

FOREST TRENDS POLICY

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

2022



Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (PSEA)

Purpose

Forest Trends recognizes our obligation and responsibility to operate in a manner consistent with the fundamental principles of human rights and we are committed to the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse. Recognizes that sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people is a global phenomenon and prevalent in development can entail dealing with these issues. It is vital that sexual exploitation and abuse are not perpetrated or compounded by those who FOREST TRENDS employs. It is crucial that we all understand the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse and our own role and responsibility in preventing it. Employees need to consider how their sexual conduct might cause serious harm to others and bring FOREST TRENDS into disrepute.

SCOPE OF POLICY

- This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, partners, and working on behalf of or representing FOREST TRENDS. All should ensure their conduct:
 - Is never influenced by personal gain or advantage that results in a risk or detriment to FOREST TRENDS
 - Does not give rise to suspicion of improper motives,
 - Is in keeping with FOREST TRENDS's policies and procedures,
 - Respects and never violates the rights of vulnerable people,
 - Is professional and that ethical and in accordance with the FOREST TRENDS' Code of Conduct.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The term sexual exploitation is defined as any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes including, with the intent to exploit another, for personal gain, or for profit monetarily, socially, or politically. The term sexual abuse means actual or threatened physical act of a sexual nature, whether by force, coercion, under unequal conditions.

FOREST TRENDS has a zero-tolerance stand on exploitative and abusive relationships. Forest Trends will also not tolerate behavior that endangers the security of employees, beneficiaries or any stakeholder that may bring any into disrepute. It follows, therefore, that employees should have:

- No sexual contact with children under the age of 18 (mistaken belief of age being no defense),
- No transactional sexual contact with beneficiaries, clients, or partners.

FOREST TRENDS affirms the Six Core Principles adopted by the United Nation' s Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Prevention and Response to Sexual exploitation and Abuse. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.

1. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
2. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to clients [beneficiaries].
3. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

4. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
5. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their codes of conduct. Managers at all levels are responsible for supporting and developing systems which maintain this environment.

POLICY

The Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (PSEA) works in tandem with FOREST TRENDS' other safeguarding policies including safeguarding children and anti-trafficking in persons. FOREST TRENDS will not tolerate sexually abusive or exploitative acts being perpetrated by our employees, contractors, volunteers, or anyone associated with the delivery of our programs. Employees and managers are bound to uphold this policy and to report people or incidents that they believe contravene it. FOREST TRENDS managers and FOREST TRENDS senior leadership have a duty to ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are investigated and that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken. FOREST TRENDS also has a duty to provide appropriate assistance to any victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by our staff.

Our Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of our managers, employees, consultant, and anyone who works with FOREST TRENDS to report incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse being perpetrated by anyone working on behalf of FOREST TRENDS. Managers, in particular, are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment in which employees, volunteers and contractors know what FOREST TRENDS expects from them and feel able to report any suspicious or inappropriate behavior.

Our Collaborating Partners

FOREST TRENDS is clear that any collaborative partnerships we have with others is based on respect and shared values and beliefs. When FOREST TRENDS employees assess partner capacity to carry out projects this should include an assessment of the partner's capacity to meet our requirements in upholding this policy and the FOREST TRENDS Code of Conduct.

Making a Report

The Whistleblower policy asserts anyone's right to make a complaint about the behavior of those associated with FOREST TRENDS and its work, including any inappropriate behavior of other employees or consultants that violate FOREST TRENDS' Code of Conduct. Any manager who suspects inappropriate behavior should seek advice from their supervisor and the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Complaints from people external to FOREST TRENDS will be investigated by the Safeguarding Officer with support from senior management as required. We recommend that complaints be made within 3 months of an incident taking place. We recognize that this may not always be possible or likely with allegations of such a sensitive nature. An investigation can go ahead no matter how long ago an incident occurred and no matter whether the alleged victim wishes to take an active part. How to Report Guidelines are included as a reference below.

Investigations

FOREST TRENDS will investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving FOREST TRENDS staff, consultants, and collaborating partners in a timely and professional manner and will engage professional investigators or secure investigative expertise as appropriate and as needed.

