



BIOCOOR POLICIES FOR SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME AND SAFETY AND GENDER EQUALITY RELATED POLICY



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ACCRONYMS

BIOCOOR: Biodiversity Conservation Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

GBV: Gender Based Violence

SGBV: Sexual and Gender Based Violence

MIGEPROF:Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

NWC: National Women Council

GMO: Gender Monitoring Office

CSO: Civil Society Organization

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

UN: United Nations

SEA: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

ID: Identity Card

HR: Human Resources

IT: Information Technology

DAF: Director for Administration and Finance

BIOCOOR GENDER, SECURITY AND SAFEGUARDING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Biodiversity Conservation Organization (BIOCOOR) has been created mainly by young people dedicated to act and to advocate for biodiversity conservation, ecotourism promotion, community health, environmental management, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The BIOCOOR headquarters is located in Southern Province, Nyamagabe District, Gasaka Sector.

BIOCOOR has engaged in partnership with Trocaire, an Irish international NGO which is based in Rwanda since July 1994. The organization works in partnership with local civil society organizations in the developing world to achieve social and economic justice. Trócaire has requirements to be met by any local partner so as to enter into funding partnership with her. These requirements provide Trócaire with the necessary assurance that there is sufficient capacity in a partner agency to responsibly manage project funds.

Trocaire assessed the BIOCOOR capacity in meeting the said requirements. They noticed that BIOCOOR needed to have the three following policies in order to become its partner who can benefit from funding: Gender equality, Security, organizational and staff safety. In order to have these important documents, Trocaire accepted to fund a consultancy work for providing BIOCOOR with technical skills for developing the policies.

On our side, BIOCOOR recognizes the importance of working in an environment which enables both women and men to fully enjoy their rights. We give credit to the effective participation of whoever is concerned by biodiversity and environmental conservation. These policies come to reinforce our organizational needs and aspirations. We want everybody to feel comfortable, safe and secure while dealing with BIOCOOR's business.

Following the terms of Reference launched by BIOCCOR, a freelance consultant, was selected to offer his technical support in the development of the said policies. The following is the draft of the policies to be approved by competent organ of the entire Organization

I. GENDER POLICY

Key Definitions

Gender – a social construction of femininity and masculinity, which varies over time and place, and is enacted through learned, rather than innate, behavior.

Gender roles – activities ascribed to men and women on the basis of perceived gender differences. Women have triple roles: productive roles, reproductive roles and community management responsibilities.

Gender equality – the equal employment, by men and women, of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards

Gender equity: The concept of gender equity refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities” (International Labour Office, 2000)

Policy: it is a set of guidelines or rules that determine a course of action

Country Context

Rwanda is recognized, internationally, for its high commitment towards gender equality and women's empowerment since more than two decades. It is, particularly known for the political will in promoting gender and eradicating SGBV. The country put in place an impressive legal framework and institutional apparatus for the promotion of gender equality. The gender machinery is in place to support the political will. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the National Women's Council (NWC), the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), the Gender focal people in various Ministries and different gender related commissions were created and are operational. Furthermore, the 2003 Constitution as revised to date sets quotas of 30% in decision making positions (Art. 9, 52, 76, 77), making sure that women and girls are represented also in the main decision making organs at all levels.

The country put in place a legal framework that aims at empowering women, particularly by trying to address the traditional gender social norms according to which land, the main economic asset in the country, belonged to men only and it should be passed from fathers to sons, while women were expected to benefit from their husbands' land, without owning it. The Law 22/1999 on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Succession, among other instruments, gave rights of inheritance to children of both sexes as well as right of co-ownership to legally married couples under the regime of community of property. The Law 08/2005 determining the use and management of land in Rwanda (Land Law) also states that no discrimination to access to land should be done based on sex and that legally married women and men have rights to land that depend on the chosen matrimonial regime (Art. 4). Land should be officially registered under the name of both husband and wife and both spouses have to give their consent for any land transaction (Art. 21).

The Government of Rwanda, closely work with civil society organizations (CSOs), to mobilize the general public for behavior change aiming at achieving gender equality.

Through the implementation of this gender policy, BIOCOOR seeks to address those inequalities that still prevail in Rwandan society as well as those that exist, or may occur, within our organization. Some of the reviewed studies highlight the imbalances in the household between women and men, as well as girls and boys that we should address.

Rationale of the policy

As an institution, BIOCOOR has a vision to Contribute to the development of Rwanda to the level of middle income countries using its resources and skills. Its mission is to build a Nation, Environ-Socio - Economically stable through its skills and our Resources. It has three major objectives as per its constitution: 1) Enhancing community awareness on environmental conservation around Nyungwe National Park; 2) Improving Soil Quality to promote Agriculture and Livestock and 3) Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration for sustainable development. Its program covers five districts near the Nyungwe National Park. The organization has been working on a program made of projects to promote youth entrepreneurship, safe water and sanitation practices, proper dairy processing techniques, the

removal of invasive plants that damage the forest, as well as soil improvement and composting. BIOCOOR also includes Information Communication Technology training

A critical analysis of the vision, mission and objectives and its business plan shows that the organization is gender blind in all its governing texts. No gender assessment was done while the current implemented business plan was being developed. Such an assessment was not mandatory as it was backed by no gender commitment in the key governing regulations: Constitution and other policies and bylaws.

In order to fulfill our mission and vision, we are committed to promote gender equality and gender equity in our organization and our programs.

We will improve the ability of men and women to work creatively and effectively in the organization and in communities by increasing awareness on gender inequalities and by working with women and men to change the situation. We will advance gender equality within the institution through our policies, human resources management, organizational culture, and within the communities we serve through our program cycle. Finally, gender mainstreaming will improve BIOCOOR organizational effectiveness, quality and impact of programs.

This Gender Policy is developed in the framework of the National Gender Policy. Members and staff are required to adhere to it in promoting gender equity.

Objectives of BIOCOOR Gender Policy

This policy provides a clear framework for placing gender equality and gender equity at the heart of our work, and it seeks to ensure greater consistency of gender principles, policies and practices across the organization.

The main objectives of this gender policy are:

- To promote equal and equitable participation and representation of women and men in decision making processes at all levels within our organization.
- Enhance our organizational/institutional capacity in addressing gender issues.
- Mainstream gender in planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting process.

Gender policy statement

BIOCOOR is fully committed to the advancement of gender equality and women's leadership in Rwandan society. We shall always work towards the eradication of discrimination and gender-based violence in our programs by engaging men and women, and encouraging them to challenge the stereotypes that perpetuate gender disparity and violent relationships.

Our Strategies

- We will adopt a human rights approach that provides to both women/girls and men/boys equal treatment and consideration, involved in our programs, to equally benefit and enjoys from various opportunities they offer;
- We will raise our institutional capacity in gender for being more competitive and responsive to issues regarding gender and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV);
- We will mainstream gender in planning programs/projects, monitoring and reporting processes;
- We will train both our staff in particular and members, in general on gender and gender mainstreaming for being the real role models for other program participants;
- We will call upon the external expertise wherever we will face weak capacity to address gender related issues
- We will set up various mechanisms to enhance service delivery and professional development. This will be achieved by:
 - o Opening a transparent recruitment process with the lens of gender equality. We will encourage both women and men to compete for organizational positions.
 - o Putting in place an inclusive, clear and fair staff performance appraisal system taking into consideration gender equity principles.
 - o Setting clear gender targets in organizational departments against which performance will be measured.
 - o Doing research and documentation processes which consider gender equality as one of the key pillars of our programs' cycle.

