
Workplan for IFAD's Ethics Office for 2026

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to confirm the Workplan for IFAD's Ethics Office for 2026.

Technical questions:

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I. Introduction

1. Building on the implementation of the IFAD Ethics Charter and the successful delivery of the 2025 workplan, 2026 marks a pivotal year for the institutionalization and modernization of IFAD's ethics function. The Ethics Office (ETH) will consolidate systems, tools and policies initiated in 2025 to ensure that ethical principles are fully embedded in IFAD's operations, culture and governance.
2. The 2026 workplan reflects ETH's continued mandate to promote the highest standards of ethics and conduct through prevention, guidance, capacity-building and monitoring, while responding to lessons drawn from the 2025 Global Staff Survey and aligning with commitments made for the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13) with regard to transparency, decentralization and integrity. ETH will also incorporate insights from IFAD's corporate risk assurance mapping to better identify and manage emerging ethical risks across operations and governance processes.
3. ETH's mission is to foster a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability across all IFAD-supported activities and operations, strengthening internal trust and external confidence in the institution. ETH continues to carry out its mandate as set out in the Ethics Charter and IFAD's Code of Conduct, through the functions enumerated below:
 - Championing the ethics function, managing the organization's comprehensive ethics and anti-harassment programme and overseeing compliance with IFAD's Code of Conduct.
 - Contributing to the establishment of an enduring culture of ethics in the organization and, to this end, spearheading corporate efforts concerning specific ethics-related topics, such as efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment (SH) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and to combat hate speech, racism and discrimination.
 - Developing and disseminating ethical standards and training programmes on core ethics activities. ETH shall make mandatory refresher training courses in ethics available to all staff and non-staff, irrespective of seniority, category and level, to be completed at least every three years.
 - Guiding Management and IFAD personnel to ensure that IFAD's ethics-related rules, policies, procedures and practices are reinforced and promote the highest standards of ethics and conduct required by the organization.
 - Attending Senior Management meetings on agenda topics related to ETH's work.
 - Advising managers, staff and persons holding a non-staff contract on actions that may constitute an infringement or violation of IFAD's standards of ethics and conduct, as reflected in Human Resources Policy, the Staff Rules and Human Resources Implementing Procedures (HRIP), including IFAD's Code of Conduct and IFAD's core values, by providing confidential advice and guidance on ethics issues such as conflicts of interest, outside activities and gifts.
 - Administering the financial disclosure/declaration of interest programme for all staff other than ETH staff.
 - Assisting IFAD managers in the prevention of all forms of misconduct.
 - Developing and updating guidelines for managers and staff to consult on how to deal with allegations of harassment and other forms of misconduct.
 - Receiving and conducting an initial/prima facie review of documentation related to allegations of violations of the Code of Conduct, such as

harassment, including SH, while ensuring confidentiality. The purpose of ETH's initial/prima facie review shall be to determine the existence of facts that could potentially support the allegation(s). In such cases, ETH refers the matters to the Office of Audit and Oversight (AUO), which is the sole IFAD entity entrusted with investigative functions.

- Managing the informal resolution procedures¹ for reported allegations of unsatisfactory conduct/misconduct.
 - Administering the organization's policy for protecting staff from retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations (whistleblower protection policy) and receiving complaints of alleged retaliation.
 - Establishing organizational objectives for ethics and compliance with IFAD's Code of Conduct and managing the organization's programme in these areas.
 - Overseeing the assessment of organizational risk for misconduct and non-compliance with IFAD's Code of Conduct and core values and ad hoc reporting to Senior Management on risks, incidents, ethics-driven initiatives and progress towards programme goals.
4. In addition to the above activities, in 2026, ETH will focus on implementing a comprehensive revision of IFAD's Code of Conduct and conflict of interest (COI) framework, reinforced by new online systems for declaring and clearing outside activities and gifts, and new outreach materials. ETH will implement the roll-out of the mediation programme, operationalize the new case management system, and deliver bystander trainings and scenario-based training derived from the 2025 Global Staff Survey results. Through these initiatives, ETH will advance IFAD's culture of integrity, accountability and respectful conduct across all operations and duty stations.
5. This plan will ensure that ETH keeps ethical considerations central to IFAD's mission and operations.

II. Strengthening the conflict of interest and Code of Conduct framework

6. **Objective:** Upgrade IFAD's ethical governance framework through a full revision of the Code of Conduct, integrating enhanced COI standards and digital tools.
7. With the launch of IFAD13 and the scaling-up of non-sovereign operations (NSO), IFAD is entering a more complex investment environment entailing direct engagement with private sector entities, co-investors and financial intermediaries. These new modalities bring significant development opportunities but also require adapted institutional safeguards to manage governance risks, particularly COI.
8. ETH will lead the comprehensive review and relaunch of IFAD's Code of Conduct. The revision will incorporate updated COI provisions, ensuring full adequacy and greater clarity on expected conduct, recusal obligations and disclosure requirements. Key enhancements will include the review of the current outside activity framework and dedicated guidance on financial COI.
9. Deliverables (2026):
- (a) Revised NSO COI guidelines and Code of Conduct and relevant human resource provisions finalized and launched (Q4).
 - (b) Awareness-raising campaign and Code of Conduct refresher training for all personnel (Q4).

