GUIDE
Work Ethics, Cultural Considerations, and Sexual Harassment Prevention

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Objective:

• To ensure a productive and comfortable work environment for all PREDICT personnel.

• To ensure all PREDICT personnel understand the importance of ethical conduct.

• To facilitate a better understanding of cross-cultural differences as they relate to good communications and staff working relationships.

• To prevent misunderstandings with collaborating organizations and ministries and to foster effective working interactions with local and international organizations.

• To prevent sexual harassment among PREDICT personnel and provide guidance for reporting concerns related to ethics or sexual harassment.

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SECTION 1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading the material in this training guide, you should be able to:

• Describe the importance of ethical conduct to organizational success and a healthy work environment.

• Describe how cultural differences may influence communications, discussion styles, motivation, leadership and decision-making.

• Recognize and adapt to cultural differences in the workplace to improve communications and minimize misunderstandings.

• Recognize sexual harassment in the workplace, particularly between supervisors and employees.

• Report ethical concerns or sexual harassment.
SECTION 2. ETHICS FOR A HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

Why worry about ethical conduct? Unethical behavior can affect staff morale, reduce work performance and strain work relations. Unethical conduct can be particularly stressful for international and cross-cultural working relationships. Unethical behavior can also affect relations with other organizations, negatively affect public relations and credibility, and potentially reduce support from funders. A reputation of unethical behaviors is also likely to reduce collaborative opportunities with other organizations.

The benefits of ethical conduct include:

- Positive work environment
- Enhanced organizational reputation
- Respect among collaborators, stakeholders and international colleagues
- Employee retention

PREDICT management is committed to promoting high standards for ethical conduct and a positive work environment. PREDICT personnel are urged to report ethical concerns and complaints.

Ethics Principles

Honesty—Integrity—Respect—Trust—Responsibility—Civic Responsibility

Honesty

- To be truthful in all our endeavors.
- Should be manifested towards colleagues, international partners, local communities, business relationships.

Integrity

- To say what we mean
- To deliver what we promise
- To stand for what is right

Respect

- To treat one another with dignity and fairness.
- To appreciate the diversity among staff, colleagues and international partners and among various cultures and ethnic groups.
Trust

To build confidence through:

- Teamwork
- Transparency
- Effective communication

If trust is violated, it is slow and difficult to regain.

Responsibility

- To speak up, without fear of consequences.
- To report concerns in the organization including violations of laws or regulations or violations of organization policies, protocols and safety standards.
- To seek clarification and guidance whenever there is a doubt.

Civic Responsibility

- To obey all laws of your own country and the foreign countries in which you work.
- To do our best to make the community in which we live a better place.

Tolerance of Different Perspectives and Cultural Values

- To respect and value different points of view
- To recognize and respect cultural values

PREDICT Ethics Issue Help Contact:
Discuss with your supervisor any questions regarding ethical standards or issues. To report an ethics concern related to PREDICT implementation you may contact your organization’s management:

For UC Davis personnel contact:
Lisa Stevenson, lhstevenson@ucdavis.edu, +1-530-752-1396

For EcoHealth Alliance personnel contact:
Harvey Kasdan, kasdan@ecohealthalliance.org, +1-212-380-4479

For Wildlife Conservation Society personnel contact:
Elizabeth Donovan, bdonovan@wcs.org, +1-718-220-2003, skype: wcs.org_bdonovan

For Global Viral Forecasting Initiative personnel contact:
KC Cramer, Kcramer@gvfi.org, +1-415-309-4712 ext. 0
SECTION 3. CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK

This section focuses on how culture may influence behavior in the work environment. While not discussed below, there are certainly other factors that influence behavior such level of education, work history and experience. The main purpose of this section is to foster tolerance toward contrary points of view, particularly to different cultural perspectives.

Simply stated, culture includes the common values and beliefs shared by a group. These common values and beliefs influence how people organize their thoughts, how they behave and how they view the world.

Culture influences many aspects of the work environment. Work-related interactions can result in conflicts due to differences in cultural norms and philosophy. Cultural values influence organizational, management and communication structure and styles. Cultural background also shapes negotiation styles, worker motivation, leadership and decision-making, and gender relations.