Scope of the policy

The policy is principally addressed to all BIOCOOR employee and related personnel included in the following categories:

- Board of Directors and BIOCOOR Management;
- All BIOCOOR employees;
- Consultants and other freelance persons who act on behalf of BIOCOOR on the basis of service contracts;
- all persons acting voluntarily on behalf of BIOCOOR;
- All the other people not included in the above mentioned categories who have signed a contract with BIOCOOR.

NOTICE: The principles set for this policy apply all times, during and outside the office hours and during the periods of leave, with no exceptions.

In order to cultivate a culture of tolerance, mutual respect and effective collaboration in our organization, we are committed to:

- Incorporating gender equity in our values
- Reviewing our policies and by laws to have them gender sensitive for backing gender initiatives in any other organizational business.
- Having zero tolerance to gender identity based discrimination and stigmatization: We will ensure that our organization be welcoming to all gender identities without any discrimination based on diversity of cultures and, clearly, set sanctions to whoever will dare to discriminate or stigmatize others on basis of gender identity
- Increasing the visibility and consideration of our organization focusing on how we welcome people and treat them: We call upon all members, staffs, volunteers, service providers, visitors and beneficiaries to respect other people of different gender identities in the way they consider them, they look at them, they talk to them and behave in front of them.
- Not tolerating any member, staff or visitor's attitude or practice that degrades others' image basing on sex or gender identity.
- Analyzing the office facilities and adapt them to the gender requirements

- Ensuring that gender is understood, analyzed and addressed in all aspects of BIOCOOR's work planning, management and communications by all employees and representatives

All the above statements require us to reviewing our existing policies, procedures, and systems to ensure that they support a gender-sensitive and conducive environment.

Gender and HR management

The BIOCOOR staff regulations and rules dated on 2018 and the procedures manual. Especially the code of conduct section detail how the human resources are managed. We do have a recruitment policy included in the document. The manual underlines the commitment for staff training and professional development and mention the code of conduct of all staff members, the respect and Courtesy and how the public relations should be in the organization. It defines the discipline required and highlights the right all staff should have. We developed the document at the moment when we had no gender agenda. The document is gender blind. We commit to review it for integrating gender principles for guaranteeing equal opportunities and chances to candidates of both sexes, men and women.

Gender and recruitment process

Before the advertisement of positions, we commit to assess the risks that may hinder the equal participation of men and women in the competition and advertise the position only when we are sure that the positions requirements do not discourage any gender identity group member.

During the recruitment process, we will manage to encourage both male and female candidates to compete for available positions. Once recruited, the induction will also take into consideration the gender policy to familiarize the new recruited staff to apply it in his/her daily life. The recruitment policy will also be reviewed to highlight this commitment. The procedures manual will, therefore, detail how the organization intends to do staff development, equitably profitable to women and men.

Gender in the program management and projects' cycle

BIOCOOR is conscious that it is important to have core competencies in the performance management systems and into any management development model. At program level, before

developing any project proposals, a gender needs assessment will be carried out in the community where the project will be implemented. This baseline assessment will allow the organization to know gender related specific needs of men and women, define reference indicators and plan accordingly.

While planning

- Gender in strategic planning: we will assess our business plan in a gender perspective and take further actions in developing specific projects
- Develop the gender analysis tool and skills to support project participants not only in meeting immediate practical needs, but also in exploring and advancing strategic interests that may challenge socially defined roles which limit development potential.
- We will examine the structures beyond the community that affect men and women's access to and control over resources, power of decision-making, and how these structures might be influenced by the program
- We will make sure that all baseline surveys include a gender perspective
- We will develop all new program in consideration of the gender assessed needs. The later will be identified while identifying project related needs.

For monitoring and evaluation

- We will discuss all existing programs to check whether they do not have negative impact on the relationships between spouses and children. Further decision shall be taken accordingly
- We commit to train the staff in gender mainstreaming and in relevant tools development and use
- We will ensure planning, monitoring and evaluations tools are reviewed to reflect gender perspective
- We will adopt a culture of keeping data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant diversity including relevant and feasible gender sensitive indicators for every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- We will track our projects implementation and focus on gender indicators achievement

While reporting

- Every staff is required to trace and report against gender indicators when he/she does monitoring visit. The annual report should state to what extent the gender indicators are being achieved
- The program and project managers will, regularly, trace the expenditures done on gender related activities. Compare them to the planned budget and report accordingly
- Highlight stories from our beneficiaries' work that have a clear and communicable positive gender perspective, challenge gender stereotype, and the essential role played by women in the life of their communities

BIOCOOR in the fight against SGBV

SGBV concept related definitions

The gender policy does look at the rights all people having different gender identities. It is important also to talk about the Sexual and gender Based Violence as a gender concept related issue. A separate Sexual and exploitation policy is sometimes required by some partners. However, the section under is included in the gender policy and shows our commitments to fighting SGBV. In this document, we should understand used key terminologies as follows:

By sexual violence, we understand acts of a sexual nature committed by taking advantage of a coercive environment or a person's incapacity to give genuine consent. It furthermore includes acts of a sexual nature a person is caused to engage in by force, threat of force or coercion, against that person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or the person's incapacity to give genuine consent. Sexual violence encompasses acts such as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy or enforced sterilization

The term GBV is an Umbrella term for any harmful act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, man, girl or boy based on their gender. GBV is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power.

It includes Sexual violence, domestic violence, drug trafficking, forced or early forced marriage, prostitution, sexual exploitation and abuse

Sexual, Gender Based Violence, as per CEDAW committee's definition, is violence directed at a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm, suffering, threat of such acts, coercion, and deprivations of liberty.

Sexual abuse

The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force, coercion or under unequal conditions. It includes sexual assault or sexual acts to which a person has not consented, could not consent, or was compelled to consent.

Sexual exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, to pressure or demand others to provide sexual favors, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of someone else.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. A single incident may constitute sexual harassment. Many forms of behavior can constitute sexual harassment, including:

- physical conduct of a sexual nature. This may include unwanted contact such as unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another employee's body, assault and coercive sexual intercourse;
- verbal conduct of a sexual nature. This may include unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, unwanted or offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendos or lewd comments;
- non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature. This may include the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects, written materials, emails, text messages or faxes. It may also include leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures; sex-based conduct. This may include conduct that denigrates or ridicules or is intimidating or physically abusive of an employee because of his or her sex, such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults that are gender-related

BIOCOOR commitments to fighting SGBV

Physical, economical, sexual, psychological, emotional violence are not tolerated in the organization. The code of conduct provides more details on this issue. The organization prohibits brutal, discriminatory behavior, Sex based harassment, human exploitation and trafficking in the organization and programs.

With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, this section is developed in harmony with the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, especially in Articles 13, 14, 24, 29; and the Law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labor in Rwanda; article 8; It is also referring to the UN Protocol on allegation of SEA where it is stated categorically that UN does not partner with entities that fail to address SEA cases;

Therefore, we commit to zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse. BIOCOOR takes seriously all concerns and complaints about sexual exploitation and abuse involving BIOCOOR Employees and partners. BIOCOOR stands to initiate rigorous investigation of complaints that indicate any possible violation of this policy and takes appropriate disciplinary action as warranted.

At BIOCOOR, we believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence. We recognize that there are unequal power dynamics across the organization and in relation to those we serve, and that we face an inherent risk of some staff exploiting their position of power for personal gain.

BIOCOOR will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representatives associated with the delivery of its work carrying out any form of sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

It is the responsibility of all people doing business for BIOCOOR to raise any concerns they may have or witness according to this policy. It is not the responsibility of whoever to decide whether or not sexual harassment, abuse, or exploitation has occurred.

