



Public Service Code of Conduct

for

Bhutan Media Foundation

Thimphu, Bhutan
Adopted in January, 2024

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Preamble

The Bhutan Media Foundation is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, impartiality, and responsibility in serving the public interest. This Code of Conduct outlines the fundamental principles and ethical guidelines that all members, employees, and representatives of the foundation shall adhere to in their roles as a public servant.

The foundation shall demonstrate the highest degree of competence, skill, knowledge, creativity, self-leadership, resilience, perseverance, resolve, determination, fortitude, grit, adroitness, firmness, decisiveness, trustworthiness, reliability, and aptitude as required and adhere to the professional codes of conduct;

Rule of Law

1. BMF employees shall perform the official duty in accordance with the law of the land.

Serving the Public Interest

2.1 BMF employees shall prioritize the dissemination of accurate and unbiased information to the public.

2.2 The foundation is committed to promoting a well-informed citizenry, upholding democratic values, and facilitating open and constructive discourse within our society, with the ultimate aim of contributing to the betterment of the nation.

Loyalty

- 3.1 An employee shall be loyal and faithful to the Tsa-wa- sum.

Professionalism

Our commitment to professionalism extends to the responsible use of sources, protecting the privacy of individuals, and maintaining the highest ethical standards in our work. We will strive to continuously enhance our skills and knowledge, staying updated with the evolving media landscape to best serve the public interest.

- 4.1 be strategic, dynamic, innovative, astute, and steadfast; and strive to achieve the intended

- results based on predetermined targets and other performance standards set for the public service delivery;
- 4.2 endeavour to optimally use resources including time in achieving the objective, target, or task of an organization or public office; and
 - 4.3 be mindful, careful, conscientious, thorough, and assiduous in carrying out the official duties.

Fairness

The foundation commits to fairness in all aspects of work.

The foundation will refrain from favoritism, discrimination, or bias based on any individual's or group's characteristics, and we shall report without prejudice, striving to provide a fair and accurate representation of the facts and viewpoint.

An employee shall:

- 5.1 be fair and impartial in the performance of their functions and in dealing with the public.
- 5.2 at no time accord any undue preferential treatment to any group or individual or discriminate based on gender, race, religion, disability, region, or ethnic background, politics or other status
- 5.3 not act arbitrarily and/or prejudicially against the right of their client and staff.

Transparency

Transparency is a fundamental principle guiding our actions as members of the Bhutan Media Foundation.

- 6.1 An employee shall be transparent in their decision and action unless otherwise required to maintain confidentiality and secrecy.
- 6.2 The foundation shall maintain openness and accountability in all its activities.
- 6.3 commits to clearly disclosing sources, conflicts of interest, and the methods used in gathering and verifying information.

6.4 When corrections or clarifications are needed, the foundation will promptly and prominently acknowledge and rectify any errors or inaccuracies in our reporting to maintain the trust of our audience and uphold the integrity of the work.

Discipline

Discipline is essential to maintaining the high standards of the Bhutan Media Foundation.

7.1 An employee shall adhere to a strong code of professional conduct, consistently demonstrating self-discipline and self-regulation in its roles.

7.2 The foundation understands that its actions reflect not only on itself but also on the credibility of the entire civil society organisations in Bhutan.

7.3 An employee pledge to abide by the foundation's guidelines and to accept responsibility for his or her actions and content, ensuring to be courteous and behave in conformity with Driglam Namzhag, law, standard and the respective code of conduct for public service.

Conduct of private affairs

8.1 The foundation is committed to conducting public affairs with the utmost responsibility and integrity.

8.2 The foundation shall provide fair, accurate, and timely information, serving as a watchdog to hold public officials and institutions accountable.

8.3 It is the duty of the foundation to facilitate informed decision-making among the public, ensuring that the activities contributes to the overall welfare and progress of our society.

