

Code of ethics – Integrity

The code of ethics is a guideline for acting with integrity for all those involved in our organisation VLIRUOS. This means that all employees, all members of the Bureau UOS, the members of the VLIRUOS selection committees and all consultants who fulfil an assignment for VLIRUOS help to live up to this code in the context of their assignment in or for the organisation.

The code of conduct departs from VLIRUOS' core values, is part of VLIRUOS' integrity policy and is an integral part of it.

All those involved subscribe to this code of conduct.

In addition, VLIRUOS expects all those involved in VLIRUOS-funded projects to also act in line with the VLIRUOS code of conduct.

‘Act as one’

- For us, working together is an essential part of our DNA. Together, you achieve more and you do so by listening out to each other, exchanging ideas, making and implementing good agreements and building a common support base. Working together is both a means and an end.
- Working together increases the quality of our operations. We coordinate with each other and aim for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
- Open and connecting communication, that is our way of working: it is our basic attitude to listen openly to each other and give open feedback. That way, constructive solutions and suggestions come about and we express what our mutual respect for each other means. It is the basis of mutual trust.
- Everyone has his/her own task and in that sense is a link in the whole chain. In doing so, everyone is also responsible for his/her own professional development that should help make it possible.
- This attitude of working together on the basis of respect and trust and of open and connecting communication is our strength. It helps us fulfil our three roles vis-à-vis partners and networks: to be grant managers, to offer a platform and to act as a knowledge hub.

‘Be committed’

- To choose to work at VLIRUOS is to be committed to act with integrity, honesty, respect and reliability. It is taking responsibility and working with passion.
- We do not close our eyes to what constitutes abusive or unethical behaviour, not internally to our organisation, but also outside with our organisation's partners. On the contrary, we report all possible forms of degradation of the moral (harassment, intimidation, transgressive behaviour, racism, exclusion, physical violence, sexual harassment and abuse, mobbing, extortion, stalking, deprivation of liberty or security...) as well as the financial (fraud, evasion, forgery, money laundering, scams, extortion, corruption...) integrity violation.
- We handle information and information security with care. This may involve trade secrets, ICT security of devices, systems, applications, confidential information related to projects or persons, etc. Information leaks are flagged up immediately. Even in a private context, we remain cautious and discreet in sharing and handling information.
- Our commitment also involves compliance with existing ‘policy frameworks’. We adhere to all formal policy frameworks and regulations (international/European/Belgian/Flemish), VLIRUOS' policy, and other agreements entered.

- Sustainability is a prerequisite for the way we work. We help monitor it at the project level of our operations but also apply it in our daily behaviour within the organisation (recycling and energy efficiency, respect for people and the planet).

‘Act with integrity’

- We work transparently: objectivity and equal rights are the guidelines in this. It is do what you say and say what you do.
- We respect all people without distinction of alleged race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, birth, ability, religious or political belief, philosophical belief, current or future physical or mental health condition, disability, language, trade union affiliation, physical or genetic characteristic, social background, pregnancy.
- We handle carefully and economically the resources at our disposal and those we can make available to partners through our role as ‘grant manager’. In doing so, we feel responsible for spending public money and all other resources we manage correctly.
- Working time is also a resource that we handle with care and efficiency.
- We keep private interests separate from professional interests. We refrain from partiality, conflicts of interest and are reluctant to accept personal benefits or gifts offered to us in the professional context.
- Everyone has the right to their own opinion, but a policy position of the organisation is only made known in consultation with the management team and through the calibrated policy bodies (Bureau UOS, rectors) and according to internal agreements.

‘Embrace diversity and Inclusivity’

- We unequivocally endorse the equality of every human being; discrimination is not given a chance in our organisation or in cooperation with partners.
- Everyone has the right to have their own religious, political, trade union, philosophical, ... beliefs, but no one imposes them on others.
- We avoid endangering our own health and safety and that of others.
- Through our behaviour, we create a safe and inclusive organisation where everyone feels welcome and can be themselves.

‘Embrace change’

- As a centre of knowledge, our organisation has a mission that is constantly evolving. Therefore, each of us is also invited to remain flexible and grow with the evolution of our organisation. In doing so, it is essential to keep knowledge and competences constantly sharp.
- ‘Connect. Learn. Inspire’ is the starting point of our connecting, learning and inspiring organisation. We learn from each other and with each other.
- We pursue change if it is a concretisation of responding to a changing context and/or aims to increase quality or efficiency, but always in an ethically responsible manner and provided there is dialogue and support.
- We provide innovative solutions and working methods, safeguarding the collective approach and cooperation, taking everyone on board. We support scientific freedom in research. In our projects, it must be possible for scientists to conduct research on socially relevant themes in a responsible way, and it is up to VLIRUOS to facilitate the exchange of results and good practices that follow from this in the light of global sustainable development and ‘Connect. Learn. Inspire’.