This section sets out BIOCOOR's approach to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. It sets out:

- The principles upon which we will base our decision making and actions,
- Our expectations of all who represent BIOCOOR and

- Our commitments to ensure effective action are taken when problems occur.

BIOCOOR Management, among the others, is expected to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse in work-place. BIOCOOR management staff must be familiar with and enforce this policy.

Through the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse section of this Policy, BIOCOOR clearly expresses its determination to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and members of the community by BIOCOOR employee and all related personnel.

Core Principles

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by BIOCOOR employee and related personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary actions and/or termination of employment contract within the applicable and current regulations;
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited.
- Sexual relationships between BIOCOOR staff and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of BIOCOOR's work;
- Where BIOCOOR employee and related personnel develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or by a fellow worker, whether the individual works for BIOCOOR or for other organization, partners, suppliers or other related stakeholders, he or she must report such concerns through the means and tools available within the Organization. The Management must be informed about all the concerns and suspicions, including rumors in good faith arisen about sexual exploitation and abuse;
- All BIOCOOR staff members, whatever their levels are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse;

When appropriate, BIOCOOR ensures to report for criminal prosecution and legal action to the competent authority in accordance with the applicable law and evaluates to take out proceedings as a civil damaged party.

Commitments taken

BIOCOOR is dedicated to the implementation of the following commitments:

For SEA Prevention

- The Board and Management must ensure robust recruitment screening process for all the personnel, particularly for person who will have a poor track record;
- A Code of Conduct that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation all the employees and collaborators not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people is in place and duly known to the intended recipients; We will review the one in place already and reinforce the code of conduct and discipline sections
- BIOCOOR employees and related personnel are completely aware of the Core Principles contained in this Policy;
- Create a safe working culture for all those whom BIOCOOR serves and those working for and representing the organization;
- Mutual respect and trust that recognizes, embraces diversity, and values the contributions of all staff members;
- All staff, volunteers, partners and other representatives will have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation;
- Concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, abuse or exploitation will always be taken seriously, investigated and acted on if appropriate;
- All Board Members, employees, volunteers and other representatives will have access to, and be familiar with this policy and know their responsibilities within it.

For SEA Mitigation

- Report incidents of SEA; and holds offenders accountable for their actions;
- Put a Committee in place responsible, specialized and empowered to ensure staff of climate that condemns Sexual Exploitation & Abuse;
- Make sure new staff and new partners know our policies;
- Ensure that all concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, abuse or exploitation are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner and there are multiple channels through which staff and other stakeholders can raise concerns;

- Ensure zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse through offering support to survivors and victims and holding those responsible to account;
- All staff will receive training in relation to SEA. In addition, staff with specific responsibilities (eg managers) will receive additional training commensurate with their role;
- The administration is responsible for promoting awareness of this policy within their divisions, individual departments or teams.

NB: This Policy will be used in conjunction with employment/labour, duty of care and relevant criminal laws, the BIOCOOR procedures manual to make decisions about how to respond to complaints and concerns raised by concerned people

Complaint Mechanism/Reporting

Anyone can raise a concern or make a complaint about something they have experienced or witnessed. You can do this verbally or in writing to the management. The management is committed to responding to all complaints and concerns of abuse timely and appropriately. When a complaint or concern has been raised, it must be referred within 24 hours. When the executive management is involved, the legal Representative of the organization may be referred to. In case he is involved himself, RIB should be alerted,

Roles and responsibilities for reinforcing gender policy

Role of the Executive Director shall be to ensure the:

- Compatibility of all Policy documents
- Implementation strategy
- Access to resources for gender and SGBV training

Role of Administration and Finance Department

- Continuously conduct gender analysis of staffing patterns, personnel and benefits. Strive to achieve balance by employing competent women at all levels in BIOCOOR.
- Publish gender sensitive job adverts, job descriptions and performance management system.
- Embed Gender equality delivery in the appraisal system.

Role of Program / Project Managers

- Ensure gender indicators are met in programme implementation
- Include gender analysis and gender segregated data in project proposals, reports, monitoring and evaluations.
- Participate in the review of existing policies, procedures, project documentation and departmental /project manuals for compliance with the Gender Policy and inclusion of gender sensitive language.
- Collect, document and share gender success stories from the community.
- Assist each other in the organization to determine ways of mainstreaming gender in their job description, programs and performance indicators.

Roles and Responsibilities to reinforcing SEA related commitment

In a workplace, creating a safe working environment at BIOCOOR is everyone's responsibility and failure to act on concerns or disclosures relating to sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation is not an option. However, the Management holds overall accountability for this Policy and its implementation. All staff, volunteers, partners and other stakeholders are required to adhere to this Policy. All employees are obliged to report any suspicious of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of others. This can be done without sharing details of cases where information has been shared in confidence. Failure to report to relevant channels of reporting SEA suspicion of abuse relating to someone else is punishable, and could lead to disciplinary action being taken. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no obligation placed on any individual to report any incident that has happened to them.

The Management will ensure wide compliance with annual mandatory sexual abuse awareness and prevention meetings and emphasize the importance of staff zero tolerance message through Leadership/management/STAFF meetings.

ASEA Committee will be put in place. It will be responsible, specialized and empowered to:

- Ensure work place climate that condemns Sexual Exploitation & Abuse;
- Provide victims with sensitive care, resources, and support;
- Report incidents of SEA; and holds offenders accountable for their actions.

- Ensure a safe emotional and physical environment for all members of the staff in case of SEA.

SEA Response

Immediately after receiving a complaint or concern, SEA committee/focal point MUST send an email or letter to the complainant acknowledging the complaint receipt as soon as possible. The committee/focal point will support the victim/survivor and/or complainant regardless of whether they wish to report to local police / statutory authorities or not. Our approach will always comply with reporting obligations under local laws.

Support to Survivors and Victims

Basic support will be offered to survivors and victims, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Support can include specialist, psycho-social counseling, medical care and justice.

BIOCOOR will train key staff in counselling for being able to provide support to traumatized people who seek justice after being victims of SGBV.

The basic needs for the staff are how to receive a traumatized person; how to document the case and how to behave in front her/him.

In case BIOCOOR does not have skills or capacity to deal with the case, there will be a data bank of specialized institutions or key people where the staff may refer the person in sought of support

Rights of alleged perpetrator

To ease the investigation and properly uphold alleged perpetrators rights, management will

We respect the principle that the suspect is always innocent before he/she is convicted by the court. The suspect should be treated with humanity and be given the opportunity to respond to accusations against him/her by competent services. On our side, we will use our capacity to document the case and refer it to the competent service. Therefore, we will:

- Avoid discussing or questioning the sexual assault allegation with the alleged offender, it may jeopardize the criminal investigation

- Respect the alleged offender's rights and preserve the integrity of a full and complete investigation, to include limitations on any formal or informal investigative interviews or inquiries by personnel other than those assigned to handling the case
- Strictly limit information about the investigation to those who have a legitimate reason to know.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the complaints process by all staff and witnesses. Staff members who breach confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

False Allegations management

It is extremely rare that staff or other stakeholders are found to have raised allegations which they knew to be false. If a member of staff from BIOCOOR is found to have made an allegation that they knew to be false they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. These disciplinary actions will be integrated in the code of conduct while reviewing it

Review of the Policy

The Senior Management of BIOCOOR will always review the policy according to the evolution of the organisation and staffing. The review will depend on the life of the organisation whenever deemed necessary to cope with new changes in the interventions.

