

Code of Conduct

WALK YOUR TALK



Why do we need a Code of Conduct?



Our Code of Conduct guides us through a set of standards to ensure that we all do the right thing and act in line with our six values: people, interconnectivity, open dialogue, sustainability, integrity and innovation. This code of conduct applies to all employees, volunteers, interns and third-party entities such as consultants, partners and donors. Furthermore, this Code aims to promote, strengthen and support an ethical culture throughout Rikolto, which will help us to make ethical decisions in the context of our work. Finally, it enables us to find the right person to contact if assistance or guidance is needed.

What is expected of....?

1. Each one of us

We need to familiarise ourselves with the Code of Conduct. We all have a shared responsibility to comply with this Code and the law wherever we are. Use good judgement and avoid the appearance of improper behaviour. Violations destroy trust in Rikolto (and in all the stakeholders) and may result in individual disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and perhaps legal liability. If you are ever in doubt, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is/Are my behaviour/actions consistent with the values and Code of Conduct of Rikolto?
- Do they respect the law?
- Will they reflect positively on me and on Rikolto?
- Would my family, friends and colleagues react positively if they knew about this?
- Would I be happy to read about this in the newspaper or on social media?

If the answer is “no” to any of these questions, don’t do it. If you are still uncertain, ask for guidance. If you observe behaviour that concerns you, or that may constitute a violation of our Code of Conduct (and policies), raise the issue promptly. Don’t hesitate to discuss it with your colleagues.

2. Management

The organisation needs to create an environment that promotes a culture of “doing the right thing”, prevents unethical behaviour and puts people at ease, allowing them to speak up in the workplace. In order to do so, Rikolto stresses the importance of the role of management. Managers need to set a good example, implement this policy in the workplace, follow up on the conduct of co-workers and ensure that all members of staff feel comfortable enough to discuss issues in the workplace. If necessary, they should give advice, report breaches and respond in an appropriate manner.

What about local standards, policies and laws?

Rikolto is aware of the different cultures and local laws in the individual regions. **This document sets out the minimum international standards with which everyone has to comply¹**. Consequently, this list of rules of conduct is by no means exhaustive. Each region is free to include more rules in its local policy if needed. Each member of staff has a responsibility to become acquainted with the local laws, policies and Code of Conduct when travelling on business. Please also note that this Code of Conduct is simply a supplement to the legal provisions, and does not in any way replace them.

Do you need any information about the integrity policy?

Please contact your supervisor or HR Manager or the Integrity Manager² of Rikolto (integrity.manager@rikolto.org) with any questions related to the regional and global integrity policy, procedures, integrity training and relevant person to contact.

Rikolto’s Code of Conduct comprises the following six standards:

RIKOLTO’S STANDARDS

- We treat people with respect and promote inclusion
- We respect the environment and connect all stakeholders of the food system we work with
- We ensure total transparency and operate in line with our standards, values and responsibilities
- We protect Rikolto’s resources
- We protect Rikolto’s interests and reputation

Each standard will be explained in the section that follows and apply to all employees, volunteers, interns and third-party entities such as consultants, partners and donors. Once again, this is by no means exhaustive but reflects our minimum standards for ethical behaviour. More details can be found in the global policy of the organisation.





1 We treat people with respect and promote inclusion

Respect for diversity and equality

Rikolto believes in diversity as added value for the organisation and beyond. We treat people equally and with respect. Rikolto strongly believes that the contribution of each one of us (drivers, programme managers, communication officers, etc.) is needed to fulfil Rikolto's mission. We disapprove of any unwelcome comments or actions regarding race, colour, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation, age, gender, religion, nationality, marital status, pregnancy, medical condition, etc. Any form of discrimination, harassment or verbal or physical violence towards any individual will not be tolerated.

Safe and healthy working environment

To create and maintain a safe working environment where people are treated respectfully, we will:

- Treat colleagues, stakeholders and partners fairly and with dignity
- Abide by all health, safety, tax, social security and employment-related laws and regulations of the countries where we work
- Promote a positive and harassment-free working environment with zero tolerance for discrimination
- Protect the occupational health, safety and welfare of all employees.

Open and connected organisation

As a network organisation, we believe strongly in constructive cooperation, teamwork, taking initiative, dialogue and trust. Rikolto promotes an environment in which people feel free to experiment, be creative, fail and learn from their mistakes. We share information and work closely with all stakeholders in the different regions. In this way, we develop our expertise, keep an open mind and become innovative.



