



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

From Concern to Clarity

FAO's Roadmap on where
to go when in need





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The development of this Roadmap was led by the Ethics Office in collaboration with internal stakeholders. It is a living document that will be updated in accordance with any changes to rules, regulations, policies, contacts, etc. For questions on the contents of the Roadmap, please contact Ethics-Office@fao.org.

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1st revision, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Where do you go and whom do you contact when you have something to report, feel unfairly treated or need guidance on how to understand the rules? Do you have a concern that the Ombuds Office, the Office of the Inspector General or the Ethics Office can assist with? Should you discuss your situation with your manager, the Human Resources Division, the Staff Representative Bodies, or should you speak to the Staff Counsellor?

This Roadmap will empower you in navigating the various offices, functions and mechanisms available to you, whether you are based in the field or at headquarters, to help you address your concerns related to workplace conduct or employment conditions.

The Roadmap introduces the various offices, functions and mechanisms in FAO and explains the areas of responsibility of each. It also offers some practical examples to provide context to the explanations, and to help you when you have doubts about how to deal with your concern. Be mindful, however, that each situation presents unique circumstances and that the guidance offered will differ accordingly, and may therefore need to be adjusted in light of your specific situation. In some cases, you may also wish to consult with more than one office or function.

This Roadmap is for all FAO personnel (staff members, consultants, subscribers to personal service agreements, interns, volunteers, FAO retirees, etc.). For some areas of concern, the Roadmap may also provide guidance to anyone external to FAO (such as project beneficiaries or participants at FAO events).

You may refer also to the **FAO Code of Ethical Conduct**, which provides guidance on acting ethically and identifies applicable rules and policies that all FAO personnel are expected to be familiar with.

For available sources of information and assistance, see below under the specific headings.



MANAGERS

HEAD OF STREAM, CENTRE, DIVISION OR DECENTRALIZED OFFICE

By leading by example, managers have a responsibility in ensuring their own as well as their team or office's adherence to FAO's regulations and rules, and to the highest standards of integrity and conduct. Managers are in a unique position to help consider and address problems as they emerge, and to take early action before situations deteriorate. They should take action and provide guidance to the personnel reporting to them on how to address issues such as:

- ✓ office management or interpersonal disputes;
- ✓ misuse of FAO assets, including human, financial, material;

- ✓ minor violations of regulations, rules or administrative issuances;
- ✓ acts of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority; and
- ✓ signs of possible misconduct¹ such as favouritism, nepotism, corruption, or other violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct.

¹ Misconduct includes unsatisfactory conduct, as set out in the non-exhaustive list of examples in the Administrative Manual at paragraph 330.1.52 and sanctionable actions by a third party, as defined in the FAO Vendor Sanctions Procedures (see Administrative Circular 2014/27).



Many of the above-mentioned types of issues, if of a serious nature, should be referred to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Managers may contact the offices listed in this Roadmap for guidance on addressing concerns brought to them, as well as refer personnel to these offices as necessary.

You can contact your manager for advice, assistance or information if you have a concern about office dynamics, inappropriate behaviour or interpersonal relations, or have doubts whether actions are ethical. If you are not comfortable doing so or have doubts about the advice provided, you may, of course, contact one of the independent offices listed in this Roadmap for help.



HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

The Human Resources Division (CSH), the Regional Human Resource (HR) Officers, and the Shared Services Centre are partners in support of FAO's most valuable asset; its personnel. Their roles and responsibilities can be summarized as follows:

CSH in headquarters focuses on developing HR strategy, policy, leading workforce planning, learning and capacity building programmes, and manages complex workplace issues, staffing matters and rotation programmes, medical insurance plans, the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), the compensation plan and service-incurred injury or illness.