FOREST TRENDS has procedures for carrying out investigations into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Guidance and support to investigators and those managing investigations is essential and is available from the Safeguarding Officer.

Investigations are an internal administrative process and would not necessarily involve the police or judiciary. Investigations are carried out so that FOREST TRENDS can have the best information possible on which to base its decisions concerning employee conduct and consequences thereof.

We might then alert the appropriate authorities if, following an investigation, we determine that:

- A crime has taken place,
- Confidentiality can be ensured,
- The victim is in agreement, and
- Those associated with the case will not be subject to further abuse, disrespect, or violence.

Headquarters investigators are free to handle a case of PSAE without reporting to anyone else in a country office when necessary. FOREST TRENDS reserves the right to act or not to act on any information provided. The organization is not required to disclose its response or the actions resulting from any information that may be provided or reported. Safety of participants and colleagues will prevail. The intentional misreporting of information is subject to disciplinary action.

Victim Assistance

If the person reporting an incident is at risk of immediate harm, danger or threat, FOREST TRENDS staff receiving the report must work to find an immediate safety solution for the person reporting. Contact the Country Director or the or HR Director immediately. As soon as possible, this information must be reported to the HQ Safeguarding Officer.

FOREST TRENDS will pursue investigations and take appropriate disciplinary procedures. Victims will receive immediate support as necessary, in line with the wishes and needs of the victim and to levels appropriate locally (and to a level deemed acceptable to appropriate professional staff).

Consequences

Employees who contravene FOREST TRENDS's clearly stated expectations of their sexual conduct will be subject to disciplinary action that may result in dismissal. Consultants will have their relationship with FOREST TRENDS terminated. Partners must disclose to FOREST TRENDS if their employees contravene the PSAE policy and the expectations expressed in partnership documentation and must conduct appropriate investigations. Failure to do so may result in funding being withdrawn and their relationship with FOREST TRENDS may be terminated. As outlined above (Investigations), the appropriate authorities, including the police or judiciary may be involved under certain circumstances.

Training and Learning

FOREST TRENDS will ensure awareness of our corporate PSAE policy and our FOREST TRENDS Code of Conduct on orientation for all new and existing staff. Additional training will be implemented as appropriate or as policies are updated. Corporate Human Capital will keep a record of incident reports from which trends in behavior, investigation outcomes, and problems will be regularly analyzed. Regular reporting of incidents to the HQ Safeguarding Officer is obligatory. A regular report of incidents will be reported to the Chair of the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors of FOREST TRENDS.

How to Report Guidelines

If you have decided to make a report, we ask that you provide your name and contact information so that we may better assess the allegations and follow-up with you in addressing your concerns. If you choose not to provide your name or contact information, you may file your report anonymously, but note that anonymous reports are suspect as they have greater potential for abuse and may be subject to legal limitations. Please be sure to include the following information with your complaint:

- All facts describing the alleged event, issue, or matter,
- The name and title of each person involved,

- Dates, times, frequency, and locations,
- Facts relevant to urgency, and
- Documentation, witnesses, or other evidence available to support the allegation, including any laws or policies believed to be breached.

You can use the 5 Ws to help remember what to report: Who, What, When, Where, Why. Please keep in mind that those who initially read your complaint or investigators may not be familiar with your local context or local laws, so as much detail as you are able to give is helpful.

Where to Report

FOREST TRENDS encourages all staff members to first speak to their manager or local human resources representative when they have concerns about a policy violation or misconduct, as this is typically the best method for addressing problems and allows the management to act.

For suspected or alleged sexual exploitation or abuse, staff are required to report to the local Country Office Director. Directors who receive such a complaint must notify the Safeguarding Officer soon as possible for guidance and next steps. In cases where a person reporting, for any reason, fears for their job or well-being, they may also file a report anonymously and/or confidentially on FT's Ethics Hotline at www.foresttrends.ethicspoint.com or by calling +1-844-837-2247. All reports made to FOREST TRENDS' Ethics Hotline will be processed by the Safeguarding Officer at our Corporate Headquarters in Washinton, DC, USA.