

Purpose

The Medair Code of Ethics provides clear guidance to all Medair representatives on how to conduct themselves in an ethical manner, so that our humanitarian work is not be diminished due to unethical behaviour.

Who we are

Medair is a Swiss-based international humanitarian organization dedicated to relieving human suffering in some of the world's most remote and devastated places. We reach people in underserved communities that have been damaged by natural disasters, conflicts and other crises. In doing so, we help people recover with dignity and develop skills to build a better future.

Who must follow the Code

The Medair Code of Ethics applies to all Medair employees, trustees, board members, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, individuals or organisations under short or long term contractual obligations such as third parties, suppliers, agents, and implementing partners, and any other persons acting on behalf of Medair ("representatives"). Representatives are expected to read, understand and comply with all aspects of this Code.

Summary

The Medair Code of Ethics states that all Medair representatives must act with integrity, serve others with dignity and be accountable. It requires all Medair representatives to comply with all applicable Medair policies, laws, professional standards for humanitarian organisations, and good judgment. It lists and highlights key points from the most important Medair policies governing how we treat people, use resources, and protect information.

Act with integrity, serve others with dignity and be accountable

Integrity, dignity and accountability are fundamental to Medair. Along with our other values of hope, compassion and faith, these are the pillars of our work to bring relief and recovery to people in crisis.

The Code defines how representatives should conduct themselves as the face of Medair. The Code addresses our responsibilities to Medair, each other, the public and to the communities we serve.

In carrying out Medair activities, representatives must follow this Code as well as Medair policies and guidance documents. All representatives must also follow the law and act in accordance with professional standards for humanitarian organisations. Use good judgment, be honest, and avoid even the appearance of improper behaviour to preserve Medair's reputation and ability to do good. Never mistreat, abuse, or take advantage of anyone. Always treat everyone, especially beneficiaries, with the highest dignity and respect.

Red Cross Code of Conduct

Medair is a signatory to the [Red Cross Code of Conduct](#). All Medair representatives are required to uphold the Red Cross Code.

Consider your actions and ask for guidance if you are unsure

If you are ever in doubt about a course of conduct, ask yourself:

- Is it consistent with the Medair Code of Conduct?
- Is it ethical?
- Is it legal?
- Will it reflect well on me and Medair?
- Would I want to read about it in the news or on the internet?

If the answer is “No” to any of these questions, don’t do it. If you are still uncertain, ask for guidance.

Medair has an open-door policy regarding this Code. You are encouraged to speak to your manager or your Medair point of contact (if you are not a Medair employee). You may also speak to another or more senior manager at your location, or even contact the Legal Director in the Medair Global Support Office (GSO – headquarters) at GSO-Legal-Dir@medair.org with any questions relating to this Code.

Violations and reporting

Compliance with the Code is mandatory. Violations will result in disciplinary action and sanctions to be determined at Medair’s discretion. These may include dismissal or reporting the behaviour to relevant authorities.

All representatives have a duty to report suspected violations of this Code. If you suspect a violation, report it to your manager or Medair point of contact. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your manager, report your concerns to another or more senior manager at your location. You may also send a confidential report to the GSO online at <https://www.medair.org/reporting-misconduct/> or via e-mail to notify@medair.org. If you have any questions about the reporting process or how complaints are handled, ask your manager or Medair point of contact, or another or more senior manager at your location. You may also contact the Legal Director at GSO-Legal-Dir@medair.org or the Human Resources Director at GSO-HR-Dir@medair.org.

Medair will promptly review suspected violations and, where appropriate, conduct a thorough investigation. Suspected violations by persons in the Executive Office or by Medair board members should be reported to the Human Resources Director, who will review them and determine whether they require external investigation.

Medair and its senior management commit to protecting from retaliation or harassment any person who reports suspected fraudulent or wrongful activity, provided that the reporting person has acted in good faith and not with malicious intent to harm others by wrongfully accusing them of misconduct.

Third Party Due Diligence

Before hiring or contracting with a third party to provide services or goods to Medair, and before partnering with another organisation to provide aid to beneficiaries, representatives must investigate their background and confirm their willingness and ability to comply with this Code. This could entail speaking to previous and current customers/contractors of the third party, verifying third parties' qualifications and experience, visiting potential suppliers and implementing partners at their premises, reviewing their internal anti-corruption measures, and checking on any links they may have with public officials or politicians. Contracts with third parties should require compliance with this Code.

How We Treat People

Harassment

Medair is committed to providing a safe environment for all its employees free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work, including sexual harassment. Medair has a "zero tolerance" policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace. Every allegation will be treated seriously and confidentially, and promptly investigated. Representatives found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, including dismissal from employment. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Policy on Preventing Harassment](#).

Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

Medair representatives are prohibited from engaging in or facilitating any form of sexual exploitation, abuse or gender-based violence, especially any such behaviour involving beneficiaries. The payment or exchange of employment, goods or services for any sexual activity is strictly prohibited under all circumstances. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Policy on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#).

Medair seeks to uphold the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:

1. "Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers (including all Medair representatives) and beneficiaries are prohibited¹ since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.

¹ IASC Task Force on PSEA in Humanitarian Crises' principle here states: "strongly discouraged;" Medair prohibits these relationships.

6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.”

Child protection

Medair representatives are prohibited from engaging in or facilitating any form of child labour. Representatives shall not employ individuals below the legally applicable minimum age of employment. Representatives must also comply with international standards and local labour regulations.