■ Specifically, **CSH** provides guidance and addresses issues related to:

- ✓ workforce and succession planning, organizational design, position management, generic job profiles and job classification: **Post-Action-Requests@fao.org**;
- ✓ recruitment processes, mobility, lateral transfer: **employment@fao.org**;
- ✓ advice on workplace issues and conflicts: **HR-advice@fao.org**;
- ✓ non-staff human resources (NSHR): **Raise a ticket through ServiceNow**;
- ✓ learning and staff development: **Training@fao.org**;
- ✓ performance management (including disagreement with appraisals): **Performance-Management@fao.org**; and
- ✓ medical insurance plans, UNJSPF pension fund, compensation plan and service-incurred injury or illness:
 - Service-Incurred injury or illness: **Service-Incurred@fao.org**
 - Pensions: **Pensions@fao.org**
 - Medical-Insurance: **Medical-Insurance@fao.org**.

The **Regional HR Officers** are responsible for providing HR advice and compliance support to the offices in their region. Contact details are available in the Country Office Information Network (**COIN**).

The **Shared Services Centre** (CSLC, or the “SSC”) conducts the day-to-day HR transactional/administrative processes and provides advice to personnel in headquarters and decentralized offices on individual contracts or entitlements and routine administrative transactional processes, including individual human resources servicing, consultant and other non-staff recruitment, payroll and travel operations. The SSC also advises staff members and managers on the application of procedures, and answers queries on entitlements and obligations. The SSC is the first point of contact for all your HR contract and entitlements queries and it can be contacted by raising a ticket through ServiceNow.



OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsperson (or Ombuds) provides **a safe and confidential space** in which to informally raise any work-related concern. The Ombudsperson **can help you find the right way to resolve disputes**.

The Ombudsperson is neutral, impartial, and independent. You can visit the Ombudsperson in complete confidence, knowing that, without your express consent, the Ombudsperson will never tell anyone about your concern. The Office of the Ombudsperson helps foster a harmonious and productive workplace for all at FAO.

The Ombudsperson provides informal advice and guidance to all FAO personnel, regardless of function, grade, or geographical location, on concerns such as:

- ✓ conflicts with a co-worker, peer, or supervisor;
- ✓ administrative decisions affecting your employment; and
- ✓ available mechanisms to address harassment, sexual harassment, or other misconduct such as abuse of power or authority.



The Ombudsperson actively helps FAO employees to address workplace concerns and resolve conflicts through informal means, such as:

- ✓ identification and review of options;
- ✓ conflict coaching (increasing an individual's ability and confidence to deal with conflict);
- ✓ shuttle diplomacy (where the Ombudsperson serves as intermediary between the parties in a dispute, without direct contact between the parties); and
- ✓ mediation (bringing the parties together to help them find a mutually agreeable solution).

The Ombudsperson also manages a network of Ombuds Respectful Workplace Facilitators (or RWFs) based in many of the decentralised offices. You can find out how to reach them from your local administrative office.

For a better understanding of the role and functions of the Ombudsperson, please refer to the International Ombuds Association (IOA) **Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice**, and the **Terms of Reference of the FAO Ombudsperson**.



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ETHICS OFFICE

The Ethics Office helps foster a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability within the Organization. The Office is independent and reports directly to the Director-General. The work of the Ethics Office is generally preventive in nature.

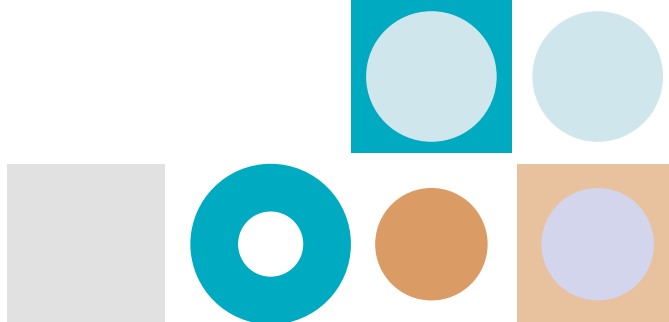
The Ethics Office provides **formal advice and guidance on professional ethics standards and dilemmas**, and conflicts of interest, such as:

- ✓ maintaining independence and impartiality;
- ✓ employment-related conflicts of interest;
- ✓ use of FAO resources;
- ✓ acceptance of gifts, honours or awards;
- ✓ outside activities;
- ✓ political activities;
- ✓ post-employment restrictions;
- ✓ personal financial investments and assets where there might be a conflict of interest; and

- ✓ perceived or actual unethical management of resources (procurement contracts, letters of agreement, etc.).

