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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Alliance is committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding to protect all individuals with whom we interact, including children, vulnerable adults, and members of the communities we serve. This Safeguarding Policy prohibits any form of abuse, exploitation, sexual misconduct, or human trafficking and establishes a framework to ensure safe and ethical conduct across all operations.

## 2. PURPOSE

- Promote a culture of safeguarding throughout the Alliance.
- Prioritize the best interests of and prevent harm to children, vulnerable adults, and other individuals affected by Alliance activities.
- Provide clear guidelines for reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure compliance with local, national, and international legal standards.

## 3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to

- All Alliance staff. “Staff” refers to regular and complementary staff. This includes but is not limited to Internationally Recruited Staff and Nationally Recruited Staff, Consultants, Visiting Researchers, trainees, volunteers, interns, and visitors.
- All members of the Board of Trustees.
- Third parties such as contractors, vendors, and partners engaged by the Alliance.
- Subsequently, all covered parties are referred to as “Personnel.”


This policy governs

- All Alliance operations, including fieldwork, research, and interactions with vulnerable populations.
- Conduct of Personnel during and outside of work hours, for both professional and private activities that might affect the Alliance’s reputation, interests, or mission, regardless of where the activities occur.

When required by external partners, such as governments and independent agencies, the Alliance will include adherence to this Policy in collaboration agreements. This Policy is written to complement and coexist with the policies of sponsors and funding agencies and will be interpreted consistently when possible, with guidance sought internally from the Senior Ethics Officer, Legal Office, or other designated representative within their organization.

## 4. POLICY STATEMENTS


- **Zero tolerance:** The Alliance strictly prohibits any form of sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse, or human trafficking of any person, whether child or adult.

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- Personnel shall not engage in any sexual activity with persons under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of majority or consent locally. A mistaken belief as to the age of a child is not a defense.
  - Sexual activity includes all forms of activity and abuse of a sexual nature, with or without physical contact. Personnel are strictly prohibited from exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sexual favors or sexual acts with children. Personnel shall not abuse their position to withhold services and assistance to children, nor give preferential treatment in order to solicit sexual acts, favors, gifts, payments of any kind, or advantage.
  - Personnel are prohibited from engaging in the production, distribution, importation, receipt, or possession of any image of child pornography (e.g., any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving persons under 18 years of age).
  - Any Personnel who engage in sexual abuse, sexual grooming, maltreatment, exploitation, or failure to follow good safeguarding practices have committed gross misconduct and will face dismissal.
- **Child abuse and exploitation:** The abuse and exploitation of children violate fundamental child and human rights. They might also be criminal acts. We are transparent in our approach to preventing and responding to any child safeguarding violations throughout our supply chains, partnerships, and relationships with third parties.
  - **Child labor:** Personnel are prohibited from hiring children under the age of 18 – regardless of any perceived benefit to the child or family – and prohibited from funding programs in which child labor is occurring.
  - **Human trafficking:** Personnel cannot engage with, provide resources to, or support individuals or organizations associated with human trafficking.
  - **Accountability:** Personnel are responsible for upholding safeguarding standards.
  - **Confidentiality:** All safeguarding concerns will be managed with utmost discretion.
  - **Protection from retaliation:** Whistleblowers and reporters of safeguarding concerns will be protected from retaliation.
  - **Cultural sensitivity:** Personnel shall respect the laws, culture, traditions, and practices of the communities in which we work. We comply with applicable legislation in all jurisdictions where we operate. This includes applicable local, national, and international child welfare and protective legislation. If our policies and procedures differ from local laws and this Policy has more rigorous expectations, this Policy must be followed.

## 5. SAFEGUARDING IN RESEARCH

Research shall be conducted in accordance with the Alliance Research Ethics Policy and any other applicable standards. The Alliance Institutional Review Board (IRB) will provide more specific guidance on research involving human subjects.

