



***BTC***

**BELGIAN  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

# ***CODE OF CONDUCT***

***OUR COMMITMENT***

***VERSION 2***



# ETHICAL COMMITMENT OF BTC

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June 2011

Dear Sir or Madam,  
Dear colleague,

Each day the Belgian development agency must deserve the trust of its donors, the partner countries and the populations for which it works.

Trust is gained by respecting rules of irreproachable behaviour and conscientiousness.

The values that our actions are based on are underlying this Code of conduct. These values are respect, integrity, commitment and responsibility.

This Code is the cornerstone of our organisation's ethical commitment. Everywhere in the world it is to guide all staff members of BTC, its directors and board members to behave in an ethical and responsible way. Moreover, communicating and promoting this Code with, in particular, our partners and suppliers, will allow us to clearly express the values that underlie our relations.

We are aware that our values and ethical principles are sometimes challenged in the difficult environment in which we operate. Consequently, if you are in doubt about how to proceed in certain particular circumstances or if you wonder whether the Code has been infringed, it is your duty and your responsibility to talk about it.

We do know that this Code cannot cover all situations that we have to deal with. However, the BTC values must govern everybody's conduct. It is the duty of every one of us to consider all situations in the light of our values.

We are convinced that the ethical behaviour of every one of us will definitely contribute to building a fair world.



**Yves Haesendonck,**  
President of the Board of Directors



**Carl Michiels,**  
Chairman of the Management Committee

# ***BTC'S CODE OF CONDUCT***

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## **BTC's values**

**01.** BTC's Code of conduct is based on BTC's values:

- Respect;
- Integrity;
- Commitment;
- Responsibility.

The rules of behaviour in this Code of conduct have been written starting from these values.

## **Scope**

**02.** The Code of conduct applies to:

- BTC staff members (everywhere);
- BTC directors;
- BTC Board members.

The Code does in no case substitute any legal regulatory provision in force.

# ***RESPECT***

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## **Respect for the individual**

**03.** BTC operates in an international and multicultural environment. We strongly believe that diversity is a major asset for our organisation. Consequently, we develop an attitude that respects every individual whether he or she is a staff member of our organisation or not.

With BTC's mission in mind, special attention is paid to respecting local populations and partners.

## **Non-discrimination**

**04.** In our work, we must be able to guarantee that each situation and each individual is given equal treatment. We avoid any form of discriminatory or offending behaviour based on a person's race, colour, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, birth, age, wealth, religious, political or philosophical beliefs, current or future health status (HIV/AIDS), disability,

language, trade union affiliation, physical or genetic characteristics, social background, pregnancy, childbirth or parenthood.

### **Exploitation**

**05.** We consider that any kind of exploitation of human beings, and of children in particular, constitutes an unacceptable violation of human dignity.

We abstain from accepting or soliciting sexual relations, including any sexual favour or any other form of humiliating sexual behaviour, degrading or exploiting others, in exchange for money, employment, goods or services.

### **Health and safety of individuals**

**06.** Through our actions, we avoid endangering our health and that of others. We ensure that safety is part of our daily habits.

Besides respecting health and safety rules, each of us, at his or her own level, provides reasonable solutions to sustainably increase everyone's individual health and safety.

### **Respect for the institutions**

**07.** We respect local, national and international institutions, as well as their symbols.

# INTEGRITY

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## Integrity

**08.** For each of us, integrity is a guiding principle in our work.

## External activities

**09.** BTC respects the privacy of its staff members. However, (political and other) behaviour, activities and relations outside the professional arena may not infringe on worthy, neutral, loyal and impartial job performance.

## Conflicts of interests

**10.** We make sure not to place ourselves or to be placed in a situation of conflict of interests, namely a situation in which we have, either ourselves or through an intermediary, an interest that may influence the impartial and objective performance of our job or that may create a legitimate impression of such an influence. This can especially be the case in procurement, in recruitment, and in awarding grants and micro projects.

Personal interest includes any advantage for ourselves or for family members, relatives, friends or next of kin, or for organisations with which we have or have had personal business, political or other relations.

In case of a conflict of interests, we take appropriate measures to put an end to it.

When we think we are in an impending situation of conflict of interests or when we fear of being in one, we immediately inform our hierarchical supervisor about it in writing; he or she will in turn acknowledge receipt in writing.

At any time, we can ask for advice from the chairperson of the Management Committee or from his or her delegate about a situation we may be in, in order to know whether it could constitute a conflict of interests.

## Gifts and other advantages

**11.** In no case, may gifts influence or give the impression of influencing the decisions that we have to take in performing our job.

To guarantee our impartiality, it is forbidden to ask, accept or give a gift linked to our job. The term 'gift' must be understood in the broad sense covering specific concepts such as a present, a promise or any other advantage, regardless of whether for ourselves or for others, or whether obtained in performing our job or not.