Done at Nyamagabe

Date:

**Approved by: 1. Dominique MBARUBUKEYE, The Legal Representative of BIOCOOR
2. Ange IMANISHIMWE, The Executive Director of BIOCOOR**

II. BIOCOOR SECURITY POLICY

Definition of Security

What do we mean by security in this document? The simple definition of security is “the state of being free from danger or threat”. Collins underlines that “Security refers to all measures that are taken to protect a place, or to ensure that only people with permission enter it or leave it”. Areas of security controls include management security (Guidance, rules and procedures for implementing a security environment) , operational security or technical controls (access controls, authentication and security typologies applied to networks, systems and application) and physical security (Protection of personnel, data, hardware,etc from physical threats that could harm, damage, or disrupt business or impact the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of systems and/or data)- Brian Willis.

Country security context

Rwanda is a secure country considering its political stability. It has been under threats of attacks from rebels’ incursions, however, in the South-West part of the country. The attempts of rebels’ attacks were contained by the Rwandan army. This is the region where our organization operates. The attacks were conducted in Nyaruguru District, one of the operating zone of BIOCOOR.

Looking at the geographic setting of the region, with a forest boarding the Republic of Burundi and nearby the eastern DRC, the region is a target for the rebels’ attacks. It is worth to note that despite the risk of the insecurity of that kind, a deep analysis of the situation indicates that serious attacks are not possible in the region. The Government of Rwanda has arrested the leadership of that rebellion. This, as we believe, has been a big loss for the rebellion that may keep quiet for a long time.

Another concern is the effects of the COVID-19 related lockdown. People could not effectively run their daily businesses and hence, some people live in precarious conditions. They may be pushed in robbery activities. This may be considered as a risk. The main target of these people in despair may be traders’ businesses and institutions that may be suspected to have money, NGOs, among others.

In towns and centers in the southern province, we observe a big number of jobless people. An aimless population may be a threat to organizations such as BIOCOOR.

All the above considerations require us to be prepared and have appropriate strategies and measures to face insecurity regardless of its origin.

Rationale of the policy

Organizational security policy is a paramount subject in today's organization. The organization settlement is in an urban area; it works in rented house in Nyamagabe District, Gasaka Sector. The organizational management relies on built management systems. We have different people who use the premises of the organization. We also have visitors and clients, who seek different services. The management of assets and people require to take important security measures. Since the advent of electronic communication and networks, BIOCOOR needs also organizational information security practices to maintain a high level of information system. There is need for protecting information systems from usual hardware and software instances and, vitally, ensuring those systems are secure from inside and outside hazards. Effective security policy is, therefore, needed among every entity within the organization.

Statement of security policy:

Health, Safety and work success depends on security quality. The performance of the organization depends upon the commitment and collaboration of all, individually and collectively. It is essential that all employees of the BIOCOOR assume, each at his/her level, its full responsibilities in the prevention of occupational injuries and all other risks that may damage, hamper or disrupt the organizational business. We will manage no effort to protect all production factors and ensure appropriate management, operational and physical security for the best of our organizational effectiveness and efficiency

Purpose of the policy

BIOCOOR has found essential to develop a security policy. Its purpose is to give wider guidelines on how security issues should be handled within and in the circumscription of its working zone.

The objectives of this security policy

To create a security culture within the organization:

- To ensure protection to the BIOCOOR's personnel, partners and property
- To protect the assets and information of the organization and to ensure confidentiality, availability and integrity of information system.
- To provide guidelines for all persons involved with the organization

Scope of the policy

This security policy applies to all people and services of the organization including, Employees, volunteers or internees and visitors. This policy will cover major security issues /areas that BIOCOOR, as an organization has considered as priority for the time being, extended from the BIOCOOR headquarter to the field extension bureau and stores. This policy, therefore, addresses both physical and information security issues in BIOCOOR.

People Security management

Personal Conduct: the BIOCOOR expects that all persons in its premises are treated with respect and consideration. Anyone who violates this rule or threatens or endangers another person will be subject to the disciplinary action.

About BIOCOOR employees:

- The employee must comply with security procedures for BIOCOOR. The procedures will be issued through appropriate channels from time to time.
- The employee understands that in case of a security incident, BIOCOOR is not responsible for their life, or continued employment beyond the project period.
- The employee must provide BIOCOOR office with contact information about next of family to contact in case of problems/emergencies.

- All employees will undergo security orientation and briefing as part of the induction program. This will be conducted by the security focal point person.
- All employees should submit any matters related to security to the authority of the team leader in that location. Individual staff members are ultimately responsible for their own safety and must take active measures to reduce the risk to which they may be exposed.
- On a trip mission to the field or elsewhere, each BIOCCOR delegate should behave in a disciplined way. There is a range of values that are specified in the code of conduct that should allow him/her to avoid misbehaving or entering into conflict with tiers while at work regardless of the location. Among these values, we find integrity, respect and courtesy, sobriety in taking alcohol
- Every member of staff of BIOCOOR is a public relations representative, whether at a formal or informal meeting, in private or public forums.
- All staff members are expected to portray a positive image of BIOCOOR at all times. A Staff is expected to show politeness, respect and courtesy to all external parties, which include attaches, trainees, donors or personal visitors.
- Drunkenness in the place of work or outside the organization is sufficient ground for summary dismissal.
- Drivers should not have taken alcohol at least 8 hours before commencement of journey.
- No staff shall solicit for any help, gift, or favors from co-workers, suppliers, donors, investors or sponsors without express permission of the Executive Director BIOCOOR.
- BIOCOOR prohibits solicitation and distribution of materials that might in any way interfere with normal business operations, impact on staff efficiency or interfere with customer service or pose a threat to security.
- A staff cannot accept a gift from co-workers, suppliers, donors, investors or sponsors without express permission of the Executive Director BIOCOOR. Any gift with a value of Euro 20 and above should be declared to the organization and the gift will be shared among staff. A gift register should be kept with the organization with all declarations made.

Globally, the discipline must be respected in all working areas. It is expected that staff will carry themselves in a professional manner and that staff behavior shall be in accordance with generally accepted corporate behavior which BIOCOOR seeks to propagate and fulfil. However, an employee who is negligent or commits a misconduct, which does not warrant instant dismissal, may be disciplined by applying the sanctions included

About Visitors:

- Each person visiting BIOCOOR will be briefed about the security code in the organization. The visited person is responsible for that introduction

Concerning Accidents during work Time

It should be understood that because of the nature of the activity in which BIOCOOR is involved there is an associated risk of accident or injury. However, in the case of such risk or injury, BIOCOOR will make an effort to assist the employee in a possible way on a case-by-case basis. It is in this context that every BIOCOOR's staff is covered, every year, by a health insurance by providing them the first category. BIOCOOR has the responsibility to contract with a strong Health Insuring Company which has the ability to cover all necessary health interventions for its staff. Furthermore, all BIOCOOR's employees are subscribed to the professional risk insurance with RSSB.

Work Injury & Employee Obligations

The employees must provide the incident report to the employer including the type of accident, the main cause of the accident and the action taken immediately after its occurrence and in case of a fatal accident, the notice must be made within 24 hours.

Stakeholders and other Visitors Management

An unauthorized or unescorted visitor can be a physical threat and can also steal sensitive information or property. Therefore, all of BIOCOOR visitors will enter into a controlled entry points, that is at the gate where they are registered into visitors' book and given a visiting badge and at the receptionist's desk where visitors' should be escorted at all times, to the person / office they need after the reception confirms with the person needed. All visitors must be accompanied

by the employee(s) that they are visiting for the duration of their stay. This policy should be clearly explained to all employees. Once it is clearly communicated, employees can more easily serve as our eyes and ears as they will feel more comfortable approaching or reporting a suspicious individual.