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- **Informed consent:** Personnel shall obtain consent from guardians for research involving children or vulnerable persons.
- **Protection of images:** The Alliance overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in the portrayal of children, families, and communities. Permitted use of pictures, images, or other likenesses of children or vulnerable adults and their personal information must never compromise our duties of care and protection.
- We will implement best practices when using children’s or vulnerable adults’ images and personal information:
  - Before photographing or filming, assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
  - Before photographing or filming, obtain informed consent from a parent or guardian of the child, and provide an explanation of how the photograph or film will be used.
  - Ensure that photographs, films, and videos present everyone in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner, and do not stigmatize community, family, or the individual.
  - Ensure that any person whose image or likeness is used is adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
  - Ensure that images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
  - Treat with utmost importance the confidentiality of children and never provide a child’s personal details to unauthorized persons. This also applies when material is made available to third parties. Full names should never be provided alongside other identifiers such as date of birth or community.
  - Pictures, materials, and personal information regarding individuals will be stored in a restricted-access and secure database that is password protected.
  - The misuse of any person’s images or personal information will be treated in the same way as other breaches of this Policy.
- **Protection of personal information:** The Alliance is committed to confidentiality in sharing sensitive information about anyone who participates in or benefits from its programs. In the event of a safeguarding incident or allegation, information that identifies individuals will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, with due consideration for the safety of children, vulnerable adults, witnesses, reporters, and subjects of complaints.
- **Conducting research:** Research shall be conducted in accordance with the Alliance Research Ethics Policy and any other applicable standards. Research might require the involvement of marginalized or vulnerable people. For this, researchers must ensure that research plans minimize the possibility of coercion, undue influence, or manipulation, and maximize the likelihood of valid informed consent. Informed consent from a parent or legal guardian is required before commencing any scientific research that involves a child.
- **Risk mitigation:** In accordance with the Alliance Research Ethics Policy, researchers shall be vigilant of the potential risks posed by research undertaken and any potential negative responses or unintended effects. Researchers shall therefore take all possible steps to ensure the safety and security of themselves, partners, research participants, and other persons affected by their research. When conducting research, researchers must not encourage activities or behave in ways that are unhealthy

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or life-threatening to research participants or others. Similarly, they must avoid activities that might affect the reputation of those involved in the research. Researchers must suspend research immediately if they perceive that its continuation could be damaging to anyone.

## 6. SUB-RECIPIENTS, CONTRACTORS, VENDORS, AND PARTNERS

Sub-recipient agreements shall include adequate provisions requiring their adherence to the Alliance Safeguarding Policy or adoption of their own internal policy that affords a similar level of protection. Sub-recipient agreements shall also include, at a minimum, a safeguarding clause requiring mandatory reporting to the Alliance of any allegations involving trafficking of persons, abuse, or exploitation that pertain to programming or staff funded by the Alliance.

## 7. REPORTING MECHANISMS

Alliance staff and board members are obligated to report any concerns or suspicions related to sexual exploitation, abuse, or trafficking of persons that they witness, are made aware of, or suspect. This obligation applies to incidents involving Alliance staff, board members, partners, program participants, contractors, vendors, or aid workers associated with another organization.

Reports should be factual and submitted promptly after an incident and contain as much relevant information as possible to allow for proper assessment of the nature, extent, and urgency of the matter to allow for timely resolution through the procedures of the Alliance. Personnel can report concerns through the following mechanisms:

### 1. Internal reporting channels:


- **Directors, Supervisors, or Senior Managers:** Supervisors must escalate a report to the Senior Ethics Officer.
- **Ethics Unit:** Reports can also be submitted via email to [alliance-ethicspoint@cgiar.org](mailto:alliance-ethicspoint@cgiar.org).

2. **Whistleblowing Hotline:** An independent channel, *Lighthouse Services*, is available to the Alliance for submitting anonymous or identifiable complaints, thus ensuring confidentiality and protection. The hotline also has the ability for a complainant to ask for updates and to exchange messages with the Senior Ethics Officer, all while maintaining anonymity.

This mechanism is designed to be accessible, confidential, and reliable for all stakeholders, including staff, external partners, and communities affected by Alliance projects.

(See Annex 1 for additional details.)

