



# **OIKOS EAST AFRICA CODE OF CONDUCT**



## INTRODUCTION OF THE CODE

The Code of Conduct is an official Oikos East Africa's document, approved by the meeting of Members of the Board of Directors. The Code contains principles and rules to be respected by anyone working or dealing with the Organization. The purpose of the present Code is to state and disseminate the values that Oikos East Africa intends to maintain as a reference during its work.

The Code of Conduct is available on the Organization website and is displayed on the wall at Oikos East Africa Office and all sub-stations. Control over the compliance with the code is exercised by the Director and Country representative.

## GENERAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Oikos East Africa (OEA) is a Tanzanian NGO based in Arusha that works since 1999 to promote the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources as tools to fight against poverty and boost socio-economic development.

The principle behind OEA's work is that sound environmental conservation strategies can guarantee health and wellness to current and future generations, increase the economic independence of vulnerable communities and tackle climate change.

To reach its objectives OEA applies a systemic and interdisciplinary approach that foresees the implementation development projects in four different sectors of intervention: natural resources conservation and management; natural resource accessibility; climate change adaptation and rural communities' economic empowerment.

**OEA vision** is a future where local communities and authorities work together to promote a fair socio-economic development based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

**OEA mission** is to work with high ethical and scientific standards to promote and to support rural communities and local governance in improving the quality of life of the population and in protecting their ecosystems through culturally sensitive and environmentally highly sustainable interventions.

The general ethical principles that inspire the work of Oikos East Africa represent the founding values through which it intends to achieve its mission.

These general principles as follows:

**Independency:** Oikos East Africa is an independent, non-religious, non-political, multicultural organization.

**Legality:** Oikos East Africa undertakes to respect the laws and regulations in force in all regions where it operates and it will not establish any relation with anyone who does not abide by this principle.

**Equality:** Oikos East Africa rejects any form of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, political or sexual orientation, language or health conditions, providing equal treatment to anyone.

**Responsibility:** Oikos East Africa requires its employees to always act with professionalism, attention and caution, using the best available scientific information and avoiding any misuse or waste of its resources.



**Transparency:** Oikos East Africa ensures and maintains transparency in all its activities. Every operation and transaction is accurately recorded, authorized, verifiable, lawful, consistent and reasonable, according to the law in force, internal regulations and donors' requests.

**Privacy:** Oikos East Africa ensures compliance with laws on privacy and confidentiality.

**Sustainability:** Oikos East Africa, according to its vision and mission, respects, promotes and applies the principles of sustainable development in all its actions and projects.

**Diversity:** Oikos East Africa will engage local communities in the planning and implementation of its projects. Oikos will respect their cultural and economic needs and empower them to protect natural resources.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR INTERNAL RELATIONS**

Oikos East Africa considers the human resources as its main asset and promotes the development of their skills, aspirations and professionalism. At the same time, it requests all staff members the observance of its mission and of the ethical principles expressed in this code as well as the respect for the codified set of duties.

- a. *Avoid any type of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, political or sexual orientation, language or health conditions.* In no cases discriminations are accepted.
- b. *Use of drugs and alcohol.* No functions shall be performed under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The distribution or the sale of illegal substances is not allowed, as well as their possession and use.
- c. *Harassment, exploitation and abuse.* No proven attempt to harass, exploit or abuse any person shall be tolerated. Harassment may be physical or verbal.
- d. *Sexual relationship with beneficiaries and minors.* Any sexual relationship with beneficiaries of Oikos East Africa's programs is strongly discouraged since it could undermine the credibility of its acts. Any type of sexual relationship with persons under 18 years old (or under-age according to local laws) will not be accepted.
- e. *Prostitution.* As an organization based on the principle of respect for human dignity, Oikos East Africa does not tolerate prostitution.
- f. *Child labor.* Oikos East Africa shall make sure that persons working for it have reached the minimum age imposed by government laws regarding child labor. In the event of services and supplies assigned externally, a self-declaration form should be signed by the contractor.
- g. *Use of vehicles.* Vehicles provided by Oikos East Africa are available for the operations of the organization or the projects. Any other use is not permitted. Only the persons expressly authorized by Oikos East Africa can drive. Volunteers, interns or non-staff members are not authorized to drive vehicles under any circumstances. Logistics office should make sure that:
  - i) each car has its registration book and maintenance logbook;
  - ii) each car is regularly checked and insured.