It is not easy to assess many aspects of cultural differences. Many culturally based beliefs, values and rules are not often spoken or shared. But understanding the components of culture and the range of cultural differences helps to understand behavioral differences. The Iceberg Concept of Culture (see next page) depicts some of the overt and subtle components of culture.
The Iceberg Concept of Culture
Like an iceberg, the majority of culture is below the surface

Surface Culture
Above sea level
Emotional load: relatively low

Deep Culture
Unspoken Rules
Partially below surface
Emotional load: very high

Unconscious Rules
Completely below surface
Emotional load: intense

Source: Indiana Department of Education • Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education
Various scholars have established elements or dimensions that define a culture. The five cultural dimensions in the chart below (from Steers et al. 2010) are a composite of the more common dimensions used to characterize a culture. It may be useful to consider this generalized model of culture when learning about people and places.

However, this generalized model must be balanced by the reality that cultures are internally diverse and often divided. Naturally, not all people of a shared culture (or region/nation) will share the same point of view. Gender, economic status, social class, religious or ethnic identity, geographic origin, local histories of cooperation and conflict, and many other factors influence the beliefs and behavior of human beings everywhere. We should be sensitive to all these dimensions in trying to understand the point of view of others and to work effectively with them.

Five dimensions of culture are:

1. **Power distribution**— People of different cultures vary in their beliefs regarding how power should be distributed in society, from very hierarchical to egalitarian, or from centralized to decentralized.

2. **Social relations**— People of some cultures encourage individual achievement while others foster collective action.

3. **Environmental relations**— Some groups promote a philosophy of subduing and controlling the natural world. Others promote lower-impact relationships more in harmony with conservation-oriented belief systems. Quite often, behavior toward the environment can be explained by circumstances more immediate than "belief" or "culture", e.g. need for cash for school fees or cooking fuel.

4. **Time and work patterns**— People of some societies are very time and task oriented, while others manage time and work in a more flexible manner, integrating work and personal lives.

5. **Uncertainty and social control**— People differ in how they manage social control and uncertainty. People in some cultures emphasize rule-based systems that have universal rules to govern everyone, while other cultures place more emphasis on relationships, and informal personal relationships to maintain social control.
An Exercise to Enhance Cultural Understanding: Have an informal discussion among personnel about their own cultures with regard to the five dimensions described above. This might be a useful way to learn about cultural similarities and differences, thereby fostering a better understanding in the work environment.

Culturally Based Behaviors and Styles

Failure to recognize behaviors or styles that are culturally based can lead to misunderstandings, frustration and conflicts between co-workers and with collaborating organizations.

Cultural norms influence personal style, approaches and protocol with regard to introductions and benedictions, conversations, meeting discussions, and negotiations. Cultural styles vary in how direct or indirect people are with their communication. The chart below generalizes a range of cultural styles for components of a meeting or discussion.

Table 1. Culture-based meeting or discussion styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formality Protocols</th>
<th>Alternative Styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening conversation</td>
<td>Assertive vs. hesitant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending a conversation</td>
<td>Sudden vs. elaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting ideas or proposals</td>
<td>Linear sequence of ideas vs. integration of information to be presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruptions and silence</td>
<td>Wait one’s turn vs. interrupt to make a point, short vs. long periods of silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal characteristics</td>
<td>Rapid vs. slow, loud vs. soft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Steers et al. 2010.
Cultural Differences in Communication

The key to effective communication between people of different cultures is an understanding of each other's culture—especially how each society conveys meaning. It is important to recognize preferred communication styles such as direct vs. indirect and formal vs. informal.

In some cultures, non-spoken communications are far more important than in others. Americans tend to rely heavily on direct spoken communication. Non-spoken communications are more prominent in many Asian and Latin cultures. Edward Hall (1976) describes these differences in communication as high context vs. low context communication (See Table 2 below).

High-context and low-context communication refers to how much speakers rely on things other than words to convey meaning. In general, cultures that favor low-context communication will pay more attention to the literal meanings of words than to the context surrounding them.

It is important to remember that every individual uses both high-context and low context communication; it is not simply a matter of choosing one over the other. Often, the types of relationships we have with others and our circumstances will dictate the extent to which we rely more on literal or implied meanings.

