

Media Defence Partner Code of Conduct and Ethics

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Links to:	Media Defence Code of Conduct Media Defence Anti-Bribery Policy

1.0 Policy statement/Purpose

Our Partners are integral to the work that we do. We partner with individuals and organisations all over the world in order to further our human rights work.

We are committed to creating working relationships that are safe, respectful and fair. In turn we require our Partners to adopt the highest possible standards of ethical and moral conduct in their work, in line with international human rights standards and Media Defence's values and standards.

This Code exists to ensure our partners feel respected and fairly treated, and to ensure that our Partners practice the highest possible ethical and moral conduct in their work.

2.0 Scope

This Code applies equally to all Media Defence's Partners, regardless of the type of support they receive from Media Defence (financial or in-kind).

3.0 Code of Conduct

It is a condition of partnership with Media Defence that Partners understand and abide by this Code. Partners are liable for the actions of their employees and volunteers in relation to this Code. Non-compliance with this Code may result in immediate termination of a grant, partnership or contract with Media Defence.

3.1 Act in a way consistent with Media Defence's values and standards

Media Defence's values and standards are:

Respect for human rights ¹	Tolerance
Accountability	Protection of the environment
Transparency	Non-discrimination
Mutual respect	Trust
Inclusiveness	Responsibility

Partners are required to act at all times with the highest standards of integrity and in a professional and ethical manner and in line Media Defences values and standards, ensuring they are acting in the interest of the journalist, blogger or media outlet they are supporting.

3.2 Respect the environment

Recognising that a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, Partners are required to respect the natural environment and to take into consideration climate protection as far as possible within their ability. They shall comply with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and standards.

3.3 Treat all people with respect and dignity

Partners are expected to be committed to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity in their working and employment practices.

Partners shall not discriminate against any employee/beneficiary/client based on race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, political affiliation, union membership, national origin or marital status.

Partners shall not engage in harassment, including sexual harassment, of any kind. Partners shall not tolerate harassment within their organisation and shall undertake all appropriate action to address allegations or incidents of harassment.

¹ As articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments

3.4 Avoid conflicts of interest

Partners shall not undertake any action contrary to human rights principles or which serves to undermine the work of Media Defence.

3.5 Comply with all relevant laws and regulations

Partners shall fully comply with all laws applicable to its business in the country in which it operates, including international laws and regulations related to anti-money laundering, trafficking and anti-bribery, and observe internal policies that support ethical behaviour.

In countries where there is no relevant law in place, Partners will apply the standards inherent in this Code. Partners shall fulfil all agreed contractual obligations with Media Defence.

3.6 Ensure high standards related to anti-bribery and corruption

Partners must not engage in corruption, extortion, fraud or other improper payments or gifts, in any form. In particular, Partners may not offer services, gifts or benefits to Media Defence employees in order to influence any part of the Media Defence's business. Partners shall comply with international anti-bribery standards as stated in the United Nations' Global Compact and local anti-corruption and bribery laws. Partners must declare any interest that compromises the impartial delivery of their activities or service to Media Defence.

3.7 Ensure confidentiality and information security

Partners shall never breach the confidentiality of information they receive in a professional capacity from Media Defence. Partners shall not access any unauthorised personal and business information of Media Defence.

3.8 Ensure accuracy of financial accounting and reporting

Partners shall ensure high standards in all financial accounting and reporting matters. Partners will provide to Media Defence information that is accurate, complete, objective, relevant, timely and understandable. Partners shall reject any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper.

Partners will report any wrongdoing regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, auditing or financial matters to Media Defence.

No fees or other payments shall be paid to a salaried employee of a grant recipient, unless express and prior agreement has been sought/given by Media Defence.

No fees or other costs may be requested/charged to Media Defence by a grantee or any member of the grantee's staff, for any activity for which the grantee or their staff member has already been paid by Media Defence or any other entity.

3.9 Ensure high standards in employment practice

Partners shall not threaten workers with or subject them to harsh or inhumane treatment, including sexual harassment, sexual abuse, corporal punishment, and mental or physical coercion.

Partners shall not use any form of forced, bonded, indentured, or compulsory labour. All work must be voluntary, and workers shall be free to leave work or terminate their employment with reasonable notice.

Partners shall not employ children aged 15 or under.

Partners shall comply with the respective national laws and regulations, including those regarding working hours, wages and benefits, anti-trafficking, and relevant occupational health and safety regulations.

Media Defence reserves the right to update this policy and will strive to notify all affected stakeholders of any changes. Please reach out to us at info@mediadefence.org for any questions or feedback you may have about this Code or to report any breaches.

4.0 Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
Code	This Partner Code of Conduct and Ethics
Partner	Partners include grantees (whether they are organisations or individuals) and their staff / officers of grantees; contractors and consultants; and training and event participants.
Harassment	Harassment is any verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, silence or coerce.