As an exception and in order to observe the rules of politeness, the exchange of minor tokens of attention is accepted if the hierarchical supervisor has given written authorisation for it.

Small tokens of attention may be exchanged between colleagues during the normal performance of our duties.

These small tokens of attention are occasional presents and other advantages, the value of which does not exceed 35 euros per giver, per calendar year for a staff member.

### **Facilitating payments**

**12.** Facilitation payments are unofficial payments of a low amount, usually to low-ranking public officials, in order to obtain or speed up a routine administrative process.

BTC takes a zero tolerance stance on facilitation payments. Such payments are not authorised.

Every staff member who has been asked to pay a facilitation payment will inform the Resident Representative or his/her direct supervisor, who in turn will inform the Integrity desk. Where necessary, the OM in charge will support the Resident Representative and the staff member concerned.

### **Use of information**

**13.** We use the information that we have to at our disposal appropriately. We ensure that the information that is entrusted to us or that we have, remains confidential, or secret if necessary. This obligation is subordinate to legal or regulatory provisions that oblige staff members to disclose facts. We do not try to obtain access to information that is not intended for us.

## **Departure from BTC**

**14.** We inform our employer as soon as possible in case of departure, when the future function includes activities that could put us in relation, and in particular business relation, with BTC.

We may not give staff members who have stopped working for BTC any advantages related to their preceding function (for instance: information, databases).

## **COMMITMENT**

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### **BTC's mission**

**15.** We are dedicated and determined in executing our mission: Eliminating poverty and building a fair world.

### **A learning organisation**

**16.** BTC is a learning organisation. We actively participate in sharing knowledge inside BTC. In a responsible way, we endeavour to propose innovative solutions and working methods that respect the procedures and are in accordance with the objectives of our organisation. We develop good practices and foster a spirit of openness to new approaches.

### **Transversal themes**

**17.** We contribute actively to implementing the policies of BTC with regards to the transversal themes, namely the environment, gender, social economy, children's rights and HIV/AIDS.

# RESPONSIBILITY

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## **Sense of responsibility**

**18.** We resolutely and fully assume our responsibilities in all our activities and at all levels.

## **The quality of work**

**19.** Every day and at all levels of the organisation, we take decisions on the basis of information that is given to us by colleagues. So, it is essential to have correct information to ensure high-quality work. That is why we undertake to deliver reports, to provide pieces of advice, to keep accounts and financial documents and others that are reliable, complete, detailed and substantiated. We conduct our missions and perform our tasks to achieve the objectives of our service to meet the objectives of the organisation.

We are entitled to information about and training on all aspects of our job and of our future career.

We update our knowledge and skills in our professional field and we develop our professional competencies.

## **Internal management**

**20.** Our hierarchical supervisors involve us in an open and transparent way in the management of our service. To do so, they provide us with appropriate means, powers, competencies and responsibilities. They regularly inform us about the policy, missions and objectives to be met by our service.

The hierarchical supervisors contribute to the development of the competencies of the staff members. To do so, they communicate about new concepts and their application and about legal and regulatory evolutions.

## **External communication**

**21.** When communicating to the outside world, we make sure not to harm the image of BTC.

Only staff members who are authorised to do so, may take an official stand and make official declarations in the name of BTC.

## **Protection of the assets of BTC**

**22.** It is our duty to protect the assets of our organisation, namely movable property and real estate, financial resources and sensitive information belonging to our organisation. We must ensure that none of these assets are stolen, sold, damaged or destroyed illicitly.

Using assets of BTC for personal use may only be done within the regulatory framework set, or subject to the written consent of the hierarchical supervisor.

We identify and protect the assets and sensitive data and take appropriate internal control measures.

## **It is our duty to talk about it**

**23.** BTC promotes a culture of straight and open communication. We are strongly encouraged to talk with the competent persons about issues or situations susceptible to go against this Code.

If we know about illegal or irregular acts of other staff members, we shall immediately inform our direct or higher hierarchical supervisor about it.

If staff members, regardless of their hierarchical position, ask other staff members to act illegally, irregularly or against this Code, the latter will immediately inform their own direct or higher hierarchical supervisor about it.

We communicate any evidence of such acts or demands to our direct hierarchical supervisor or to the supervisors thereof. If communication through hierarchical lines is not possible or not desirable, we can turn to the BTC Integrity Desk.

BTC shall not tolerate retaliation against staff members who, in good faith, have expressed concerns or who have helped the persons responsible for investigations.

Our hierarchical supervisors inform and train us, at regular times, about the provisions of this Code of conduct. We expect them to set a good example and to display their adherence to this Code at all times.



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