

World Vegetable Center

Guidelines for prevention and reporting of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse

Original release date: 6 August 2018

Date of amendment: 1 July 2020

Objective

These guidelines define conduct that constitutes workplace sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. It also addresses preventive, reporting and investigation actions for violations. The objective of The World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) in implementing and enforcing these sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse guidelines (*in addition to the description of harassment in sections 2.1 - Code of Ethics and 1.2.4 - What constitutes a Misconduct of the Human Resources Policy Manual*) is to prohibit sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in all forms, carry out appropriate disciplinary action in case of violations, and provide procedures for lodging and investigating complaints.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all WorldVeg staff working at all its locations. All staff will be subject to discipline for any act of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse they commit.

Defining sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse

"Sexual harassment" is conduct of a sexual nature that is sufficiently persistent or offensive to interfere with a staff member's job performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

"Sexual exploitation" is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

"Sexual abuse" is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Examples of prohibited conduct

Although sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse encompass a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include the following:

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as rape, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults, and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against or poking another person's body.
- Sexual advances, propositions or other sexual comments, such as sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience or sexual orientation, showing pornographic pictures, etc.

- Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any staff to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward.
- Subjecting, or threats of subjecting, a staff to sexual attention or conduct or making performance of the person's job more difficult intentionally to force sexual conduct.

Responding to conduct that violates the expected conduct

Staff

If a staff member believes that he or she has been subject to sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse or any sexual attention, he or she may address the situation directly and immediately to the harasser, if possible. If the inappropriate conduct does not cease, or if the staff member is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the alleged harasser directly, he or she should report the incident to his or her own supervisor immediately. If the harasser is the supervisor, then the affected staff should report to the next level supervisor. It is helpful, but not required, to provide a written record of the incident(s) with date, time and nature of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses.

Supervisors

Supervisors must deal expeditiously and fairly with complaints of sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse within their offices whether or not there has been a written or formal complaint. They must:

- Take all complaints or concerns of alleged or possible harassment, exploitation or abuse discrimination seriously, no matter how minor or who is involved.
- Ensure that harassment or inappropriate sexually oriented conduct is immediately reported so that a prompt investigation can occur.
- Take any appropriate action to prevent retaliation or prohibited conduct from recurring during and after any investigations or complaints.
- Supervisors who knowingly allow or tolerate sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse or retaliation, including the failure to immediately report are in violation of these guidelines and subject to discipline.

Regional Directors (for staff in regions)/ Director – HR (for staff at HQ)

- Regional Directors will designate a Respect@WorldVeg Focal Point, preferably a female staff, for the region. For HQ the Director of HR will serve as the Respect@WorldVeg Focal Point. The Focal Points will provide help in harassment prevention training, preliminary investigation and arranging assistance to the affected person.
- Ensure that both the staff filing the complaint and the accused staff are aware of the seriousness of a sexual harassment complaint.
- Explain WorldVeg's sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse guidelines and investigation procedures to the complainant and the respondent.
- Arrange for an investigation of the alleged harassment, exploitation or abuse, and preparation and submission of a written report.
- Report to the government agency, as required in the country of operations.
- Notify the complainant and the respondent of the corrective actions to be taken, and implementation of those actions.

Note: Please refer to the stepwise reporting, investigation and redress process to be followed when a sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse incident is observed or reported.

Discipline

Staff who violate the expected conduct as stated in these guidelines, will be subjected to disciplinary procedure as specified in the WorldVeg's Human Resources Policy Manual. If an investigation finds the concerned staff guilty of violation, depending on the seriousness or repeated nature of the violation, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Confidentiality

All inquiries, complaints, and investigations are treated confidentially. Information is revealed strictly on a need-to-know basis. Information contained in a formal complaint is kept as confidential as possible. However, the identity of the complainant is usually revealed to the respondent and witnesses. The Director of HR (for HQ) or Regional Director (for regions) will take adequate steps to ensure that the complainant is protected from retaliation during the period of the investigation.

Communication and Training of Staff

These sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse guidelines will be communicated to all staff, and will be available in the Greenhouse. New staff will be briefed during their induction by HR/Administration staff at HQ and regions.

Staff at HQ and regions will be trained annually about sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and reminded of their responsibilities in prevention, reporting, investigation, and remedial action.

**Sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse
Reporting, investigation and redress process**

Steps	Action	Person responsible for action	Timeline
Step 1 Complaint	<p>1.1 Send the complaint by email or hard copy to your supervisor and Respect@WorldVeg-Focal Point (for staff in regions) / Director HR (for staff at HQ)</p> <p><i>Note: If supervisor is the alleged person, send the complaint to the next level supervisor.</i></p>	Complainant	Immediate
Step 2 Handling complaint	<p>2.1 Receive & acknowledge</p>	Supervisor and Respect@WorldVeg-Focal Point	Immediate
	<p>2.2 Arrange assistance (counseling, other support services) if necessary</p>	Respect@WorldVeg - Focal Point in the region / Director HR	Immediate
	<p>2.3 If the complainant is injured or in need of medical attention, the supervisor should immediately report to Director HR (for HQ) or Regional Director (for region) to arrange assistance</p>	Supervisor	Immediate
Step 3 Investigation and reporting	<p>3.1 Preliminary investigation:</p> <p>Meet & talk to complainant; Talk to others who witnessed the incident or are aware of it; Talk to the alleged person.</p>	Supervisor and Respect@WorldVeg-Focal Point	Within 3 days from receipt of the complaint
	<p>3.2 Prepare preliminary report & submit to:</p> <p>DDG-A&S and Director HR at HQ; Regional Director and Director HR for staff in the region.</p>	<p><i>Note: If supervisor is the alleged person, then the next level supervisor;</i></p> <p><i>If DDG-AS or HQ Director or Regional Directors is the alleged person, then the Director General;</i></p> <p><i>If DG is the alleged person, then the Board Chair.</i></p>	

Steps	Action	Person responsible for action	Timeline
<p>Step 4 Review and further action</p>	<p>4.1 Director HR calls Executive Management Team (EMT) for review and discussion of the preliminary report</p>	<p>Director HR</p>	<p>Within 7 days from the receipt of preliminary report</p>
	<p>4.2 EMT based on the preliminary report assesses whether the alleged behavior can be considered as a sexual harassment or exploitation or abuse under the Center’s guidelines, the nature and degree of harm to the complainant, probability that the incident happened (based on available facts & circumstances) and other issues needed to take a decision for further action.</p> <p>4.3 EMT may decide to go for an informal or formal resolution.</p> <p>4.4 If EMT decides to proceed with a formal process, EMT will appoint an enquiry committee (3 members) with Director HR as Chair, to thoroughly investigate following the disciplinary procedure as set in the HR Policy Manual and as outlined under step 5 and 6 below.</p> <p><i>Note: If the situation so warrants, the alleged person will be suspended from work, pending enquiry, to prevent further harm to the complainant or to others.</i></p>	<p>EMT</p> <p><i>Note: If the alleged person is a member of the EMT, the person will not be in the EMT discussion.</i></p> <p><i>Note: If the person alleged is the DG, the Nomination Committee of the Board will review and recommend to the Full Board for necessary action.</i></p>	
	<p>4.5 If EMT decides to proceed with an informal process, a committee of two persons will be formed to talk to the parties for reconciliation, ensure the person alleged apologies and agrees to comply with the expected behavior of the Center, and the complainant is fully satisfied with the outcome.</p>	<p>EMT</p>	
	<p>4.6 Reconciliation committee should facilitate reconciliation between the parties and submit a report to the EMT whether the issue was satisfactorily resolved or not.</p>	<p>Reconciliation Committee</p>	<p>Within 15 days from forming the committee</p>

Steps	Action	Person responsible for action	Timeline
	4.7 If not resolved, the EMT could decide on a formal enquiry.	EMT	Within 7 days from receipt of the report from the Reconciliation Committee
	4.8 Based on the legal requirements of the host country, the incident will be reported to the designated authority of the respective country.	Director HR or Regional Director, as applicable.	As per the requirement of laws of the host country
Step 5 Enquiry and recommendation	5.1 The Enquiry Committee, following the procedures laid out in the HR Policy Manual, will conduct enquiry to establish whether the alleged person is guilty or not guilty of misconduct for sexual harassment, and submit a report to the Director General.	Enquiry Committee	Within 30 days from start of the enquiry proceedings
Step 6 Disciplinary action	6.1 If the alleged person is found guilty by the Enquiry Committee, the Director General in consultation with EMT may decide on one or some of the following actions: issue a warning letter, withhold increments or promotions for certain period of time or terminate the employment contract of the staff.	Director General Note: <i>The Board in case the alleged person is the DG.</i>	Within 15 days from receipt of the report from the Enquiry Committee
	6.2 If the incident was earlier reported under the laws of the host country, the Center will inform the appropriate agency of the disciplinary action taken by the Center.		Within 2 days from the decision of the disciplinary authority

Note:

- If the person alleged is a contractor, partner, vendor, sister institution's staff, after preliminary investigation by WorldVeg, their respective employer will be immediately informed and urged to take action under their regulations.
- For WorldVeg partners / consultants, action will be taken as per the respective contracts.

Change register

This Procedure will be updated as further substantive changes are made. The following changes were made to the Procedure.

Date of amendment	Changes made
1 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added definition of 'Sexual Exploitation and Abuse'.• Added the term 'sexual exploitation and abuse' in the operating paragraphs of the guidelines.• Changed the abbreviation 'HQMT' to 'EMT'.

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