



OVERBERG RENOSTERVELD CONSERVATION TRUST ("ORCT")

POLICY NAME: Code of Conduct Policy

POLICY & VERSION NUMBER: 2 Version 1

APPROVED BY BOARD: DATE: 15 September 2023

EFFECTIVE FROM: DATE: 1 October 2023

1. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for the professional conduct and responsible behaviour of those acting on behalf of the ORCT, including trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors and representatives. The ORCT expects the highest standard of professional and personal behaviour from its staff and all those who work on its behalf, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. The Code requires ORCT trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors and representatives to conduct themselves with dignity, honesty, integrity and respect when interacting with colleagues, clients, farmers, partners or the general public.

It is the responsibility of all individuals to be aware of and act in accordance with this code. Breaches of the code will be treated as disciplinary matters in the case of employees; others not employed by the ORCT may face appropriate sanctions.

2. **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 To avoid any any form of harassment, bullying, discrimination, personal misconduct or inappropriate behaviour;
- 2.2 To allow individuals to report such behaviour that they are subject to or which they witness and for the ORCT to investigate all allegations and take action where proved to be true.
- 2.3 To raise awareness of the impact of ones behaviour on others, to consciously avoid behaviour which may even unintentionally cause distress, anxiety and a loss of self-esteem or sense of powerlessness in others.
- 2.4 To raise awareness of impact of unsolicited or intrusive attention particularly between staff.
- 2.5 To allow the ORCT to remove from the decision-making process any person who has declared a close personal relationship with another person over whom they have decision-making power. Any person with a close personal relationship shall declare such relationship to the Director or Chairman of the Board as appropriate.
- 2.6 To provide guidance in the interaction of employees, trustees, contractors, volunteers and representatives in their interaction with overseas partners, where particular care must be taken to observe the acceptable standards of behaviour in that country as well as adherence to the laws and prevailing accepted moral attitudes of a country in which they are travelling.
- 2.7 To encourage employees, trustees, contractors, volunteers and representatives to be open to hearing feedback about their conduct and seek to develop the highest levels of professional conduct.
- 2.8 To protect employees, trustees, contractors, volunteers and representatives who participate in any investigation against retaliation or victimisation.

3. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004 (PACCA).

4. **DEFINITIONS**

Bullying and Harassment

- 4.1 Harassment, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people in the workplace. It may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.
- 4.2 Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate

or injure the recipient. Whatever form bullying takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

5. **PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES, TRUSTEES, CONTRACTORS, VOLUNTEERS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

Reporting and dealing with concerns and allegations Any individual witnessing or affected by the behaviour of ORCT employees, trustees, contractors, volunteers or representatives should report any concerns or allegations, or potential conflicts of interest, in writing, addressed in the first instance to the Director. If they feel unable for any reason to approach the Director, the report should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. On receiving a report of personal misconduct, the Director will notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees and will initiate an investigation in liaison with other senior members of the management team, as appropriate. All allegations will be treated confidentially, and the identity of the person making the allegation will be kept confidential as far as is possible while conducting the enquiry. The person making the report will be kept in touch with progress on the investigation and will be notified promptly when a conclusion has been reached. If a report concerns conduct of a potential criminal or illegal behaviour, then the Director will report the matter to the relevant statutory bodies, including the Police, and individuals will be expected to co-operate in any investigation or prosecution. If the report or allegation has been found to be proved, the Director will confirm with the Chair of the Board of Trustees the measures to be taken. The procedures outlined in the ORCT's Disciplinary Procedures will be followed in cases where employees are found to have been in breach of this code of practice. It will be necessary to go through the ORCT's Disciplinary Procedure before deciding if disciplinary action is appropriate.

6. **PROTOCOLS FOR TRUSTEES**

Trustees must ensure the following:

Integrity and Honesty: Trustees will avoid conflicts of interest. If there are any, they must be declared; Take no part in reaching decisions where he/she has a personal interest; Derive no personal profit from his activities; Take no payment for his/her services other than legitimate expenses; Act within the limits of his/her portfolio; Treat all matters dealt with by the Board as confidential, even if no longer a Trustee; With other trustees, take all reasonable steps to secure and preserve the property of Members; Take all reasonable care to ensure that no other trustees commit breaches of trust.

Corporate Governance: Trustees will ensure that they are fully informed, understand, and are knowledgeable of the binding documents for the ORCT; Be properly informed about relevant legislation applicable to the ORCT.

Relationships and Communication: Trustees will strive toward building relationships built on respect, trust, co-operation and care, recognising they are part of the same team; Commit to

achieving common goals, maintaining good relationships and continually striving to improve the process of decision making and performance as a team; Set an example of humility and demonstrate the value of respect for others in behaviours, language, manners, tone of voice and all forms of communications, where ideas are examined and criticised, not people; In cases of disagreement among trustees, strive toward consensus, incorporating the wisdom from different viewpoints and accept the leadership and decisions of the Chairman; Accept that the Board operates by majority decision and that individual trustees must be prepared to support such decisions in public; Satisfy himself/herself that adequate management controls are in place; Not to delegate tasks allotted to him/her, unless special skills are required.

7. **MONITOR AND REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years on the anniversary of first approval.