8.4 An employee, even in their conduct of private affairs, shall comport himself/ herself in a manner expected and becoming of a public servant to sustain public trust and confidence.

Conflict of interest

9.1 The foundation understands the importance of maintaining the highest level of trust and integrity in our work.

9.2 pledge to avoid conflicts of interest that may compromise our objectivity and

impartiality in reporting.

- 9.3 The foundation shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest that arise and take appropriate steps to address them transparently and in the best interest of accurate and ethical manner.
- 9.4 An employee shall not allow official position to conflict with or advance his or her private or personal interest or that of his or her family, relative, or associate, in any way.
- 9.5 An employee shall not take part or influence any decision or decision-making proceeding or process of a public agency when he or she, his or her family, relative, or associate has a private or personal interest.

9.6 An employee shall:

9.6.1 declare any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest; and

9.6.2 manage the conflict of interest in accordance with the foundation's conflict of interest policy on managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Service in vogue.

Outside interests

- 10.1 Notwithstanding the requirement under law, the foundation shall not engage in any activity or transaction, acquire any position or function whether paid or unpaid, or have any pecuniary or non-pecuniary, commercial, or other comparable interest that is incompatible with their office, function, and duty or the discharge thereof or detract from the proper performance of his or her official duty.
- 10.2 shall comply and declare membership of, or association with, organization outside his or her official position.

Declaration of assets and liabilities

- 11.1 An employee, as required by law, comply with requirement to declare its asset, income, and liability.
- 11.2 The foundation acknowledge the importance of declaring its assets and liabilities to prevent conflicts of interest and maintain the trust of our audience.

11.3 It shall, on an annual basis, disclose our financial interests, including assets and liabilities, to ensure that any potential conflicts are identified and appropriately managed. This commitment to financial transparency demonstrates our dedication to maintaining the integrity of our work and public's trust.

Acceptance of gifts and hospitality

12.1 An employee shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept gift, favor, hospitality, or other benefit of any kind either for himself or herself, or his or her family, relative and friend, or person or organization with which he or she has or had business or relation except as otherwise permitted by law.

12.2 An employee shall report any offer, promise, or giving of undue advantage either to himself or herself or another public servant to his or her immediate supervisor or directly to the Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan.

12.3 The foundation shall declare any receipt of gift or hospitality in accordance with the foundation's Gift rule policy.

Susceptibility to influence by others

13.1 An employee shall not himself/ herself to be put, or seen to be put, in a position of obligation to return a favor to any person or body.

13.2 An employee shall not make any of its official conduct whether in their official capacity or in his or her private life susceptible to the improper influence of other.

Abuse of official position

The foundation shall recognize the significance of declaring our official positions and affiliations.

This declaration of official positions is crucial to maintain the public's trust in our objectivity and to prevent any conflicts of interest that may arise from our affiliations.

14.1 An employee shall not take advantage of his/her official position for the improper

advancement of personal, pecuniary, or non-pecuniary interest or that of his or her family, relative, and associate.

- 14.2 An employee shall not seek to influence any person or body, including other public servants, for his or her benefit or benefit of his or her family, relative, or associate, by using his or her official position or by offering them personal advantage.

Public and official resources

- 15.1 An employee shall at all times ensure that the staff, public property, facility, service, and financial resource with which they are entrusted to manage are used judiciously for intended or official purpose.
- 15.2 The patent right and copy right for any invention, discovery, innovation or intellectual work of the foundation that has resulted from the employment in, use of public resource or supervision of public agency shall be vested with a relevant public agency.