Examples of disrespectful behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Uncontrollable and threatening anger directed at an individual.
- Visual forms of harassment, such as displaying denigrating posters, cartoons, or drawings that are offensive.
- Requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct or communication or sexual advances.
- Repeated unwanted attention, such as phone calls, texts or messages to an individual without a work-related reason for the contact.
- Comments that stereotype an individual

This requires an open environment in which people treat each other with respect and are able to give and receive honest feedback. We can be ourselves and respect each other's identity. We can safely admit mistakes and can openly deal with problems and challenges. Rikolto invites everyone to contribute and speak up.

Zero tolerance for exploitation

Rikolto regards any form of abuse or exploitation (economic, sexual, etc.) as a violation of human rights. The act of treating someone unfairly for your own advantage is not tolerated. We refrain from any form of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.

2 We respect the environment and connect all stakeholders of the food system we work with

Environmental sustainability

Rikolto stresses the importance of protecting the environment. We respect our planet by disseminating and applying the culture of the three Rs: reduce, re-use, and recycle. In our daily work at office level, we minimise waste (paper, food, etc.), make the office energy-efficient, apply a specific policy regarding air travel and promote local transport. Each year we monitor a number of key indicators in order to improve and to create awareness about our ecological footprint.

Environmental sustainability is also an important issue in our daily work in the field. At programme level, we use renewable resources, minimise toxic substances, conserve resources, manage ecological relationships, adjust to local environments and diversify crops.

However, every day, we have to make decisions in response to changes in our environment. Each time, new questions arise about what the "true sustainable choice" would be. At programme level, the global sustainability working group guides Rikolto's work in this area, deciding on our global strategy on climate change, natural resource management, agrobiodiversity, valuable ecosystems, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and agro-ecology. This



Transparency in line with our standards

group has also developed a scoring tool per commodity (rice, cocoa, coffee and fruit & vegetables), which helps us to move towards more environmental sustainability in our programmes. For further information, please visit our website.

Working with farmers' organisations and all other stakeholders of the food system, their members and communities

We commit ourselves to implementing our programmes in a way that is honest, decent and respectful of local culture. We are aware that we have responsibilities towards all our stakeholders. On the one hand we coach farmers organisation to become strong business partners.

On the other hand, we harvest new ideas together with farmers, companies, scientists and governments to feed a growing world population in a sustainable way. Rikolto is the bridgebuilder and each stakeholder of the food system are equally regarded as partners. Rikolto is looking for new ways to do business in the long term, where profits and risks are fairly distributed. Because a better world starts with our food.

We ensure total transparency and operate 3 in line with our standards, values and responsibilities

Zero tolerance for any form of corruption

Rikolto will not tolerate any form of corruption. Corruption is an act involving the misuse of a person's position or authority for personal interests or the interests of another person or entity. Corruption is not limited solely to illegal acts and can occur in different forms (bribery, fraud, favouritism, kickbacks, abuse of position, abuse of power and money laundering) and at different levels (governmental versus administrative). Corruption must be avoided at all costs. It not only has a negative impact on the organisation and the individuals involved, but also has a much larger impact on society. We will discuss some forms below (note that this list is by no means all inclusive).

Fraud

Fraud is an act of deception intended to achieve unfair, unjustified or unlawful gain. The general criminal offence of fraud can include: deception whereby someone knowingly makes false representations, fails to disclose information or abuses a position. Fraud may also be committed by omission or purposeful failure to state material facts, the non-disclosure of which makes other statements misleading.

To reduce the risk of fraud, we should always ensure the accuracy of all Rikolto's business and financial records. This includes not only financial accounts but also other records, such as donor reports, time records, expense reports and submissions (such as benefit claim forms). All of us, not just accounting and finance personnel, have a responsibility to ensure accurate and complete records. Not having accurate records reflects on our reputation and credibility.

Furthermore, we should always record and classify transactions in the proper accounting period and in the appropriate account and department. Estimates must be supported by appropriate documentation and be based on your best judgement. Ensure that all reports to regulatory authorities are full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable. Never falsify any document; do not distort the true nature of any transaction.

Bribery

Rikolto staff need to be vigilant not to engage in any bribery or improper dealings with government officials. A bribe or bribery is giving or offering anything of value or any advantage, whether directly or indirectly, to any person, in order to induce that person or any other person to perform a function or activity improperly. A bribe can be financial or otherwise (donations, travel, goods, services, etc.). Offering something of value can be against the law. As such, Rikolto prohibits engaging in bribery.