No photographs may be taken by visitors without prior approval from the Executive Director or any other relevant authority. Furthermore, any permitted photographs may not be published without prior approval of the Executive Director

Weapons are not allowed in the premises of BIOCOOR, apart from authorized security personnel. Nobody will be allowed to enter the organization's premises or vehicles while armed. It is forbidden to smoke or drink while in office.

Visitors requiring internet access will be given a guest username and password for the wireless network/Modem. At no time will a guest be permitted to access BIOCOOR internet with their laptop or mobile device, without authorization from relevant authority.

Information management

Personal/Personnel Information

BIOCOOR collects and stores a wide range of sensitive information about its employees from various sources. Job applications can include copies of ID, Diplomas, telephone numbers and other personal information. Therefore, access to sensitive personal information will be restricted to a small number of human resources personnel including the HR Manager and the Executive Director of the BIOCOOR. All personal information will be stored in locked filing cabinets.

Non-disclosure of information

Many Organizations put policies in place to protect themselves from employees' indiscretion. Employees who leave their jobs may use BIOCOOR secrets to gain the leverage needed for securing a higher paying job with a competitor; former employees may also leak secrets to unscrupulous news reporters or compromise the BIOCOOR in any number of other ways.

Likewise, at BIOCOOR, disclosure of Organization sensitive information outside the office is restricted and one of the major /serious personnel offenses that can lead to expulsion as indicated

in staff contract and the DIOCOOR procedures manual. This will be reviewed to integrate the relevant disciplinary sanctions

Organizational Information Security

We have defined, in our procedures manual, the acceptable use of IT within our organization to protect the information and keep the privacy while communicating with others. The use of mobile phones while driving may be an offense punishable under the traffic rules of the country. The use of mobile phones in public places limits the confidentiality of the conversation. Employees are cautioned to be aware of this lack of privacy when using mobile phones in public places to represent the organization (Procedures manual)

BIOCOOR considers Information security just as important as physical safeguards for the Organization as we have internal networks connected to the Internet. Hackers and information thieves can use computer networks as back doors for finding company secrets, financial data and sensitive employee information, or they may launch cyberattacks solely intended to disrupt the flow of activities and tarnish BIOCOOR image.

Therefore, all sensitive information will be stored on servers not connected to the Internet, kept and only accessed Executive Director and any other delegated person in BIOCOOR. All departments are required to install and update antivirus and firewall software on their laptops, as often as needed.

All computers will be prevented from viruses by applying an up to date anti-virus each year which should be regularly updated by the owner, and all USB will be scanned before use to another computer.

Internet Usage

The dangers of internet access include loading and downloading information, viruses and cybercrimes. All BIOCOOR employees are not allowed to use the departments' computers for personal information download; the Executive Director and the Administrator are the only persons allowed to download and upload any information from internet. Other staff have to request a go ahead from the Executive Director.

Email/Social Networking

Email and social networking have created their own category of security concerns. These technologies make it very simple to disseminate information. And once that information leaves your building, it can rarely, if ever, be recalled. Content that includes off-color humor and images may damage your organization's image, and revealing confidential information may put at risk your security. BIOCOOR email policy should address appropriate content for company emails and social media pages. All emails related to any Organizational information should be sent through organizational official email and sent by the BIOCOOR's Executive Director, or any one replacing him/her, officially.

Protection of funds

The security of funds is ensured as per the BIOCOOR procedures manual financial procedures (sections two and three in addition to appendices that constitute Section four).

Physical Security

The Physical security measures are essential to keep human resources safe while protecting valuable organizational assets such as inventory, cash and vehicles. Offices will be kept by the guards hired by partner companies following an agreement with BIOCOOR. Written guidelines will be given to guards and will be part of their respective employment contracts

Physical safeguards are most effective when paired with clear and comprehensive policies governing their usage. Therefore,

- BIOCOOR will hire a professional security firm to protect the premises, whether at Head and parishes where necessary.
- BIOCOOR will provide staff ID and registration book, visitors badges and book for better control of movement into the organization premises.
- These security personnel at building entrances will be responsible for checking ID, recording details of all persons entering, Check the vehicle and bags and provide visitors badge.

- BIOCOOR will install video surveillance in major areas, around the Center's building and in inventory /stores, and DAF will be responsible to review the security tapes on a weekly basis at random.
- BIOCOOR building and other belongings in it will be ensured against fire, and fire extinguishers will be available and hanged in the suitable positions for emergencies. All the users of the buildings will be trained in how to use the distinguishingers.
- Safety related to fires: will be displayed in each office phone number for alerting the police or other authorities responsible for the fight against fires. The BIOCOOR will buy the equipment against fire and provide training relating thereto
- No visitor will enter in BIOCOOR's office without being checked by the guardian
- BIOCOOR is not responsible of visitors' stuffs security; they are advised to properly take care of them.
- All access to the office is well closed after work time. Nobody else can enter in BIOCOOR work place.
- Security requirements will be posted on walls and exposed to visitors. Security briefing will be done to visitors, when necessary.

Other security issues for personnel like Insurance, salaries and capacity building are also catered for by BIOCOOR and are well detailed in human resource policy in the BIOCOOR procedures manual.

Key Control

Normally, each personnel member must have his/her office key. Key reserves are kept in the Secretariat / Coordination of the BIOCOOR The keys of the vehicles must be kept in secure locations.

Every staff is called upon to close the windows and doors of his/her office at the end of the working day and make sure other doors and windows around are well closed

BIOCOOR until now uses mechanical keys only. Nowadays, however, such mechanical keys can be duplicated and used without leaving a trail. Our key control policy therefore includes a track of who is currently holding mechanical keys and who has permission to duplicate those keys.

All doors should have 3 keys, one for the user-responsible for the office, one kept with the Administration, with all the third copies kept at the office of the Executive Director

Fixed assets management

- The fixed assets include computer equipment, office equipment, and office furniture & fittings.
- BIOCOOR will ensure it takes insurance cover for its fixed assets for mandatory categories and for other categories depending on availability of funds.
- Employees are expected to handle with care all equipment and materials provided by the employer;
- Employees have the obligation to return equipment and materials to BIOCOOR at the termination of the employment;
- The employee is responsible for any damage to equipment or materials due to neglect or intentional misuse;
- Employees are not authorized to allow other people to enter BIOCOOR premises, including offices, stores without official motives.
- Concerning information security BIOCOOR's staff should not make any declarations or provide written statements to the media without prior approval from the Executive Director of BIOCOOR.
- External USBs are not allowed to be connected to BIOCOOR's computers;
- All computers of the organization have updated antiviruses;
- All visitors do not have access to the organization computers.

Installation of para thunder: If resources allow, the BIOCOOR will install the para thunder

Personal Property:

BIOCOOR is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property of anyone using its premises. BIOCOOR encourages these people to ensure the safety of their personal property and to remain vigilant. The organization's assets (Moto, Vehicle, machinery computers etc) use will be governed by a specific policy. However, every use will be authorized by the Executive

Director. In case of theft or damage to equipment of the organization outside of office without written authorization of the Executive Director, the staff will be responsible for the repair.

The management of assets is under the responsibility of the head of Administration and Finance. All fixed assets must be recorded in the fixed asset register.