Disclosure of information

- 16.1 The foundation is committed to disclose information to the public to the fullest extent possible.
- 16.2 It shall provide accurate and comprehensive information to our audience, ensuring they have access to the facts they need to make informed decisions.
- 16.3 The foundation understand the public's right to know, and we commit to timely and thorough disclosure of information on matters of public interest, while respecting legal and ethical boundaries.
- 16.4 The foundation shall maintain confidentiality and secrecy of any matter, document, report, and other information relating to the official function that become known to him or her or come in his or her possession or under their control.
- 16.5 An employee shall take appropriate step to ensure the security and confidentiality of information or document for which he or she is responsible or of which he or she become aware or come to his or her possession and use only for the intended purpose; and
- 16.6 An employee shall not access to information or document that is not appropriate for him or her to do so.
- 16.7 The foundation shall not disclose official information, whether confidential or not,

unless authorized to do so.

Integrity Vetting

17 The foundation is responsible for the selection, recruitment, promotion, nomination, appointment, and election of a person in the public office and award of a public contract or entering into a public contractual relationship shall ensure integrity vetting in accordance with the Integrity Vetting Rules of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan.

Political engagement

- 18.1 The members of National Council, Local Governments and public servants in non-elective offices shall remain apolitical.
- 18.2 Elected Public Servant shall ensure that vested political activity do not influence or conflict with his or her official duty and shall comply with any lawful restriction on political activity.

Post-public service restrictions

BMF employees shall:

- 19.1 not take advantage of his or her official position to obtain opportunity for future employment; and
- 19.2 forthwith disclose to his or her supervisor, management, or relevant authority any offer of employment received.

Risk assessment of posts or activities vulnerable to corruption

20. The foundation shall carry out corruption risk assessment of post or activity, and put in preventive and mitigating measure.

Protection of the public servant's privacy

21. The foundation shall take all necessary steps to ensure that its employees' privacy is respected and declaration required by this Model Code be kept confidential unless otherwise provided for by law.

Procedures for raising and handling complaints

The employees of BMF who believes he or she is being required to act in an unlawful, improper, or unethical way shall file a complaint in accordance with Grievance Redressal Mechanism instituted by the respective agency as per the Code of Conduct.

- 21.1 An employee shall file a complaint with the relevant authority if he or she become aware of a breach of the code of conduct by other public servant, including pressure or undue influence applied to him or her by supervisor, colleague or by other.
- 21.2 The foundation shall ensure that complaint or information contained therein is treated confidentially and the complainant is not victimized.
- 21.3 The foundation shall ensure the due process of law and protect the right of a person while conducting administrative inquiry on a complaint.
- 21.4 The foundation shall impose an appropriate disciplinary sanction for a breach of the code of conduct as established by the administrative inquiry.

Disciplinary Sanctions

An employee shall be liable for major or minor disciplinary sanction for the breach of the code of conduct, which shall include but not limited to the following:

22.1 Major disciplinary sanctions

- . (i) Termination; or
- . (ii) Compulsory retirement.

22.2 Minor disciplinary sanction

- . (i) Suspension;
- . (ii) Withholding of promotion;
- . (iii) Demotion;
- . (iv) Re-assignment of duties;

- . (v) Withholding of annual salary increment;
- . (vi) Reduction in salary;
- . (vii) Deductions from salary, by way of fine;
- (viii) A reprimand; or (ix) Any other sanction.

23. The foregoing disciplinary sanctions shall not preclude the application of any civil or criminal sanctions if the breach of the code of conduct constitute a criminal or statutory offense and is punishable under any other relevant law.

Accountability

24. An employee holds the office in public trust and shall be held personally accountable and liable for any unlawful or inappropriate action, inaction or decision.

Supervisory accountability

25. The Executive Director of the foundation shall be accountable for failure to develop, adopt and implement the agency specific code of conduct in line with the policies and purposes of the foundation based on this Code.

Rules of construction

26. In this Code, unless the context indicates otherwise, singular shall include plural and masculine shall include feminine and vice-versa.

27. The term used in this Code shall bear same meaning as in the Anti-Corruption Act of Bhutan.

By adhering to this code of conduct, Bhutan Media Foundation, pledge our dedication to serving the public interest and contributing to the growth, development, and integrity of the media in Bhutan.



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