formal written complaint to the administrative affairs committee in AIHR: The complaint should have a factual description, name of the defendant and complainant (plaints could not be submitted anonymously); plus, it should include any further interventions were done by any party before sending the complaint.

After reviewing the formal complaint, and the administrative affairs committee prove misconduct that contrary to human rights principles, to the CoC as it is previously mentioned, or to the law, whether related to his/her work or not, or committed a fatal mistake concerned with the provisions of the Labor Law. This matter will be exposed to disciplinary procedures.

### ***Disciplinary procedures***

The Institute has a disciplinary board composed of;

- The president of the institute or his legal representative, as chairman of the Board of Directors,
- The Executive Director
- The Director of financial, administrative affairs and human resources
- The Confidential external advisor (Integrity advisor)

The confidential external advisor assigned by the AIHR is an independent consultant in legal and administrative matters relating to the staff of the AIHR, its service providers and its assets. As such, this person also plays the role of a confidential external advisor. The confidential advisor lends a listening ear, provides information, offers advice and mediates where necessary. Any questions, doubts or suspicions can be discussed in confidence. Carefulness and reliability form the basis for the proper functioning of a confidential advisor. The confidential external advisor's work sphere covers strictly integrity matters covered by the CoC.

- The decisions of the council shall be by majority, and referral to this council shall be made by a decision of the president of the institute based on a request from the Executive director.
- The duration of the investigation should be within a week up to 5 weeks.
- The employee shall be notified of the decision to refer him/her to the Disciplinary Board within a period of no less than 7 days before the meeting of the council.
- The defendant may familiarize himself with the investigations against him/her, and s/he has the right to defend himself in front of the Disciplinary Board himself or his/her representative.
- The disciplinary board shall appoint one or more of its members to conduct the investigation.
- The investigator/s has full access to information of the complainant, and the accused along in the investigation period; with the condition of its reference to the case.

***Enforcement and disciplinary measures:***

If any staff member, associate, consultant, intern or volunteer does not adhere to standards as set out in the Code of Conduct, the Disciplinary Board has the right to take disciplinary decisions according to the seriousness of the situation.

These decisions range from the following;

- A written warning notice
- Reprimand
- Deduction from the salary for a maximum period of one week
- Suspension from work for a maximum period of two weeks
- Dismissal from service
- Complaint at the court

The disciplinary measures are taken in accordance with the nature of issue, the internal AIHR bylaw and regulations and with the Tunisian national law.

In case if the disciplinary board prove any kind of dishonesty of the complainant; s/he will also go through disciplinary measures.

***Informal procedures:***

In some cases, the informal route could be taken when affected employee wants to put an end for unacceptable behavior. Here, affected person and perpetrator aim to resolve the issue between each other and jointly arriving at a satisfactory solution for the affected employee.

If this is not possible, the suspected irregularity can be discussed with the immediate manager, who will play the role of mediator, on this issue; the mediator has to pay great attention to the confidentiality of the matter and never shares conversations or information with the third party without the permission for both sides.

If the informal route is not appropriate or does not lead to a solution, the case may be made to a higher level within the organization through formal procedures, to the Executive Director or to the administrative, financial and HR manager.

## **4. AIHR Whistleblowing Policy**

### ***Introduction***

AIHR encourages safe workplace environment full of transparency, integrity, accountability, and good governance where employees can report any kind of misconduct or wrongdoing in a confidential and protective measure, and away from retaliation.

### ***Definition***

Whistleblowing policy: A set of internal regulation aims at protecting the misconduct complainer, against various forms of retaliation or discrimination that may be imposed on him/her for reporting cases of misconduct.

### ***Scope***

This regulation is used for reporting any kind of the following;

- A threat of misconducting AIHR code of conduct
- A threat of corruption and conflict of interest;
- A threat of Aggression or violence offence;
- A threat to public health, safety or the environment;
- A threat of sexual intimidation;
- A threat of misappropriation of funds;
- A threat of the deliberate withholding, destruction or manipulation of information about these cases.

### ***Who does the Whistleblowing Policy apply to?***

- AIHR Staff members
- Associates
- Consultants
- Interns or volunteers



### ***Why the Whistleblowing Policy?***

This policy is made to protect the complainant from any kind of revenge that s/he may be exposed to because of reporting misconduct; such as continuous harassment or disguised penalties, any arbitrary measure against him/her, including disciplinary measures such as dismissal, exemption, or refusal to promote, or any form of physical assault or moral threat.

### ***Raising a Whistleblowing Concern***

- Staff members, associates, consultants, interns or volunteers are expected to report any form of misconduct/ corruption that happens in AIHR through a formal written complaint to the administrative affairs committee in AIHR via-email with (confidential misconduct) Label, cc'd the executive director.
- Reporting follows the same steps of Reporting Misconduct/ Unacceptable behavior as it previously detailed in page 5.
- The duration of the investigation should be within a week up to 5 weeks.
- Within the period of investigation, five weeks from the moment of the internal notification, the complainant will be informed in writing by or on behalf of the Executive director substantive updates regarding him/her complain.

### ***Protected Disclosures and Confidentiality***

The complainant is protected from any form of revenge, discrimination, intimidation or repression insofar as he/she acts in good faith and not for personal gain in relation to the misconduct or the reporting thereof.

AIHR also follows terms and procedures stipulated by the Tunisian law on the denunciation of corruption and protection of whistleblowers, [Basic Law No. 10 of 2017](#)

### ***Report to AIHR Board***

- The whistleblower can report the suspicion of misconduct to the chair of the Board directly if the reporting of suspected irregularities concerns the Executive director;
- The chair of AIHR Board will record the report, with the date on which it is received, in writing and send the complainant a confirmation of receipt in which reference is made to the report and, if applicable, the notification made earlier;
- Following the notification of a suspicion of an abuse, the chair of AIHR Board will immediately initiate an investigation.

***Request to Third Party Intervention***

The whistleblower can request report the suspicion of misconduct to a third party in case if; there is a legal obligation to the issue; or s/he feels a clear threat concerning misappropriation or destruction of evidence.

The third party could be the confidential external advisor who is assigned by the AIHR as an independent consultant in legal and administrative matters relating to the staff of the AIHR, its service providers and its assets. As such, this person also plays the role of confidential external advisor. Carefulness and reliability form the basis for the proper functioning of a confidential advisor.

***Regulation effectiveness and Amendment Entry***

This version of the regulation is effective as of 1 January 2020 and can be amended by the Executive director of AIHR, after approval by the AIHR Board President. Such an amendment shall take effect from a date determined by the Executive director of AIHR. This will be notified to AIHR staff members, Associates, Consultants, Interns or volunteers by a written administrative announcement signed by the Executive Director and send via email. This document would be updated annually.

AIHR integrity policy is expected to be discussed with the AIHR staff at regular manner through staff meetings.

It is the responsibility of The Director of financial, administrative affairs and human resources at AIHR to hand in this document to each recently contracted member.

Being a member of AIHR, a legal-position employee, it means you accept AIHR integrity policy without any reservations.