3. **Third-party reporting:** Personnel are expected to report suspicions of misconduct through the above-established channels. Protection from retaliation will be extended to individuals who report their concerns externally to the Alliance only if the same information was previously reported through the established internal channels, but the Alliance failed to inform the individual of the status of the matter

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within six months of the report. External reporting will be considered necessary to avoid any of the following:

- imminent danger to the public interest
- substantial damage to Alliance operations
- violations of law

**4. Confidentiality:** All reports will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, with information shared on a need-to-know basis only, thus ensuring the protection of due process, adherence to applicable law, and the rights of all parties involved, subject to the immunities and privileges of the Alliance:


- It is important for all reporters to understand, however, that the Alliance might be legally mandated to follow up on certain allegations (with donors, or authorities in the case of a potential criminal offense) and that strict confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed due to the Organization’s moral and/or legal obligation to report and investigate.
- In instances in which there is a legitimate belief that an investigation could put the reporter, survivor, witnesses, or anyone else in danger, the Alliance will take reasonable steps to protect the safety and security of those perceived to be at risk.

**5. Good faith reporting:** Reports should be made in good faith in accordance with the relevant procedures for reporting misconduct and contain sufficient detail to allow for proper assessment. Anyone who files a complaint that is known to be false or malicious, or with a reckless disregard for the truth of the statements made, could be subject to administrative or disciplinary action.

For more information, refer to the Alliance’s Whistleblower Policy. The Alliance does not tolerate any form of retaliation. Appropriate measures are in place to protect from reprisal anyone who reports wrongdoings and makes a report in good faith.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Alliance Personnel are required to uphold the Alliance Core Ethical Values and comply with all applicable laws to ensure safeguarding in all interactions, including but not limited to
  - Upholding the dignity of every person with whom they come into contact by ensuring that their conduct always displays respect and cultural sensitivity with regard to language, conversations, gestures, and touch.
  - Providing and creating a safe work environment that protects children, vulnerable adults, and all others from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
  - Treating all persons with respect, regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, nationality, politics, disability, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, or other status.
  - Never engaging in sexual activity or having a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years irrespective of the local age of majority/consent or local custom.
  - Immediately disclosing all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of offenses relating to sexual abuse or exploitation, including those under traditional law.

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- Avoiding any circumstance in which a Staff member is alone with a child or children in the context of our work.
- Not inviting unaccompanied children into a private residence, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or physical danger.
- Never using language or behavior toward children or vulnerable persons that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, or intended to humiliate.
- Preserving the confidentiality of personal information about any individual, regardless of age or status.
- Reporting any suspicion, allegation, or evidence of a possible violation of this Policy if they have experienced or witnessed the behavior.
- Cooperating in any investigation related to safeguarding or sexual abuse concern.
- Participating in safeguarding and misconduct training and supporting awareness-raising campaigns for third parties, project staff, and local communities.

**2. Alliance Supervisors/Managers** are required to


- Build and promote an ethical organizational culture and lead by example.
- Ensure that all Personnel have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities pursuant to this Policy.
- Ensure that all members of the relevant leadership teams are fully trained and briefed on this Policy and receive support and guidance on its implementation in their operations.
- Ensure that all Personnel receive regular updates and training about this Policy and its application.
- Take decisive action concerning any breach of this Policy as warranted by the circumstances.
- Protect individuals who report suspicions of misconduct in good faith from retaliation.
- Ensure that incidents of serious misconduct are reported to the Alliance Audit, Finance, and Risk Committee of the Board in accordance with the Organization’s relevant policy and procedures.

**3. The Ethics Unit** is required to

- Provide advice and guidance on implementing this Policy upon request.
- Review this Policy on a regular basis and propose updates as relevant.
- Monitor and report on compliance with this Policy across the Alliance.
- Enable all Personnel of the Alliance to receive regular messaging and annual training about this Policy and its application.
- Support safeguarding responses as required across the Alliance.

**4. The Alliance Institutional Review Board (IRB)** is required to

- Review and approve research protocols to ensure that all research involving children, vulnerable adults, or sensitive data complies with the Alliance’s Research Ethics Policy and applicable ethical standards.
- Monitor research to ensure that it is being conducted in a way that minimizes risks of exploitation, coercion, and harm to participants, particularly vulnerable populations.