You should use the services of the Ethics Office to obtain clarification and information on ethical issues related to your work.

The Ethics Office does not undertake investigations or take decisions on the final disposition of matters brought to its attention, and generally does not become actively involved in informal resolution of issues between parties. When you bring a concern to the Ethics Office, you will receive confidential advice and guidance on the options available to you, including for formal reporting of possible misconduct.



The Ethics Office also:

- ✓ administers the Organization's Annual Disclosure Programme;
- ✓ provides advice and guidance to help prevent ethical issues related to interpersonal misconduct such as harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination;
- ✓ serves various roles in the context of protection of personnel who have reported misconduct or cooperated with duly authorized oversight activities (such as audits or investigations), and who subsequently experience retaliation or threats thereof. Here, the Ethics Office's role is to:
 - receive and conduct *prima facie* review (i.e. initial assessment) of retaliation complaints under the **Whistleblower Protection Policy**;
 - refer *prima facie* cases of retaliation to OIG for investigation;
 - refer personnel to the Ombudsperson or other informal mechanisms of conflict resolution as appropriate;
 - recommend interim protection measures to senior management in relation to matters referred to OIG for investigation, as appropriate;
 - recommend to senior management protection measures in relation to cases where retaliation has been established post-investigation.

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigates potential **misconduct by FAO personnel** and **sanctionable actions by third parties** (such as FAO implementing partners and vendors) affecting FAO's activities and operations. The types of matters investigated include:

- ✓ fraudulent, corrupt, collusive or coercive practices:
 - to obtain undue financial benefits in the context of staff entitlements (e.g. fraudulent claims for rental subsidy, education grant, travel, medical insurance, etc.);
- in the context of project implementation, financial transactions, procurement (e.g. misrepresentation, false certification, forgery, embezzlement or misappropriation, disclosure of confidential bidding information, solicitation/ acceptance of bribes or kickbacks, extortion, etc.);
- ✓ gross negligence (a willful or reckless failure to behave as a rational person would in the exercise of their duties); favoritism (e.g. in the context of recruitment or procurement activities);
- ✓ harassment, abuse of authority, and discrimination;



- ✓ sexual harassment under the Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment;
- ✓ sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) pursuant to the Policy on Protection from SEA;
- ✓ retaliation as defined under the Whistleblower Protection Policy;
- ✓ violations of the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service;
- ✓ other types of misconduct.

OIG's investigative activities are confidential fact-finding exercises that follow established professional standards (see [FAO Investigation Guidelines](#) for further details on the investigative process), and investigative conclusions and recommendations are submitted to the Director-General (or delegated authority) for decision and action, if any.

Individuals or entities external to FAO may report allegations of misconduct to OIG. While external parties are not covered by the Whistleblower Protection Policy, FAO will take all reasonable measures to protect them from any negative consequences for having reported alleged misconduct in good faith. You may also contact OIG anonymously with concerns about possible misconduct.

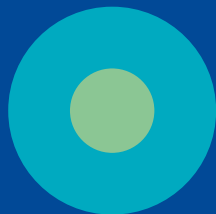
OIG can be consulted for advice or guidance about whether your concerns fall within OIG's investigative mandate or may, instead, be better addressed by another office. OIG also provides information about procedural issues relating to the investigative process.

CONTACTS:

inspector-general-office@fao.org (general queries)

Hotline (website where an online reporting form and local language phone numbers are available)





STAFF REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

In FAO, there are two bodies representing staff members, namely the Union of General Service Staff of FAO and WFP (UGSS) that represents all General Service (GS) category staff at headquarters in FAO and WFP, and the Association of Professionals (AP-in-FAO) that represents all staff members in the professional category at headquarters and in the field.

Both of these bodies are recognized through Recognition Agreements concluded with FAO. Membership of the Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) is voluntary.