- h. Use of equipment.* Every staff member must ensure proper use of equipment provided for the discharge of their duties. Their loan of equipment to other parties is never allowed, unless for specific exceptions expressly authorized. Any assets shall be returned at the termination of the tasks.
- i. Use of guest houses.* It is forbidden to accommodate non-staff members in the Oikos East Africa guest houses, unless for specific exceptions expressly authorized.
- j. Risks prevention.* Each staff member is required to know and comply with the Security Plan relating to the organization.
- k. Impartiality.* As a non-political organization, Oikos East Africa forbids to carry out directly or indirectly political activities that can jeopardize the credibility or the security of the organization.
- l. Privacy.* It is not permitted to disclose any confidential information and data of the organization or other staff members.
- m. Adequacy.* All Oikos staff members are required to respect a dress code appropriate to the workplace according to their role and responsibility in the organization and in consideration of the customs and the culture of the communities in which we operate.
- n. Respect for the environment.* Oikos East Africa, according to its vision and mission, does not accept actions that degrade the environment or the natural resources of the communities where it operates.
- o. Respect for the animals.* All Oikos' staff members are expected to respect the rights and dignity of animals. It will not be allowed to leave their own animals at Oikos' structures for a short or longer period. In any case is not accepted the delegation of their custody to the organization by the staff leaving the country.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

The rules of conduct, deriving from the general ethical principles, regulate also the relations with donors, partners, suppliers, beneficiaries, press/media and auditors.

### **Relations with Donors**

Transparency and fairness must be ensured in the relations between Oikos East Africa and its international or local donors. For this reason:

- it is prohibited to give, offer or promise any money or other non-cash benefit to receive funds;
- it is prohibited to submit untruthful statements with the purpose of receiving funds or benefits;
- it is prohibited to use money received as donation for any purpose other than the ones for which it was originally given.

Oikos East Africa will reject any donation in materials, money or services from companies that manifestly violate human rights, workers or the environment, that produce or trade weapons, pornographic material or any other product that would degrade the human person.

### **Relations with Partners**

Partners must be carefully chosen for common activities according to Oikos East Africa's ethic



principles.

### **Relations with Suppliers**

Oikos East Africa will award contracts for goods, works and services in accordance with internal or donors' tender procedures, on the basis of objective evaluations and in full compliance with the standards of free competition, quality and low price. The suppliers must respect the local laws and the ethical principles contained in this code.

### **Relations with Beneficiaries**

Beneficiaries must be fully informed of the ethical principles that inspire Oikos East Africa field work, as well as of resources used in the activities that affect them.

### **Relations with Press and Media**

Communications with Press and Media must be based on the principle of truthfulness and always coordinated by the Communication Department in the Headquarter. No one can speak on behalf of Oikos East Africa without a prior authorization.

### **Relations with Auditors**

Relations with auditors must be conducted cooperatively and with total transparency. It is strictly prohibited to obstruct the auditors in the performance of their duties.

### **VIOLATION OF THE CODE**

Compliance with the Code of Conduct is part of the contractual obligations of anyone working for Oikos East Africa. In case of a probated violation of the Code of Conduct, Oikos East Africa must prosecute those responsible, according to the contract in force. In case they are external subjects, it must resort to all necessary/appropriate measures in order to prevent such violation from ever happening again.

Measures can include dismissal (resolution of contract) or interruption of commercial/professional activities with a supplier/collaborator, with consequent mandatory compensation.