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- Ensure that all research involving children or vulnerable adults is conducted only after obtaining informed consent from legal guardians, when required, and after a thorough risk assessment is completed.

5. **The Office for Program Delivery (OPD)** is required to

- Ensure that all sub-agreements include clauses that enforce compliance with the Alliance’s safeguarding standards.
- Review sub-agreement terms to ensure that they require partners and subrecipients to meet safeguarding obligations.
- Monitor subrecipients’ and partners’ adherence to safeguarding standards throughout the life of the sub-agreement.
- Provide guidance and training to subrecipients and partners on safeguarding requirements.
- Conduct due diligence during subrecipient selection to ensure that safeguarding measures are in place.
- Collaborate with Procurement and the Legal Office to include safeguarding provisions in all sub-agreement contracts.

6. **Procurement** is required to

- Include safeguarding clauses in all contracts with suppliers, service providers, and other external partners.
- Ensure due diligence in vetting contractors and partners to confirm that they comply with safeguarding standards, including conducting background checks and safeguarding assessments.
- Monitor the compliance of contractors and vendors with the Alliance’s Safeguarding Policy during the course of their contracts.

7. **Human Resources** is required to


- Ensure that background checks are conducted on all potential regular and complementary staff, specifically looking for past convictions related to abuse, exploitation, or related offenses.

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION

- **Training and awareness:** Safeguarding training will be provided during the onboarding of new Personnel. Annual training and awareness campaigns will be conducted to ensure that all Personnel understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- **Risk assessments:** Regular assessments will identify and mitigate safeguarding risks, especially in high-risk research and operational activities.

## 10. PREVENTION MEASURES

- **Staffing safeguards:** Members of the Alliance will not knowingly permit any person to be employed, contracted, or engaged as a regular or complementary staff if the individual is known to be convicted for or have engaged in sexual abuse or exploitation or related offenses against any person, including children and vulnerable adults. Human Resources will conduct background checks, criminal record checks when appropriate, and/or obtain employment references before extending offers of

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employment to ensure that any individual with a history of sexual exploitation or abuse will not be employed by a member of the Alliance.

- **Operational safeguards:** Ensure that at least two adults are present when engaging with children in Alliance programs.

## 11. ACCOUNTABILITY

- Reports and allegations of violations of this Policy will be investigated promptly, professionally, and impartially, in accordance with relevant investigation procedures.
- Violations of this Policy could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal or contract termination.
- When the Alliance or its members have caused harm to a child or vulnerable adult, it will take prompt action to remediate that harm. It is the responsibility of the Alliance and/or Alliance partners to make victims of sexual abuse, misconduct, or exploitation whole, to the extent possible.
- The Alliance will provide immediate and appropriate support to safeguarding survivors. Support could include counseling, assistance in addressing security concerns, and/or access to other relevant services, as required and appropriate


## 12. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- Policy effectiveness will be reviewed periodically, incorporating feedback from Management, the Board, and other stakeholders.
- Reports on safeguarding incidents and investigations will be provided to Management, the Board, and other stakeholders in accordance with the appropriate escalation policy.

## 13. RELATED POLICIES/REFERENCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Whistleblower Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Research Ethics Policy
- The Alliance Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Investigation Guidelines
- Handling and Escalation Policy

For the latest version of the policies, please consult the Policies and Guidelines Dashboard [available here](#).

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#### 14. POLICY AUTHORITY

The Safeguarding Policy will be managed by the Ethics Unit. This Policy was approved by the Alliance Board of Trustees and its modifications will need approval by the Board of Trustees. The effective date of this Policy is **1st July 2025**. This Policy supersedes previous policies regarding this subject matter and previous policies are considered rescinded.