Representatives are obliged to protect children from all types of abuse and maintain an environment that prevents such conduct from occurring during the course of Medair activities. Abuse includes all physical and mental abuse, violence, offensive behaviour, sexual activity, neglect and sexual exploitation. You are responsible for protecting children’s private personal information. You may only view or share it when needed to do Medair work.

Representatives are prohibited from engaging in sexual activity of any kind with minors or anyone below the local age of consent. Mistaken belief of age will not be a defence. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Child Protection Policy](#).

Forced labour and human trafficking

Medair does not tolerate forced labour, human trafficking (the trade of humans for the purposes of forced labour or sexual exploitation) or any form of modern slavery. These activities represent serious human rights violations and criminal offences. Representatives shall not engage in nor shall they support or facilitate forced labour or human trafficking of any kind. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Policy on Preventing Forced Labour and Human Trafficking](#).

How We Use Resources

Fraud and corruption

Medair representatives must not engage in corrupt practices such as giving or receiving bribes or engaging in fraudulent activity. Bribes can neither be offered to nor received from either public officials or members of private bodies. The provision of facilitation payments to expedite the performance of routine functions is also restricted.

Representatives should be familiar and compliant with the [Medair Policy to Prevent Fraud](#), which addresses this topic in greater detail. Representatives must safeguard and protect the organisation’s resources from fraud.

Representatives must only use the organisations’ assets and resources for legitimate Medair activities. All financial transactions must be evidenced with receipts, disclosed and recorded accurately, fully and promptly. All records and accounts should be retained, and reporting of financial data must be timely

and accurate. Representatives are prohibited from any act or attempt to dishonestly obtain funds or information or avoid an obligation that results in a loss to another person.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest arises when your personal interests interfere, or appear to interfere, with your ability to act in the best interest of Medair. Representatives must avoid situations that create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In any potential conflict of interest situation, ask yourself:

- Could my personal interests interfere with those of Medair?
- Might it appear that way to others, either inside or outside of Medair?

When unsure, seek guidance.

Where a representative has any interest in a matter to be determined by Medair, it must be reported to the representative's supervisor or appropriate point of contact at Medair. This includes both direct and indirect (e.g., family member) interests. For example, the Code restricts a representative's involvement in any employment decision concerning a family member or friend. Unless clearance is obtained, the representative must not participate in the decision-making process for any matter where a conflict of interest may arise. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

Gifts and entertainment

Medair representatives should avoid receiving gifts or entertainment from third parties. Doing so might compromise, or appear to compromise, your ability to make objective decisions in the best interest of Medair. Gifts and entertainment should only be accepted if they are within relevant local cultural norms – and only if they fall within a maximum limit set locally by Medair.

Money laundering

Medair representatives are prohibited from engaging in or facilitating transactions anywhere in the world that involve the proceeds of illegal activities. All funds received from third parties must be scrutinised to ensure that they are not proceeds of criminal activity. This will entail, at a minimum, confirming and verifying the identity of the third party and, if applicable, its financial backer. If any suspicion arises, it must be reported to the Legal Director at Medair headquarters as soon as possible, and the transaction should be suspended.

Procurement

All procurement decisions must be transparent, fair, impartial and taken in accordance with the **Medair Procurement Guideline**. One of the core qualities at Medair is “stewardship achieved through transparency to our donors and communities we serve”. Medair considers the responsibility to spend money wisely a high priority, whether it be from a private donor or a large institutional donor administering public money raised through taxation. The purpose of the Medair Procurement

Guideline is to support open, transparent and traceable operations; and to obtain the desired quality of services, supplies or works at the best possible price.

Anti-terrorism laws, sanctions and embargoes

Medair representatives must abide by applicable anti-terrorism laws, as well as sanctions and embargoes that apply to countries in which Medair operates. This includes conducting appropriate due diligence on partners, suppliers, contractors and employees. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Policy on Anti-Terrorism and Trade Sanctions](#).

Environmental responsibility

Medair representatives should perform their humanitarian activities in an environmentally responsible manner. Medair is committed to the following principles on the environment:

Compliance with Environmental Requirements – Medair representatives will comply with all applicable environmental laws, statutes, regulations and other environmental requirements in all countries where Medair has a base/office. When environmental quality improvements are feasible, Medair will maintain standards that exceed existing laws and regulations.

Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle – Medair will use the 4Rs to minimise waste produced in offices and project sites, recognising the environmental and economic benefits of doing so.

Minimise Environmental Impact from Travel – Medair staff will be encouraged to minimise carbon heavy travel as much as possible and prioritise modes of travel that have the least environmental impact.

Conserve Energy, Water, and Other Resources – Medair will reduce resource consumption by eliminating wasteful practices and promoting energy efficient equipment, along with efficient use, recognising both the carbon and the cost benefits of doing so.

Procure Environmentally Sustainable Goods – Medair aims to purchase goods that have the least negative impact on the environment by focusing on the sustainability of a product's production, transport, and waste disposal.

Integrate Principles of Environmental Sustainability in Medair Operations and Programmes – Medair aims to integrate environment-focused principles, tools, and guidelines in order to better mainstream environmental good practice into all operations and programmes.

Environmental Education and Awareness – Medair will provide ongoing education for staff and other stakeholders concerning the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Environment Position Paper](#).

How We Protect Information

Protecting Medair information

Medair representatives have access to sensitive and confidential information belonging to Medair, such as financial data and donor or beneficiary details. Representatives are prohibited from making unauthorised disclosure or misuse of Medair's sensitive and confidential information. Representatives should ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to prevent misuse of this information. This obligation to maintain confidentiality persists after the representative's commercial or employment relationship with Medair has ended. Representatives are expected to know and follow the [Medair Data Protection Policy](#).