The **SRBs participate in identifying, examining and resolving issues relating to staff welfare**, including conditions of work and human resources policies. The SRBs defend rights on a collective and individual basis, providing support in disputes, grievance resolution and advice on legal issues. Staff members may bring individual cases to the

attention of their SRB for advice and assistance in addressing issues for instance related to performance management, discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority. The SRBs have assisted staff in resolving workplace grievances in numerous cases, in collaboration with concerned units.

The SRBs also participate in consultative fora, e.g. the Joint Staff-Management Consultative Committee (SMCC), the FAO Advisory Committee on Medical Coverage (FAC/MC), the Advisory Committee on Health and Occupational Safety (ACOHs), and in processes (e.g. Employee Satisfaction Surveys that cover staff welfare and working conditions of staff.)

The SRBs are part of the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA), which gathers staff representatives at UN level to

discuss relevant matters every year in their Council, where the SRBs of both FAO and WFP are represented.

CONTACTS:

UGSS: +39 06 570 53530

UGSS@fao.org

AP-in-FAO: +39 06 570
53986 or +39 06 57054037

AP-in-FAO@fao.org



COUNSELLING AND HEALTH SERVICES

The **Staff Counselling Team** provides **psycho-social support** to FAO personnel and their families with situations encountered in everyday life (i.e. related or not to their work) that may have an impact on their well-being and productivity, including:

- ✓ anxiety/excessive worrying;
- ✓ work/life balance;
- ✓ stress management;
- ✓ life transitions;
- ✓ psychological trauma;
- ✓ mood issues;
- ✓ alcohol/substance abuse;
- ✓ loss and grief;
- ✓ personal/family issues and concerns;
- ✓ difficult working relationships;
- ✓ harassment and sexual harassment.



The Counselling service is confidential, informal, and free of charge for all FAO personnel and their dependents, regardless of contract type, role or location, and offered in several languages (Arabic, English, French, and Spanish). The Counsellor does not provide for mediation services between personnel, or between personnel and managers, but instead helps you to obtain the necessary tools and contacts for mental health specialists to handle your situation better, or to help you regain good health.

FAO recognizes and supports the UN system Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, see <https://www.un.org/en/healthy-workforce/>

The Health Services also provide assistance with:

- ✓ HIV/AIDS counselling;
- ✓ mission-readiness;
- ✓ psycho-education and training on a variety of topics related to stress management and resilience.

CONTACTS:

Health Services Reception: +39 06570 53577 | Health-Services@fao.org
Staff Counsellors | wellness@fao.org



APPEALS PROCEDURE AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

If you are a staff member or a consultant employed under Administrative Manual Section 317 and have a grievance resulting from an administrative decision, you have the option of submitting an appeal to the Director-General for an administrative review of the matter, pursuant to Administrative Manual Section 331. Any decision of the Organization that directly affects you can be the subject of an appeal, for example, decisions involving non-renewal or termination of appointment, benefits and entitlements, and disciplinary decisions. An appeal must be submitted within 90 days of the date you were notified of the decision you wish to appeal against.

If your appeal is rejected by the Director-General, then you may appeal to the Appeals Committee, as provided for in the rules set out in Administrative Manual Section 331, which also sets out the deadlines

for taking action. The role of the Appeals Committee is to review the appeal and provide recommendations to the Director-General, who then takes a final decision in the matter. The composition of the Appeals Committee is set out in Annex A to Administrative Manual Section 331.

The Organization recognizes the jurisdiction of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization (ILOAT), which is the final forum for review of any decision by the Organization. A complaint to the ILOAT may be submitted after a final decision of the Director-General, as provided for in Administrative Manual Sections 331 and 332.

Note that, apart from consultants employed under Administrative Manual Section 317, the specific grievance and dispute resolution procedures for non-staff personnel are set out in their contract of employment with the Organization.

CONTACTS: Appeals Committee Secretariat
+39 06570 52462 | AppealsCommittee@fao.org

STILL UNSURE WHERE TO GO?

Consider contacting the Ombudsperson as a first point of call – ombuds@fao.org

CONTACT US

Ethics Office
Ethics-Office@fao.org
<http://www.fao.org/ethics/en/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy



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