Insurance for assets and personnel

BIOCOOR must ensure that they have adequate insurance coverage in case of theft, fire or other incidents that may cause damage to the premises. The vehicles and motorbikes of BIOCOOR absolutely must have all insurance risks. If resources allow, BIOCOOR will buy life insurance for all staff. BIOCOOR absolutely must buy health insurance for staff who do not have one.

Policy Implementation

BIOCOOR over all Focal Point for this security policy is the BIOCOOR Executive Director, who will be responsible for operational questions and oversee the implementation of this policy. However, this power can be delegated to another person agreed upon in senior management meeting and the names and contacts of the focal point will be officially announced and communicated to all staff.

Clear and specific description of focal point duties, the does and don'ts and proposed punishments for non-compliance of the policy articles will be developed and integrated in the BIOCOOR procedures manual

Reporting

One of the major responsibilities of the Security focal point will be the overall coordination and reporting on organizational security issues.

Weekly reports by security guards to the security focal point in an agreed-on format will be made and organizational monthly security reports will be provided by the Security Focal Point to the Executive Director who will also share it during senior management meeting. If any urgent security issue arises, the issue will be handled immediately by the security focal point but report immediately to the Executive Director for next actions.

- Any insecurity incidence should be immediately reported to the security focal point, who will also act and quickly report the incidence to the relevant body. Regardless of severity, all

incidents must be recorded in the register and be notified to employees (an incident report format will be provided to all offices BIOCOOR).

Responsibilities

The head of the policy is the President of Board of Administrators and the Executive Director of BIOCOOR. It ensures compliance at the various amendments to the legislation. It is he who establishes the safety report he submitted to Board of Directors to take appropriate measures. Whenever necessary, the BoDs will inform the General Assembly on the security situation in the BIOCOOR. If a serious security problem arose, it will notify and request the intervention of the police without delay.

The staff responsibilities are as follows:

- To participate in the identification of hazards in the workplace and bring them to the Executive Director of BIOCOOR
- It also has the responsibility to know, understand and comply with current legislation and internal procedures and regulations of the BIOCOOR
- Monitor, in collaboration with the Chairperson / Executive Director BIOCOOR, all training on hazards present in their workplace
- To act safely and to implement the prevention concepts taught to protect their health, safety and physical integrity.
- To communicate to visitors, the dangers and risks to the environment in which they operate.

Incident Management - Any employee who knows or suspects a security violation has occurred shall expeditiously initiate an incident report and share with the BIOCOOR Executive Director by completing necessary Security incident report (procedures Manual).

Review of policy

As already mentioned, this security policy will be reviewed as necessary when some of the articles are found inappropriate during implementation.

Any difficulty in policy implementation or any conflict that may arise will be noted and reported with proposition for amendment, then this can be discussed at senior management level.

Done at Nyamagabe

Date:

Approved by:

- 1. Ange IMANISHIMWE, The Executive Director of BIOCOOR**
- 2. Dominique MBARUBUKEYE, The legal Representative of BIOCOOR**

III. BIOCOOR SAFEGUARDING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS POLICY

Definition of safeguarding

In this document the term Safeguarding pertains to the prevention of harm to program participants, children included, while the term Protection relates to the response and support mechanisms that are in place should an allegation and/or incident of abuse arise. Safeguarding may also be considered as procedures such as awareness raising, reporting concerns, and responding appropriately to issues of abuse and exploitation and preventing harm through sound strategies and safe programming. The program participants (beneficiaries) of BIOCOOR are at the core of our vision and mission, and can also be some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Definition of safe working environment

They are Measures and commitments aim at ensuring a clean, healthy and hygienic space for all the people who use the premises of the BIOCOOR. We will ensure that appropriate cleaning procedures are in place so that the premises are clean.

Country context

Rwanda is recognized to be one of the safest destinations in Africa. Crime is relatively low, with visitors sometimes experiencing petty crime and locals are welcoming, friendly and hospitable.

Referring to the genocide against Tutsi in 1994, the Government and other actors initiated reconciliation activities that could heal wounds up to an appreciated level. People can tolerate each other today and work together after a long way of healing and transformation. The suspicion has no place today between former “victims and perpetrators” of genocide.

In terms of cooperation, the community members now are generally grouped in community based associations/cooperatives. There is a land consolidation policy that calls upon everybody to join efforts with others in order to get better yield.

The region where BIOCOOR operates is a rural area where the population lives, relatively, in a precarious economic context. People have similar poverty indicators and aspire to a better life. The population which lives nearby the Nyungwe forest faces issues of biodiversity, ecotourism, community and environment degradation as well as hygiene and sanitation.

BIOCOOR came as a response to those issues. We are convinced that our action can't bear fruit if no safety is ensured to our program participants. Our offices should provide a good working environment; our staff, volunteers and stakeholders should feel at ease while being with BIOCCOR

Rationale of safeguarding policy

With the vision to contribute to the development of Rwanda to the level of middle income countries using its resources and skills and mission to build a nation that is environmentally and socio-economically stable through its resources and skills, BIOCOOR can only be achieve them if the program participants feel safe. Although we have a code of conduct that guides and protects our members and staff, and promotes professional and ethical behavior, there is need to have a comprehensive policy outlining the roles and responsibilities of each of persons involved in the organizational programs.

To reach our vision and mission we really understand that safeguarding is a key to our success. A serious organization must provide to all stakeholders' safety. By stakeholders, we mean, the organization's members, board of Administrators, beneficiaries, visitors, partners, volunteers, interns, and consultants and all of the people who have a certain stake with the organization. We want them to uphold our safeguarding commitment in both their professional and personal lives.

Statement of safeguarding policy

At BIOCOOR, we are convinced that Safety is a prerequisite to focus on one's duties. We have no doubt that good performance depends on engagement and attention given to his/her job. We intend to guarantee to every person on BIOCOOR's duty sufficient safety for providing the maximum in producing quality work

Scope of the policy

The Safeguarding policy covers BIOCOOR's members, staff, volunteer workers, beneficiaries and other program participants including children and stakeholders. The Safeguarding policy defines the role and responsibilities of BIOCOOR for keeping the program participants in a working safer and conducive environment.

BIOCOOP Rwanda is committed to ensuring its policies are fit for purpose and that the actions of members of our governance structure, staff, contracted parties and other third parties including visitors, interns and volunteers are always appropriate. We also require that our partner organizations demonstrate a similar commitment.

Principles and values which back our commitments

BIOCOOR holds principles as defined under:

- **Integrity:** BIOCOOR members, staff and volunteers should be faithful, honest and upright in fulfilling their duties.
- **Good governance:** The spirit of corporate governance is embraced where each organizational organ understands their roles and responsibilities but complement to each other in fulfilling organizational mission.
- **Transparency:** BIOCOOR members, staff, beneficiaries and other program participants shall be obliged to provide accurate and updated information on the organization to all stakeholders.
- **Accountability:** Each member, staff and volunteer of BIOCOOR should take responsibility of their decisions and provide accurate reports on the organization. BIOCOOR holds liable the mentioned people towards their tasks and responsibilities, all in all serving its vision and mission as stated above.
- **Other BIOCOOR's values:** Professionalism, excellence, stewardship, equity, equality, enthusiasm, service centered and inclusiveness.