Favouritism

All employees are entitled to and expect to be treated equally. Favouritism in the workplace can jeopardise this. We will not take advantage of our position at Rikolto to accord privileges to family members, friends or acquaintances.

Everyone is well within his/her right to assume a fair process will be followed. Favouritism can adversely affect working relationships between colleagues and can lead to complaints about unfair treatment and discrimination.

We protect Rikolto's resources

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The organisation expects all of Rikolto's assets to be protected and used in the manner intended. These assets must not be used for personal benefit or for the benefit of anyone other than Rikolto. Use common sense.

Use of physical and non-physical assets

Physical assets such as phones, laptops, vehicles, facilities, equipment, etc. must not be used improperly. Personal use of certain assets is allowed when it is reasonable, is in line with Rikolto's interests and has no impact on your own productivity. Misuse and/or overuse will not be tolerated. Examples include



excessive use of the phone for private calls, as well as breaking road traffic laws while driving a Rikolto vehicle.

Furthermore, do not engage in personal activities during working hours. Do not use computers, laptops, slide projectors or other Rikolto equipment for business or activities outside the organisation, or for illegal or unethical activities such as gambling and pornography or other offensive subject matter.

Theft of assets, whether physical theft such as unauthorised removal of products, equipment or information, or theft through embezzlement or intentional misreporting of time or expenses, may result in termination of employment and criminal prosecution. Workplace theft of assets belonging to other employees will be treated in the same way.

We must protect our intellectual property rights and secure all confidential information and proprietary information. Each member of staff must safeguard non-public information belonging to Rikolto, including contracts, business plans, employee information, etc. We must ensure that unauthorised people cannot gain access to it. Due care must be taken to ensure the security of personal and business data. Even if we no longer work for Rikolto, we should not make any confidential information public without authorisation.

Use of money

The money we receive from donors must be spent wisely. For each item of expenditure, we must ask ourselves the following questions: is it in line with our core values and objectives, have we got value for money and did we follow the procurement procedures?

When submitting a claim for work-related expenses (e.g. travel expenses, per diems, etc.), a benefit (e.g. sick leave) or entitlements (e.g. parental leave), it must be supported by official evidence that is reasonable and correct (see section on fraud).

5 We protect Rikolto's interests and reputation

Avoiding and managing conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest arise where private interests (e.g. financial, personal, or other non-Rikolto interests, commitments or convictions) could potentially affect professional judgement. It is important for all Rikolto staff to be able to carry out their role objectively and impartially.

Conflict of interest can occur, but it is important that the organisation is aware of its existence. It is still open for Rikolto to collaborate with the colleague under certain terms and condition or per policy. If an undisclosed conflict is discovered, or not managed properly, the integrity of the person involved and the organisation is in question.

Acceptance of gifts and other advantages

Staff should not offer gifts or hospitality to a government official in return for any advantage or favourable treatment or to influence a government decision. However, hospitality aimed at establishing cordial relations with a government official that is reasonable, proportionate and made in good faith is permissible. If you are unsure, seek advice.

When government officials are invited to attend a workshop, conference, field visit or meeting organised by Rikolto or one of our partners, they can never be paid a per diem or other financial contribution except when it is in line with the local government regulation.

We should not make payments or give any other advantage to government officials beyond what is required by law or local regulations, to obtain a permit, licence or other necessary approval. We can avoid paying by planning in advance: know permit requirements, solve problems proactively, make it clear that Rikolto does not pay bribes as a way of doing business and that breaking this rule will subject us to disciplinary proceedings.

Sometimes it is customary to exchange gifts, meals and entertainment with business partners or representatives of farmers' organisations, suppliers or political partners. Avoid anything excessive that may give the appearance of undue policy.

Do not accept gifts, meals or entertainment in exchange for doing, or promising to do, anything for a supplier or other business partner. If you are offered a gift, meal or entertainment that exceeds the guidelines noted above, politely decline and explain the Rikolto rules.

Media and public speaking

We may speak on behalf of Rikolto only if we have authority to do so, in which case we must be truthful, accurate and respectful. The communication must be in line with Rikolto's vision.

If we are not speaking on behalf of the organisation, we must first ask for authorisation when using traditional and digital media for personal purposes (for example, publishing a book, writing an article, posting a message/picture on Facebook, etc. related to Rikolto's work). If authorised, we must make it clear that we are expressing our personal views and we must make sure that we do not harm the reputation of the organisation.

We do not share inaccurate information about Rikolto, e-mails or other information about work in progress. These kinds of documents can be easily misused when the context or origin is not mentioned clearly. Only policy documents or agreed documents can be shared.