To better understand your own communication style, ask the following:

- Do I recognize implied messages from others, and am I aware of the verbal and nonverbal cues that let me understand the speaker's meaning? (High-Context)
- Do I "let my words speak for themselves?" Do I prefer to be more direct, relying on what is explicitly stated in my speech? (Low-Context)

When individuals from high-context and low-context cultures collaborate, difficulties often occur during the exchange of information. These problems can be separated into differences concerning "direction," "quantity" and "quality." For example, employees from high-context cultures like China and France share very specific and extensive information with their "in-group members" (good friends, families, close coworkers, etc). By comparison, low-context cultures like the United States and Germany prefer to limit communication to smaller, more select groups of people, sharing only that information which is necessary.
Table 2. High Context vs. Low Context Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Context</th>
<th>Low Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge is situational, relational</td>
<td>• Rule oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less is verbally explicit or written or formally expressed</td>
<td>• More knowledge is public, external, and accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More internalized understandings of what is communicated (ex: &quot;in-jokes&quot;)</td>
<td>• Shorter duration of communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often used in long term, well-established relationships</td>
<td>• Knowledge is transferable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face communication, often around a central, authoritative figure</td>
<td>• Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus on what needs to be done and the division of responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong awareness of who is accepted/belongs vs. &quot;outsiders&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Association</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships depend on trust, build up slowly, and are stable.</td>
<td>• Relationships begin and end quickly. Many people can be inside one's circle; the circle's boundary is not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How things get done depends on relationships with people and attention to group process.</td>
<td>• Things get done by following procedures and paying attention to the goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One's identity is rooted in groups (family, culture, work).</td>
<td>• One's identity is rooted in oneself and one's accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social structure is decentralized; responsibility goes further down (is not concentrated at the top).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[continued on next page]
### Interaction

- High use of nonverbal elements; voice tone, facial expression, gestures, and eye movement carry significant parts of conversation.
- Verbal message is indirect; one talks around the point and embellishes it.
- Communication is seen as an art form; a way of engaging someone.
- Disagreement is personalized. One is sensitive to conflict expressed in another's nonverbal communication. Conflict either must be solved before work can progress or must be avoided.

### Message is carried more by words than by nonverbal means.
- Verbal message is direct; one spells things out exactly.
- Communication is seen as a way of exchanging information, ideas, and opinions.
- Disagreement is depersonalized. One withdraws from conflict with another and gets on with the task. Focus is on rational solutions, not personal ones.

### Learning

- Multiple sources of information are used. Thinking is deductive, proceeds from general to specific.
- Learning occurs by first observing others as they model or demonstrate, and then practicing.
- Groups are preferred for learning and problem solving.
- Accuracy is valued. How well something is learned is important.

### Learning

- One source of information is used to develop knowledge.
- Thinking is inductive, proceeds from specific to general. Focus is on detail.
- Learning occurs by following explicit directions and explanations of others.
- An individual orientation is preferred for learning and problem solving.
- Speed is valued. How efficiently something is learned is important.

*Adapted from Edward Hall’s Beyond Culture (1976)*

An example of a cultural misunderstanding rooted in high vs. low context communication is that the French tend to assume the listener knows everything; they may therefore assume that Americans think they are stupid, because Americans habitually explain everything to their counterparts. High context cultures are more common in the eastern nations than in western, and in countries with low racial diversity. Cultures where the group is valued over the individual promote group reliance. High context cultures may have a stronger sense of tradition and history,
and change more slowly (i.e. as in a native community, or an older larger company that takes years to implement change).

An individual from a high context culture has to adapt to and/or be accommodated when shifting to a low context culture and vice-versa. High context cultures expect small close-knit groups, where professional and personal life is interrelated; whereas low context cultures tend to separate work from personal life.

In the multicultural environment of international work effective communication is critical. Thus, it is important to carefully consider what to say, how to say it, and to whom; and what to communicate non-verbally and how to communicate it. Understanding high versus low context communication can help to improve your cross-cultural communications.
SECTION 4. PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All PREDICT Personnel should read and be familiar with the PREDICT Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy. See Appendix I.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other comments or touching of a sexual nature, that makes another person uncomfortable, thereby creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.”

“Unwelcome sexual advances” — Sexual advances at work are not appropriate. Less obvious examples might be repeatedly asking someone to go out after work after they have expressed they are not interested.

For example, if a supervisor repeatedly asks a staff person out, that may create an uncomfortable or hostile work environment. The staff person may be concerned that their refusal to date the supervisor may mean they might be fired.

“Sexual favors” – Refers to the implication that staff management or other decisions in the workplace is contingent upon any sexual favor. This would include the expectation of a date after work.

What are the harmful effects of sexual harassment in the workplace?

Sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace cause a great deal of harm, not only to employees who are harassed but also to others who are aware of harassment. Generally, these behaviors can cause stress among personnel and make the work environment unpleasant. It can also lead to low-productivity, absenteeism and high staff turnover.

What is not appropriate to say in the workplace?

Types of inappropriate comments include:

- Demands for sexual favors
- Sexually graphic statements
- Demeaning jokes of a sexual nature
- Descriptions or comments about an employee’s anatomy or body in sexual or sexually suggestive terms
Inappropriate Physical Conduct

Examples of inappropriate physical conduct include:

- Unwelcome touching
- Unwelcome grabbing, patting, touching a body part
- Unwelcome kissing/hugging
- Unwelcome encroaching on a person’s physical space, such as getting too close to a person when speaking with them
- Unwelcome blocking of movement, such as cornering someone in an enclosed space

Inappropriate Visual Conduct

Examples of inappropriate visual conduct include:

- Pornography
- Sexually suggestive posters
- Cartoons or pictures that depict either gender in a demeaning way
- Leering or staring
- Sexually explicit email messages

Determining Whether Conduct is Welcome

Of course, some conduct might be perfectly welcome in some circumstances, such as hugging a co-worker at a birthday party.

You’ll want to watch for the reactions of the recipient, such as facial expressions or physical reactions, to determine if your behavior is welcome. Since it is not always easy to determine how others will react, it is important in the workplace not to assume that your conduct will be welcome.

Employees should be encouraged to inform others when their behavior is unwelcome. In other words, supervisors must talk to staff so they feel comfortable about speaking up to let others know their comfort level.

Examples of Behavior That Could Be Sexual Harassment

Many activities that could be considered acceptable if welcome could be regarded as sexual harassment if the behavior is unwelcome.
Some examples of such activities are:

- Hugging a co-worker: Repeated hugging or other physical conduct can create a hostile environment if it is unwelcome by the recipient or third parties who witness the conduct. However, a hug on a special occasion may be welcome and is considered acceptable.

- Sending a sexual e-mail joke to a co-worker: Sending unwanted sexual jokes might create an uncomfortable or hostile environment.

- Repeatedly asking a co-worker out on a date: Asking a co-worker out on a date is not harassment, unless the co-worker has previously indicated that he or she is not interested.

- Viewing pornography on your work computer: This is against PREDICT standards and can be offensive to others.

**Hostile Work Environment Due to Harassment**

A hostile work environment due to sexual harassment has three elements:

1. The conduct is directed at a person because of their gender. The sexual harassment policy protects not only the recipient of the conduct, but also other employees who are the same gender as the recipient and who are aware of the conduct.

2. The conduct is unwelcome.

3. The conduct interferes with a person’s work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

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**Case Study 1: Graduate Student Renee Rogers**

**Scenario:** Renee Rogers is a graduate student doing an internship with the PREDICT surveillance program. Over a five-week period, one of the other PREDICT field veterinarians, Rob Rockwell, engaged in the following behaviors: on one occasion, Dr. Rockwell asked Ms. Rogers if she was married. When she said no, he responded, “So, you’re the aging nun?” On another occasion, Dr. Rockwell greeted her by taking her arm and pulling her close to him so the sides of their bodies were touching. On a third occasion, Dr. Rockwell put his arm around Ms. Rogers and, as he did so, rubbed her breast with his arm.

Is Dr. Rockwell’s conduct sexual harassment?
Discussion: Dr. Rockwell’s behavior is inappropriate in the workplace and should be considered sexual harassment. PREDICT Policy prohibits this kind of behavior at work.

Consensual Relationships

While not encouraged, consensual romantic relationships between members of the PREDICT staff are not prohibited by PREDICT Policy.

However, such relationships may make the work environmental uncomfortable if the romantic relationship should dissolve. It may also make the work environment uncomfortable for co-workers, particularly when there is a relationship at work between a supervisor and a subordinate staff member.

Supervisor Conduct

The unequal institutional power of a supervisor and his or her subordinates heightens the vulnerability of the subordinate personnel and the potential for coercion. The relationship between a supervisor and subordinate personnel must be protected from influences or activities that can create a stressful work environment.

What do I need to be aware of as a supervisor?

Supervisors need to be mindful of the possible complications arising from a relationship with subordinate personnel. Such relationships can result in claims of unwelcome sexual conduct as well as claims of favoritism lodged by other employees.