BIOCOOR commitments to a safe working environment

Facilities management

- BIOCOOR management will ensure that the building in which the offices are located is well secured. The security officer shall ensure that movement in and out of the building is well regulated to keep the offices free from unauthorized persons;
- BIOCOOR management will also ensure that a staff is hired to clean the office every day;
- The Finance and administration Manager will ensure that a list of staff with whom office keys are entrusted is maintained and updated when any changes occur
- The Finance and administration Manager will always ensure that fixed assets are in good working condition. He/she will also ensure that repairs are carried out on worn out assets
- Working premises shall be kept clean and equipped with health, safety and protection facilities. All employees of BIOCOOR shall work towards protecting and enhancing the working environment by observing the following as a minimum:
 - BIOCOOR premises shall be free from noise pollution
 - BIOCOOR maintains a no smoking and drug-free workplace policy. Drunkenness in the place of work or outside the organization is sufficient ground for summary dismissal. Drivers should not have taken alcohol before commencement of a journey.
 - BIOCOOR premises shall be free of any conflicts and disputes
 - Air quality: BIOCOOR attempts to ensure that the quality of the air in the premises is as good as possible. It is forbidden to smoke tobacco or similar products at the place of work. Failure to do so may lead to the immediate expulsion of premises and, in the case of employees, in the suspension or layoff.
 - Without going into details, it is understood that mutual respect will apply to other areas such as food odors and that could have an impact on air quality.

- BIOCOOR management has to educate its staff on health and safety and to post in the work premises those safety and health instructions to be observed with regard to safeguarding health and prevention of hazards
- BIOCOOR must put at the disposal of staff, an emergency box of first aid needed in case of accident. In case of work accident,
- BIOCOOR management must evacuate the injured and the patients to the nearest health center
- BIOCOOR management will ensure that the building premises are fitted with fire equipment and emergency exits;
- In addition, the Executive Director BIOCOOR will ensure that all staff members have undergone training on emergency response and use of emergency equipment

HR management

BIOCOOR HR policy is in place as staff regulations and rules. A clear and appropriate recruitment policy is also available in the BIOCOOR procedures manual. As seen above with regard to gender, there is need to review it for integrating gender principles. Staff members are comfortable in an organization when they benefit from training and capacity building. The organization also benefit from applying equitable and fair measures in the recruitment process. The staff should show their commitment to the organization by adhering to the organizational policies by signing the work contract, committing to respect the code of conduct, the procedures for addressing breaches in the global code of conduct, the Whistle blowing policies, the complaints procedures, and other policies of the organizations. In this line,

- Every recruited staff shall be given a contract specifying roles and responsibilities of each party mentioned in the contract.
- A participatory performance agreement shall be carried out, negotiated every year and this shall be a basis of human resource development.
- The staff shall adhere to the code of conduct and terms stipulated in the contract. In any case, avoid conflicts where possible.
- All benefits and other advantages are based on organizational capacity and staff positions but compliant with labor law on equal opportunities.

- BIOCOOR will provide the staff going to the field with all means which cover their trip and stay. We will ensure that the staff on BIOCOOR's mission has a comfortable transport mean, a decent accommodation and appropriate meals.
- BIOCOOR staff shall be facilitated to accomplish office and field work duties as detailed in the manual of procedures.
- BIOCOOR will provide to the staff appropriate working materials in good conditions (table, chair, machine and stationeries
- BIOCOOR staff is required to maintain good behavior while executing organizational program duties.
- BIOCOOR shall provide space or forums to discuss work related issues thus promoting cohesion between organizational leadership and staff.
- BIOCOOR shall put in place conflict prevention mechanisms where possible make periodical reviews of laws and other organizational statutes. The organization has put in place a conflict resolution commission responsible for handling any conflict that may rise as required by the Government of Rwanda
- Employees have the right to refuse a task that can reasonably be considered dangerous to their health, safety, physical integrity or that of others.

We will develop complaint mechanisms and communication policy that will be communicated to all staff members as a tool to allow staff members to feel that they can stand and fight for their rights and defend themselves against injustice, sexual exploitation and abuse included

We commit to develop a specific child policy as protecting children against abuse is our responsibility

Staff performance management

During the first month of an employee's commencement in a role, Managers/Supervisors will work with the employee to develop a performance plan which will be updated during the financial year period. The performance plan will outline the employee's goals and objectives for a 12-month period in line with the organization's strategic/Business plan and should be finalized by end of January each year. The participatory performance evaluation exercise happens at the

end of every year. It aims primarily to assess the capacity of the staff and plans how to fill the gaps.

Sexual exploitation

At BIOCOOR, all kind of abuses (physical, emotional, sexual, exploitation, etc) are totally prohibited. Sexual exploitation and abuse by BIOCOOR workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally.

Abuse of power

BIOCOOR Rwanda recognizes that abuse of power has led, and continues to lead, to many forms of exploitation and abuse, which are human rights violation. The nature of our work creates a power differential between those employed by BIOCOOR Rwanda and our beneficiaries. We acknowledge that the potential exists for those who work with program participants to abuse their position of power.

BIOCOOR Rwanda also recognizes that there are specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks that exist for children and is committed to make every effort to ensure children are safe and protected both in the working place and in our outreach programs.

In consideration to the above,

- No staff shall solicit for any help, gift, or favors from co-workers, suppliers, donors, investors or sponsors without express permission of the BIOCOOR Executive Director.
- Work premises are to be used exclusively for the work of BIOCOOR. BIOCOOR prohibits solicitation and distribution of materials that might in any way interfere with normal business operations, impact on staff efficiency or interfere with customer service or pose a threat to security. However, solicitations connected with charitable activities and community programs authorized by the BIOCOOR Executive Director, may be allowed.
- Solicitation and distribution of materials by non-staff in BIOCOOR premises is prohibited. Materials that are related to the furthering of BIOCOOR business interests, or providing community service or advertising leisure-time activities made available to staff at discount rates may be allowed on seeking and obtaining the necessary approvals.

Medical and pension benefits

As per the manual of procedures 2020, BIOCOOR shall comply with the employment agreement, legal requirements with regard to employment benefits. All employees and their dependents shall be members of the Group Medical Scheme identified by BIOCOOR. However, this will be subject to availability of funds and the employee may be required to contribute a specific percentage depending on the selected insurance cover company

BIOCOOR is subject to statutory pension scheme RSB, which is available for all staff on contract. BIOCOOR contributes 5.3% while the staff member contributes 3.3% of the individual's basic salary to the fund

First Aid: the BIOCOOR will obtain and retain a basic first aid kit once the human and financial resources allow.

BIOCOOR will uphold a zero-tolerance approach regarding fraud and corruption. BIOCOOR will identify and promptly investigate any suspected fraudulent or corruption related dishonest activity against the organization or other parties with whom the organization has dealings. The organization will take appropriate disciplinary and legal actions to include the possibility of termination of employment, restitution, and forwarding information to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

Any person who has a reasonable basis for believing fraudulent or corrupt acts have occurred has an obligation to report the suspected act to the BIOCOOR Executive Director, immediately. In some instances, the suspected fraudulent or corrupt activity may be escalated to the Board of Directors.

False disclosures or failure to report suspected fraudulent or corrupt activity in a timely manner according to the procedures below will also be subject to disciplinary action.

Complaint handling

We will develop and adopt a complaint mechanism policy which will guide us appropriately. In the meantime, we continue to believe that whoever is abused or is subject to injustice action have the right to speak out and denounce it. Whoever experiences or witnesses any abuse or injustice is required to document it and submit it for treatment to the BIOCOOR Executive Director. In case the latter is involved in the case, the request may be handed on to the President of the Board

of Administrators. If the victim or the witness has no trust in the Executive Director or the Board of Administrators, he/she may refer the case to RIB. This is a transitional disposition until we have agreed upon a comprehensive complaint mechanism policy.