Both at work and outside work, we must comply with Rikolto's values and standards to avoid any negative impact on our reputation and brand. Our integrity and trust must be beyond reproach. Not only how we act, but also what we say on the internet, in e-mails or on social media outside work can harm the Rikolto brand. Think before making something public. Remember that our statements should reflect our independence, impartiality and loyalty to the organisation. Make it clear that we are not speaking on behalf of the organisation.

Dealing with third parties

Partnerships are part of Rikolto's DNA: we partner with a wide variety of stakeholders across the world. As such, private companies, their corporate foundations and governments are important stakeholders in the accomplishment of Rikolto's mission, contributing to both the implementation and the funding of our programmes.

Rikolto must manage ethical risks associated with partnering up



with and receiving funds from companies, corporate foundations and government officials. Each region must conduct due diligence before becoming a partner and must use our Ethical Fundraising methodology. In short, our partners' ethical behaviour must be in line with our set of ethical standards. For more information, please consult the Ethical Fundraising Policy.

We speak up and report Code breaches

Seek advice in the event of uncertainty

6 If you observe behaviour that concerns you, or that may constitute a violation of our policies, raise the issue promptly. If you are not sure, please talk it through with your supervisor, director, HR, financial manager or a member of the Board of Directors.

If confidentiality is required, you can always contact the integrity adviser, whose role is to provide a sympathetic ear, offering advice on possible integrity issues, helping you decide the next steps to take and referring you to the right person for lodging an integrity complaint. Rikolto encourages you to get to know your integrity adviser and to speak up if you have any doubts.

Speak up about any breaches

Rikolto promotes a "speak-up" culture. There are three channels for lodging an integrity complaint. You can check **table 1** to meet those channels.

Zero tolerance for retaliation

Rikolto very much appreciates the help of employees who identify potential problems. Any retaliation against an employee who raises an issue honestly is a violation of this Code of Conduct. The fact that an employee has raised a concern or has informed his/her management of a case of fraud cannot be the basis for any adverse employment action, including separation, demotion, suspension, loss of benefits, threats, harassment or discrimination.

Rikolto will protect any employee who raises a concern honestly, but it is a breach of the Code of Conduct to knowingly make a false accusation, lie to investigators or auditors, or interfere or refuse to cooperate with an investigation. Honest reporting does not mean that we have to be right when we raise a concern; we just have to believe that the information we are providing is accurate. The same protection applies for all kind of whistle-blowers within Rikolto.

Each complaint will be treated with due care and discretion

Rikolto guarantees that any claim will be investigated with appropriate diligence and complete discretion. The complaints manager is responsible for the investigation and will protect the rights of all those involved by all means available. Furthermore, any investigation will adhere to data protection legislation. As a result, the reports will be shared only to the extent strictly necessary for the investigation and the subsequent procedures. The complaint manager will provide general feedback to the integrity managers so she/he can improve the implementation of the integrity policy. Please be aware that any violation of the Code can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.



Table 1: Channels for lodging an integrity complaint

Management

You can always raise any concerns with:

- Your manager or director
- HR at Regional Office or within the Global Support Team
- The financial manager at Regional Office or within the Global Support Team
- The Executive Director: chris.claes@rikolto.org or +32 16 31 65 80
- The Chair of the International Board of Directors: stephanie.daniels@rikolto.org
- The Chair of the Belgium Board of Directors: kristof.debrabandere@yahoo.com

Contact details for the different regions can be found on the website.

Internal Integrity Manager

If you do not receive an acceptable response from your first point of contact or your identity needs to be protected, you can also contact the integrity manager: integrity.manager@rikolto.org
The Operational Manager of the Global Support Team currently performs this role.

External Hotline

If the person reporting the complaint has no confidence in the first two channels (Management and Internal Integrity Manager), he/she can contact the external hotline (TBC by NGO federation).

Approved by the International Board of Directors of Rikolto International on the 7th of June 2019

1 After research (by reading the code of conduct from several organisations/firms like Oxfam, UN, WWF, Coca-Cola Company, Pfizer and JPMorgan Chase & Co, KPMG, ING,...) Rikolto selected 6 standards which reflects our minimum standards for ethical behaviour. Thereafter Rikolto has laid his accents by the interpretation of those 6 standards.

2 The integrity Manager defines and implement the integrity policy and maintains the integrity culture. He/She is the single point of contact for the integrity adviser and the complaints manager in case of questions regarding the integrity policy and support them to be succesfull in their role.