

Code of Conduct

updated July 2025

Issued by the Executive Office, this policy is set to be reviewed in July 2027.

This Code of Conduct is applicable to all employees of Berghof Foundation, associates and external collaborators as well as Partner organisations – as outlined below.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Purpose and context

The Berghof Foundation is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organisation supporting people in conflict in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace through conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The pursuit of our mission, “creating space for conflict transformation” is anchored in [foundational principles of partnership, inclusivity, work at multiple levels, multi-partiality, ownership, reflection, complementarity, accountability and sustained commitment](#). We respect human rights in all we do, and act ethically and lawfully in our places of operation.

This Code of Conduct expresses the standards of behaviour that are required from all of us working towards Berghof Foundation’s mission.

Scope of application

The Berghof Foundation Code of Conduct shall apply to all parts of the Berghof Foundation: staff, leadership, board, student assistants and interns, volunteers and consultants regardless of their location. We also expect and encourage our partners to act in the spirit of this Code. An organisational culture that fosters diversity, promotes mental and physical health and empowers individual staff members can only take root if every member of the work community participates in it.

PART II: PREVENTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership standards

The Berghof Foundation leadership commits itself to the following standards:

- a) We act with **openness** to change, **integrity**, and **honesty** towards others in sharing information transparently and consistently. Our actions align with our principles, fostering trust and accountability.
- b) We empower others and invest in **trust-based relationships**. This involves delegating responsibilities and sharing information. We recognise that leadership initiatives can originate from any member of the organisation, regardless their position and seniority.
- c) We show **competence** and ensure **quality** through regular performance and output assessments, providing feedback, offering training opportunities, and establishing standard processes for consistency.
- d) We foster **cooperation** and mutual **respect** by recognising efforts and acknowledging good work in all departments, addressing disagreements respectfully, soliciting input, and resolving issues directly with involved parties, avoiding gossip.
- e) We embrace **accountability** and **ownership** by taking responsibility for our actions, admitting mistakes, empowering teams to take ownership of their work, discussing and learning from failures, and holding each other accountable for both quality of work and behaviour.
- f) We encourage **innovation** by valuing creativity and new ideas that contribute to achieving impact at BF and beyond and commit to making space and allocating necessary resources to uphold an environment of innovation.
- g) We cultivate **empathy** and **consideration** by actively listening to others' perspectives, showing genuine interest and recognising and considering the needs and feelings of others in communication and management.
- h) We embrace **continuous learning** and **adaptation** through after-action reviews, joint analysis sessions, seeking feedback from internal and external stakeholders, and strengthening a culture of learning, reflection, and adaptation.
- i) We practice **strategic thinking for collective benefit** by prioritising the organisation's overall vision, interests and defining behaviours that align with strategic goals and fundamental values of the entire organisation.

Core behavioural and professional standards at Berghof Foundation

We expect the following behavioural standards from all colleagues:

TO EMBRACE AND APPRECIATE

- a) We work to ensure the **health**, **safety** and **welfare** of all at the Berghof Foundation and those we come in contact with through our work. In particular, we:
 - Provide a welcoming and safe space for all.

- Follow all legal and organisational health and safety requirements in force at our work locations.
 - Observe high standards of office hygiene, particularly in light of the recent and possible impending epidemics or pandemics, and to reduce the risk of mutual infections.
 - Comply with all security guidelines, including those of local offices, and are proactive in informing management of any necessary changes to such guidelines.
 - Avoid any unnecessary risk to the safety, health and welfare of ourselves and others, including partner organisations and beneficiaries.
- b) We show professional and personal conduct that is **collaborative** and **welcoming**. In particular, we:
- Treat all people fairly and with respect and dignity, and recognise the professional opinion of others.
 - Are accountable for our actions and do not use unequal power relationships for our own benefit.
 - Work with others in an open and participative way, co-operating both within and across teams to support the delivery of outstanding organisational results.
 - Respect our partners. Our work depends on close collaboration with local and international partners. Together we create processes that stakeholders can believe in and have ownership over. When it comes to protecting the security of our partners and contacts, and other matters of deep sensitivity, we exercise discretion and confidentiality.
- c) We fulfil our work assignments and tasks with **integrity** and **effectiveness**. In particular, we:
- Act responsibly with information and resources to which we have access by being engaged with the Berghof Foundation.
 - Ensure that we use Berghof Foundation information, funds and resources entrusted to us in a responsible and cost-effective manner and account for all money and property, following the appropriate policy and procedural requirements.
 - Follow all applicable laws and relevant internal guidelines.
 - Handle the donations and other contributions entrusted to us and the assets of the Berghof Foundation responsibly.
 - Strictly adhere to the requirements of donors.