Anyway, BIOCCOR is convinced that the abused person vulnerability is high. We will protect him/her as we can as he/she may need security and safety, and ensure he/she remains anonymous until his/her case is addressed. Sometimes such a person needs specific and urgent support such as counseling or medical treatment. We will keep the record of expert individuals or organizations at handsand call them for help on time. We will assess our capacity to support victims of abuse and injustice, plan for training or providing any other capacity building activity to our staff for ensuring self-reliance in giving care to needy people. We will reserve a special room for such an activity in our premises.

Specific support to abused children

All children, regardless of age are vulnerable. We consider a child as a person under 18 years old. BIOCOOR is conscious that teenage age is very critical in terms of sexual vulnerability. Other children with special attention are those who have any kind of handicap as well as unaccompanied or orphan children.

Every department leader is also in charge of child protection. He/she must monitor the implementation of the program he/she is responsible for and regularly check whether our actions do not have harm on children. It is important to cross check and find out if our beneficiaries do not use the power they get from our program our they do have already to abuse or deny protection to children.

Every staff, volunteer or intern who comes across any violation of children's rights violation is required to document the case and report it to his/her supervisor who will discuss the case with the Executive Director for appropriate action. A list of children rights defender and activists will be kept for eventual call for hell and genuine advocacy.

We will develop and approve a detailed child policy which will contain how we intend to effectively protect children from insecurity, sexual abuse, gender based discrimination and child work. The policy will also specify how we will monitor and report against children abuse and how we will document the abuse cases that we handle.

BIOCOOR is committed to work with children's rights activists and protector and find out ways for teaching our staff members how we can meet the standards in this area. This will allow us to have an accurate plan of action.

Relationships at BIOCOOR

Relationship with BIOCOOR members and staff

- BIOCOOR members and staff should have mutual respect for others. They are required to respect the code of conduct and other bylaws.
- BIOCOOR members and staff should have mutual respect for each other.
- Members and staff should always respect the private space for each other.
- Physical or verbal abuses are not allowed.
- Sabotage and intimidation are prohibited.
- Individual friendship among the staff should never interfere with organization programs and objectives.

Relationship between BIOCOOR and its partners, other program participants including volunteer workers, beneficiaries and local community

- BIOCOOR will promote good working relationship with its partners and sign relevant Memorandum of understandings.
- Transparency and accountability mechanisms shall be put in place and all people involved in the program are required to know their responsibilities and to complain if infringed on.
- BIOCOOR shall seek to work with other stakeholders in the community. Staff appraisal shall always be carried out and where possible provide guidance and necessary support for efficiency and effectiveness of planned activities.
- Project implementation shall be carried out in a participatory manner involving all stakeholders.
- The program staff should use appropriate language that is not demeaning and divisive.
- Behaviors such as fighting, drinking beer, promiscuity and drug use are strictly prohibited among staff while on duty.

Relationship with regard to Culture, Religion, Traditions and politics

BIOCCOOR adheres to the right of freedom expression principle. We welcome all criticism and point of views, should they be opposite to ours with regard to our vision, mission and programs.

BIOCCOOR allows freedom of worship and recognizes cultural diversity; however, the above differences should not be the cause of division or conflict within the organization. The details are explicitly explained in the code of conduct.

BIOCCOOR is non-partisan and all political materials and debates are not allowed in BIOCCOOR's premises.

We will never tolerate political or religious debates while on duty be it in our premises or our working area. We do not mix work with politics or religious positions.

BIOCCOOR commitment in regard with abuse

Abuse of Power

- BIOCCOOR prohibits misuse of power among its members and staff. The latter are supposed to protect properties under their control and use them responsibly in its official capacity. Enforce the guidelines on the use of computers, vehicles and motorcycles that are in place.
- Kick-backs, bribes and other forms of personal enrichment are prohibited and punishable as stipulated in the code of conduct.

Sexual abuse:

BIOCCOOR strongly encourages careful considerations with regard to the development of sexual relationships.

- No board member is allowed to have sexual relationship with staff.
- Staff members are not allowed to have sexual relationship with each other.
- Staff member can never marry each other and should it happen one of them is required to resign and leave the organization to seek employment elsewhere.
- Sexual harassment is prohibited in BIOCCOOR.
- No staff should have sexual relationship with the beneficiary.

- Members or staff shall never engage in any sexual activity with a minor.

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Managing threats

Threats will be assessed every year. Prevention and mitigation measures will be taken, if need be. Currently, there is no threat.

This policy is effective from the date of its approval by the President and Legal Representative of BIOCOOR and will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Communication

Communication at BIOCOOR is a management tool which enables activities to run smoothly and fosters good relationships between the staff and citizens as well as between the employees themselves. The Executive Director BIOCOOR should see to it that BIOCOOR employees are always informed about what is happening in the organization

Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgment in the safe usage of telephones while representing the organization. The use of mobile phones while driving may be an offense punishable under the traffic rules of the country. The use of mobile phones in public places limits the confidentiality of the conversation. Employees are cautioned to be aware of this lack of privacy when using mobile phones in public places to represent the organization.

The Officer appointed to represent the Executive Director BIOCOOR in communication shall inform the public and partners on BIOCOOR's activities by using media and adapted supports of communication in accordance with concerned targets while creating relational quality based approach with partners and public. He/she will ensure:

- media coverage of meetings and national and international conferences associated to the BIOCOOR's activities;
- publish and disseminate messages, speeches and interviews of BIOCOOR;
- prepare mass media campaign programs on both public and private media

Travel cost policy

The purpose of travel and mission procedures is to ensure that:

- All travel and missions, international or otherwise is adequately planned for in advance;

- All travel and mission expenses are properly authorized and expenses are incurred at the correct rates;
- All travel and mission advances should be properly, promptly and completely accounted for before they are expensed; and
- All donor requirements relating to travel are adhered to.

Disciplinary actions should take into account sanctions against policy breakers

SAFEGUARDING is everyone's responsibility! Everyone is called upon to model and promote respectful behavior, promote an environment that is open to hearing concerns and report any concerns immediately to the BIOCOOP Executive Director or Safeguarding focal person any incident that he/she may encounter.

For any misconduct, our procedures manual has provided for kind of gross misconduct and sanctions that may be imposed.

Enforcement of the policy:

This policy shall work as an ethical blue print document for BIOCOOR and every member or staff is required to abide with it.

It is very important to note that this policy shall not work in isolation but complement other existing policy documents of BIOCOOR and where necessary reference is made to Rwandan Labor Law.

- Where this policy relates to existing BIOCOOR's policy documents, these connections shall be noted. Members and staff are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these policies.
- After reading the policy, a member or staff shall be obliged to adhere to it.
- On the side of staff, this policy is part of the employment contract and failure to adhere to it could result in disciplinary proceedings, dismissal or in some circumstances in criminal prosecution.

The hierarchy of reporting should always be respected and the respective supervisors should encourage team spirit for a win- win situation. Self-respect and high quality of discipline is a benchmark in fulfilling organizational objectives and should there be a deviation, disciplinary process may be initiated that range from verbal and written warnings, suspension, dismissal or criminal prosecution.

Focal person for this policy

The BIOCOORExecutive Director is the focal person for the implementation of this policy. In the event he abuses this authority, the Board shall step in to ensure compliance of this policy.

Review of the policy

This policy may be reviewed or amended as deemed by Board of Directors.

It may be necessary to amend this policy. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to suggest any amendments to and by the Board of Directors and adopt the revised document.

Done at Nyamagabe**Date:**

Approved by : 1. Ange IMANISHIMWE, The Executive Director of BIOCOOR

**2. Dominique MBARUBUKEYE, The Legal Representative of
BIOCOOR**