#### 15. VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE OF APPROVAL OF THE NEWEST VERSION	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	PREPARED BY
00	12/06/2025	First Alliance Safeguarding Policy	Noukam Kalla Franck Maria Fernanda Bedoya

Reviewed by:	Approved by:
	12/06/2025
Vanessa Riveros, Head, Organizational Development Unit Ana Marta Carillo Rose Kyotungire Taremwa Senior Management Team Executive Committee of the Board	Alliance Board of Trustees

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## 16. ANNEX 1: REPORTING CHANNEL

**Lighthouse Services** is the Alliance’s external, independent, anonymous, and secure whistleblower service, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Staff can report any allegation through the following five channels:

1. *On the website:* Go to <https://www.lighthouse-services.com/AllianceBVlandCIAT>, click on the “Report an Incident” icon, and follow the instructions.
2. *By telephone:*
  - Find and dial your country number. Country numbers are available at <https://www.business.att.com/collateral/access.html>.

After connecting to your country number, dial the hotline number 800-603-2869.

3. *Via email:* Send an email to [reports@lighthouse-services.com](mailto:reports@lighthouse-services.com), including the name of the Alliance of Bioversity-CIAT in the subject and content of the email.
4. *Via mail:* Send the report to Lighthouse Services, Inc., 1710 Walton Rd., Suite 204, Blue Bell, PA 19422, USA. Be sure to include the Alliance’s name in the report.
5. *Via fax:* (215)-689-3885. Be sure to include the Alliance’s name in the report.

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## 17. ANNEX 2: DEFINITIONS

1. **Abuse:** a deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm a person’s safety, well-being, dignity, and development.

### Forms of abuse:


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

**Physical abuse:** non-accidental use of physical force that inadvertently or deliberately causes a risk of actual injury or suffering. Physical force includes but is not limited to hitting, shaking, kicking, pinching, pushing/pulling, grabbing, burning, female genital mutilation, torture, and other physical acts.

**Emotional abuse:** Harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, bullying, and not giving care and affection, resulting in adverse effects on the behavior and emotional state of an individual or the behavior and development of a child or young person.

**Neglect/negligent treatment:** Allowing for context and resources, the failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs either deliberately or through negligence of a child or individual under the responsibility of the caregiver/guardian. Neglect includes but is not limited to failing to provide adequate food and sufficient or seasonally-appropriate clothing and/or shelter; failing to prevent harm; failing to ensure adequate supervision; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or providing inappropriate medical treatment (e.g., administering medication when not authorized); or failing to provide a safe physical environment (e.g., exposure to violence, unsafe programming location, unsafe sleeping practices, releasing a child to an unauthorized adult, access to weapons or harmful objects, failing to child-proof a space that children will occupy, etc.).

2. **Child:** an individual under the age of 18.
3. **Child labor:** work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to a child’s physical or mental development. It is work that
  - is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children;
  - interferes with their schooling by
    - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school,
    - obliging them to leave school prematurely, or
    - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.
4. **Vulnerable people:** individuals with limited capacity to protect their interests, such as marginalized or impoverished individuals. Vulnerable people might be unable to protect themselves against sexual harm, abuse, or exploitation.

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5. **Sexual exploitation and abuse:** 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. The term “sexual abuse” refers to the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. This definition includes sexual relations with a child, defined as a “human being below the age of eighteen years” in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Any person of any gender identity could be the victim of sexual exploitation. Examples of sexual exploitation and abuse include transactional sex, soliciting transactional sex, sexual assault, rape, and any type of sexual activity with a child, real or simulated, on the internet or any other medium.
6. **Safeguarding:** Refers to preventive, responsive, and referral measures undertaken to protect children and vulnerable adults, ensuring that no such individual is subject to any form of harm as a result of his/her engagement with the Alliance or as a result of the actions of one of its representatives. This includes ensuring that, when there are concerns over the welfare of a child or vulnerable person or when a child or vulnerable person has been subject to harm, appropriate and timely actions are taken to address this.
7. **Human trafficking:** the coercion or exploitation of individuals for labor, services, or sex. Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons or modern-day slavery, is a crime that involves the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. Coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological. The exploitation of a child for transactional sex is human trafficking, regardless of whether any form of force, fraud, or coercion was used.
8. **Visitors:** any individuals working in the Organization’s offices or traveling with or on behalf of the Organization, which includes public and private donors, trustees, university faculty, seminarians, journalists, and others with a similar association with the Organization.