ecdpm

Code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards

Condensed version



This document, available publicly via ecdpm.org, summarises the key principles, commitments, responsibilities and procedures of ECDPM's code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards. The full code is provided to everyone working for, governing, representing or delivering activities on behalf of ECDPM.

1. Purpose and application

Our code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards sets out the minimum standards of ethical, professional and safeguarding conduct expected of everyone working for, governing, representing or delivering activities on behalf of ECDPM. It applies to Board members, management, employees, interns, fellows, associates, consultants and contractors, whether their work takes place in person, online, during travel or at events. Through relevant agreements, ECDPM extends appropriate obligations to partners, suppliers and implementing parties. ECDPM also takes reasonable steps to protect research participants, community members and others who may be exposed to risks arising from its activities.

Applicable law and any stricter donor or contractual requirements take precedence. The code should be read alongside the speak-up, complaints, safeguarding and integrity reporting framework, relevant employment rules and ECDPM procedures concerning finance, procurement, information security and partner management.

2. Expected behaviour and prohibited conduct

Everyone covered by the code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards is expected to act with honesty, independence, accountability and respect, treating others fairly and safeguarding their dignity, safety and privacy. Bullying, harassment, racism, discrimination, threats, violence, exploitation, abuse of power and retaliation have no place in ECDPM's work, including in work-related online interactions.

Actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be declared, and those involved must step away from relevant decisions until the conflict has been properly managed. No one may seek improper gifts, benefits or preferential treatment. Fraud, bribery, corruption, facilitation payments, embezzlement, falsification and misuse of donor funds or ECDPM assets are prohibited, and everyone must follow approved financial, procurement and expense controls.

The same commitment to integrity applies to research. Findings must not be fabricated or falsified, and research participants, sources, confidential information and personal data must be protected. Organisational systems must be used responsibly. Everyone must also comply with safety requirements and refrain from performing ECDPM duties when impaired in a way that could endanger others or compromise professional judgement.

3. Safeguarding and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

ECDPM prohibits sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. This includes exchanging sexual acts or favours for employment, contracts, funds, research participation, assistance or other benefits, as well as coercive or unwanted sexual conduct. Grooming or any sexual activity with a person under 18 in connection with ECDPM work is prohibited, regardless of local age-of-consent rules. Consent must be freely given, informed and capable of being withdrawn, with particular care when dependency or unequal power is involved.

Everyone must take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm to children, adults at risk and others affected by ECDPM activities. Anyone who witnesses, becomes aware of or reasonably suspects taking place in the context of ECDPM-related activities must report the concern promptly through an authorised channel, taking account of applicable law and immediate safety needs. An affected person does not have to pursue a complaint to receive support. Managers and colleagues must not conduct their own investigations or confront an alleged perpetrator.

4. Raising concerns and protection

Concerns can be raised orally or in writing with ECDPM's integrity officer, an appropriate HR or management contact, or directly through an independent Board channel where necessary. Confidential advisers (internal and external) are available to offer confidential advice and support, but do not carry out formal investigations. The speak-up framework sets out the reporting routes and contact details. No one needs to prove an allegation before raising a concern or approach the person concerned first, and reporting directly to a competent external authority remains possible.

ECDPM does not tolerate retaliation against anyone who reports a concern, is affected by a case, witnesses events, provides advice or assists with an assessment or investigation. Concerns raised in good faith or on reasonable grounds remain protected even if they are not substantiated. Reports are handled confidentially, subject only to necessary and lawful disclosure. No report automatically establishes misconduct, and everyone involved is entitled to fair and impartial treatment.

5. Responsibilities and consequences

Everyone covered by the code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards must comply with its standards, complete required acknowledgements and training, cooperate with lawful procedures and promptly raise serious concerns. Managers have an additional responsibility to demonstrate these standards in practice, respond to safety risks, protect confidentiality and refer formal reports promptly rather than investigating them informally.

The management team ensures that sufficient resources are available to put the code into practice. The integrity officer coordinates independent intake and initial assessment, while HR advises on employment matters and support. Confidential advisers provide confidential advice, and the competent Executive Board or Supervisory Board authority exercises the governance and decision-making responsibilities described in the speak-up framework.

Where a breach is established, ECDPM may take proportionate employment, contractual or governance action, subject to a fair process and applicable law. Depending on the circumstances, this may include a warning, restriction of duties, dismissal, termination of a contract, recovery of proven losses or referral to the competent authorities.

6. Implementation, monitoring and review

This condensed version of ECDPM's code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards is available publicly via ecdpm.org. The full code is communicated to everyone within its scope, and ECDPM will obtain documented acknowledgements where appropriate. Induction and periodic, risk-based refresher training will help ensure that the standards are understood and followed. Relevant external agreements will include proportionate obligations. Serious matters will be escalated and reported to authorities or donors where required.

The management team will monitor corrective actions, while the Board will receive appropriately anonymised oversight information. The head of HR and the integrity officer will review the code at least every two years, or sooner following significant incidents or changes to legal or donor requirements.

ECDPM's separate risk management and anti-fraud policy and organisational risk register continue to apply and are not replaced by the code of conduct, integrity and safeguarding standards.