A supervisor who becomes romantically involved with a subordinate needs to take effective steps to ensure the evaluation or supervision of the individual (whether student or employee) is unbiased. Such steps could include arranging for alternative evaluation of the supervisee or the supervisor removing himself/herself from decisions regarding the status of the supervisee.

Harassment May Affect Others in the Workplace

An uncomfortable or hostile environment may arise for a person who views or hears sexual conduct in the workplace even if the conduct was not directed at that person.

An employee may be affected by harassment directed at others. This creates an uncomfortable or sometimes hostile work environment.
Case Study 2: Field Assistants

**Scenario**: Jim Travis, a Field Manager, directly supervises three Field Assistants. Jim has worked with one of the field assistants, Ada Star, for several years. The two have become good friends. Recently, the other Field Assistants have noticed that Jim and Ada are talking behind closed doors more frequently, and they seem to be very flirtatious with each other. They also notice that Ada is taking longer lunch breaks and leaving work early, a benefit that neither of the other Field Assistants receives.

**Discussion**: Jim’s favoritism toward Ada at work may be considered sexual harassment and may create resentment and a hostile work environment for the other Field Assistants.
Preventing Sexual Harassment

Now you should understand what sexual harassment is and how to prevent it. Despite the difficult nature of some of these issues, if you keep in mind the following general principles, you should feel comfortable that you are doing the right thing:

In almost all cases, direct communication can solve the problem early on. Individuals who are uncomfortable with or offended by another’s behavior are strongly encouraged to inform that person that his or her conduct is unwelcome. However, no one should ever be forced to engage in such communication. If someone is not comfortable with this direct approach, supervisors or your PREDICT organization’s management (WCS, EcoHealth Alliance, GVFI or UC Davis) are available to speak on that person’s behalf in order to remedy the problem.

If you are unsure whether a particular set of facts might involve harassment, or you need further guidance concerning a situation involving an employee whom you supervise, please contact your respective organization’s contact for further guidance on who to speak with and how to proceed (See reporting contacts below).

In some cases, a local supervisor may be able to resolve the problem early on if the complaint is brought to their attention (if the supervisor is not the source of the harassment problem). Actions the local supervisor may consider include:

- Separating complainant and the alleged harasser from each other in terms of physical proximity
- Instructing persons involved not to communicate or interact with each other
- Recommending to the complainant to report the problem via email to the PREDICT project lead for your organization

Reporting Sexual Harassment

To report sexual harassment to PREDICT Management the contacts are the following:

For UC Davis personnel contact:
Lisa Stevenson, lhstevenson@ucdavis.edu, +1-530-752-1396

For EcoHealth Alliance personnel contact:
USAID PREDICT Guide Work Ethics, Cultural Considerations, and Sexual Harassment Prevention
Report the following information:

- Your full name, office location, organization
- A description of the problem*
- Indicate whether you would like to talk by phone.

*If you name a person engaged in sexual harassment behavior, we must investigate the behavior of that person.

Preferred Cooperative Resolution

PREDICT staff are encouraged to attempt to facilitate resolution at the earliest stage possible, with the cooperation of all parties involved. A cooperative resolution may include the following:

- Mediating an agreement between the parties
- Separating the parties
- Negotiating an agreement for disciplinary action
- Conducting targeted educational and training programs
- Providing remedies for the individual harmed by the harassment

Rights of the Complainant

A person who feels he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment or discrimination has the following rights:

- The right to confront the harasser and state that the conduct is unwelcome
• The right to file a complaint

• The right to a prompt and effective response

• The right to prompt remedial action, if warranted

• The right to privacy in that the complaint and related information will be shared only with those who have a “need to know” to help resolve the problem.

• The right to be free from retaliation

PREDICT Policy Regarding Privacy and Confidentiality

A complainant has the right to privacy and confidentiality. However, it is important to understand that the right to privacy is not absolute. An accused harasser also has “due process” rights to respond to accusations in disciplinary proceedings. These due process rights may dictate that certain information be provided to the accused harasser.

PREDICT Management shall strive to protect the privacy of individuals involved in a report of sexual harassment. It is understood that a report of sexual harassment may result in the gathering of extremely sensitive information about individuals. Note that while such information is generally considered confidential, under the law, some personal information related to a report of sexual harassment must be reported.

PREDICT Policy Against Retaliation

As we have discussed previously, a person who files a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination has the right to be free from retaliation, regardless of the outcome of the claim. Supervisors play an important role in ensuring that employees who file complaints are not subjected to retaliation.
SECTION 5. REFERENCES