- Protect the organisation's property, tangible or intangible assets and funds from damage and loss and use them exclusively for their intended purpose.
- d) We demonstrate commitment to both the **environment** and **sustainable development**. In particular, we:
- Adhere to Berghof Foundation policies on eco-friendly travel whenever possible, recycling and the mindful use of resources.
 - Ensure that environmental considerations are an essential part of the Berghof Foundation's procurement process.
- e) We **travel** as ambassadors of the Berghof Foundation's principles and values. In particular, we:
- Observe all local laws and are sensitive to local customs without neglecting our mission.
 - Align our personal conduct with the organisational principles and the role for which we are employed.
 - Ensure that our usage of social media or other media does not bring the organisation or any of its members into disrepute or damage our programmatic work and reputation.
- f) We **communicate** respectfully and mindfully, and we take care of each other. In particular, we:
- Treat others with respect, kindness, and empathy, being mindful of the impact of our words and actions on others.
 - Embrace diversity and inclusion; respecting and valuing different perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds.
 - Engage in constructive and respectful communication, listen carefully and respond thoughtfully, are open to feedback, and willing to learn from others.
 - Respect personal space and boundaries; obtain consent before engaging in physical contact or sharing private information.
- g) We follow procedures for internal **decision making and conflict resolution**:
- Our organisation is committed to making decisions in a fair, objective, and transparent manner.
 - When conflicts arise, we follow the following procedures for conflict resolution:
 - i. Identify the interests and the parties involved.

- ii. Gather information and facts related to the conflict.
- iii. Evaluate options and solutions to resolve the conflict.
- iv. Decide based on the facts and circumstances of the conflict.
- v. Communicate the decision to all parties involved in a timely and respectful manner.

TO AVOID AND CALL OUT OR REPORT

- a) We refrain from any form of **harassment**, **discrimination**, physical or verbal **abuse** or **intimidation**, both in and out of work. In particular, we:
- Do not tolerate any form of harassment, such as offensive comments, derogatory remarks, intimidation, or threats.
 - Do not accept discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic.
 - Call out and stop any form of bullying, including but not limited to cyberbullying, verbal abuse, or deliberate exclusion.
 - Call out and stop any actions that disrupt the normal flow of activities, events, or discussions, such as trolling, spamming, or excessive self-promotion.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is, has been or will be treated unjustly, prejudicially, or deprived of access to or excluded from rights, based on factors of (perceived) race or ethnic origin, nationality, skin colour, gender, gender identity/expression, language, marital status, family status, social status, religion or belief (or lack thereof), disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or working practice causes a person to be disadvantaged on the grounds of their (perceived) race or ethnic origin, nationality, skin colour, gender, gender identity/expression, language, marital status, family status, social status, religion or belief (or lack thereof), disability, age, or sexual orientation; or creates or implies an instruction to discriminate against a person on any of these grounds.

Bullying and **harassment** is defined as unwelcome, improper, or harassing behaviour with the purpose or effect of humiliating or violating the dignity of the person concerned, and/or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

- b) We do not tolerate any form of **sexual harassment** or **sexual abuse**. In particular, we:
- Will not sexually exploit, harass or abuse anyone.

- Avoid verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature that may reasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- Do not tolerate others engaging in such behaviour and will immediately report any form of harassment or abuse.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, or when such conduct interferes with work, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual abuse is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, sexual violence, and all sexual activities with children under 18 years old.

- c) We refrain from **corrupt practices** and avoid or report any **conflicts of interest**. In particular, we:

- Will never knowingly engage in any exploitive, abusive or corrupt relationships and will take appropriate action if we become aware of them.
- Will neither offer nor receive improper advantages, whether directly or indirectly.
- Familiarise ourselves with and adhere to the applicable national laws regarding anti-corruption, such as limits on gift values or advantages for public officials.

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It can take many forms, including misuse of power, bribery, facilitation payments and fraud.

A **conflict of interest** arises when a Berghof Foundation associate has a personal associate, family, or business relationship, or is involved in any activity, interest, or association, that could impair (or give the appearance of impairing) their ability or willingness to act impartially, or to properly fulfil the requirements of their position in Berghof Foundation's best interests.

- d) We refrain from **exploitation**.

- The Berghof Foundation follows all legal regulations and does not tolerate exploitation of any nature, including the employment of children.

PART III: RESPONSE MECHANISMS AND PREVENTION

Reporting misconduct and consequences of violations

Conduct that violates the Code will be considered as an “integrity violation” and may result in prompt remedial or disciplinary action. Criminal offences that violate the law will be reported to the police. Any employee who has concerns about the behaviour of another employee or person covered by this Code should raise these with the Workers Council, Diversity and Inclusion Officers, the appropriate line manager, or the HR team (see process outlined in the PSEAH Policy). Misconduct can also be reported [anonymously via the Berghof Foundation website](#) or via the complaints email at complaints@berghof-foundation.org. Any concerns will be treated with urgency, consideration and discretion. The Berghof Foundation protects all legitimate whistleblowing activities.

Violations of this Code of Conduct will be followed up and may result in disciplinary action or other measures being taken. These include

- Warnings: A verbal or written warning explaining the violation and reminding individuals of the expected behaviour.
- Temporary suspension: Temporary suspension of participation or access to activities or events.
- Permanent expulsion: Permanent expulsion from the organisation, including revocation of access to all associated resources and platforms.

Awareness-raising and trainings

It is the responsibility of every staff member to familiarise themselves with this Code and its adjacent policies, including updates, and to share their requirements with colleagues, partners, consultants or others we professionally engage with.

- a) The Code of Conduct is distributed to all staff, forms part of the HR welcoming package and is covered in the onboarding session for new staff.
- b) The Code is published on the organisation’s website in an easily accessible place.
- c) There are regular diversity trainings in order to support all members of the Berghof Foundation in strengthening the positive behaviours encouraged by the Code and to recognise the negative behaviours and transgressions shunned in the Code.
- d) The Code is proactively shared with all our institutional and project partners.