¹ ETH only engages in informal resolution procedures. ETH may refer formal complaints to AUO.

III. Preventing and responding to sexual harassment (SH) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

10. **Objective:** Foster a culture of accountability, respect and ethics across IFAD, with a sustained focus on victim-centred approaches, behavioural change and systemic prevention of SH and SEA.
11. Deliverables (2026):
 - (a) Finalize, launch and implement the revised Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct (Q2).
 - (b) Roll-out an internal and external communication campaign at headquarters and in IFAD country offices to promote awareness of the new policy, including staff briefings, social media content and policy explainer videos (Q2-Q4).
 - (c) Continue the delivery of in-person and virtual SH/SEA training across all divisions, incorporating lessons learned from the GSS results and targeted survey feedback (Q1-Q4).
 - (d) Expand SH/SEA scenario-based learning tools to promote behavioural change and deepen engagement (Q1-Q4).
 - (e) In collaboration with the People and Culture Division (PCD) and the Health and Wellness Unit, strengthen mechanisms to support victims/survivors, within IFAD's duty of care framework (Q1-Q4).
 - (f) Continue participation in United Nations system-wide initiatives, including the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSCSEA), the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within Organizations of the UN System, the Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (CAPSEAH), and the Multilateral Financial Institutions (MFIs) Working Group on SH/SEA (Q1-Q4).

IV. Institutionalizing informal resolution and mediation

12. **Objective:** Foster a culture of constructive dialogue and trust by making mediation a cornerstone of IFAD's approach to informal dispute resolution across IFAD.
13. Building on the mediation framework devised in 2025, ETH will explore the most effective and sustainable ways to embed mediation across the organization. This will include assessing different implementation models, such as the establishment of a roster of qualified external mediators, while taking into account IFAD's institutional priorities and budgetary constraints. The aim is to ensure equitable access to high-quality mediation services for all personnel, in line with the anti-harassment procedures (chapter 8, HRIP).
14. ETH will continue to champion an "informal first" approach by nurturing awareness, confidence and skills in informal resolution at all levels of the organization. Through divisional dialogues, targeted briefings for all staff and mediation awareness campaigns, ETH will encourage staff and managers to engage early and constructively in conflict resolution. Tailored communication materials and learning tools will support this cultural shift toward proactive, solutions-oriented engagement.
15. Deliverables (2026):
 - (a) Assessment of implementation options, including the scope, structure and cost of a potential mediator roster, and discussed with the Office of the President and Vice-President and other stakeholders (Q1-Q2).

- (b) Launch of an organization-wide mediation programme, informed by the assessment and available resources (Q3).
- (c) Dissemination of awareness materials, manager guidance and mediation FAQs disseminated (Q2).
- (d) Compilation of the first annual mediation data for the annual report, including data on uptake, outcomes and lessons learned (Q4).

V. Embedding ethics in operations and training

16. **Objective:** Strengthen ethics capacity across divisions, field offices and project teams, fostering a culture of accountability and respectful conduct.
17. In 2026, ETH will continue to administer mandatory online trainings on the IFAD Code of Conduct, the prevention of harassment in the workplace, and the prevention of sexual misconduct across all IFAD activities, as well as delivering these training to groups and individuals on request. ETH will monitor compliance with mandatory training requirements, liaising with Management to ensure that all personnel meet their training obligations.
18. In addition, ETH will expand its ethics education and outreach through on-demand integrated training modules for divisions and country offices. The bystander training programme will be scaled up, moving from pilot groups to departmental integration, ensuring that ethics learning becomes part of divisional workplans and retreats.
19. Complementing these tools, a new scenario-based workshop series will unpack findings from the 2025 GSS survey, exploring themes such as communication, mutual respect and speaking up. These sessions will use real workplace examples and ethical dilemmas raised in the 2025 General Staff Survey concerning respectful conduct, communication and workplace civility to promote behavioural awareness and accountability.
20. ETH will also issue new outreach material and guidance on responsible social media use and the preservation of institutional neutrality, providing clear expectations for online conduct, both professional and personal. The initiative will help personnel recognize potential reputational and COI risks arising from digital engagement. Staff will be invited to provide feedback through periodic mini-pulse surveys on the ethics culture, which will allow ETH to adjust outreach focus mid-year.
21. Building on SH/SEA prevention efforts, ETH will develop targeted integrity training for high-risk operational teams and implementing partners to help project personnel identify and mitigate ethics risks within IFAD-funded operations.
22. ETH will also refresh its annual outreach calendar with events that combine participation, dialogue and visibility:
 - *Ethics in Action Month* (March): Interactive learning events and team ethics challenges.
 - *Mediation Awareness Week* (June): Spotlighting informal resolution success stories.
 - *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* (November to December): In partnership with PCD, the Communications Division (COM) and the gender team.
23. Deliverables (2026):
 - (a) Ethics and bystander training integrated in divisions (Q1–Q4).
 - (b) Targeted ethics capacity-building for project teams with high-risk profiles (Q3–Q4).

- (c) Scenario-based training on respectful conduct launched (Q1-Q4).
- (d) Annual ethics events delivered as planned (Q1-Q4).

VI. Enhancing operational systems and efficiency

- 24. **Objective:** Improve ETH's efficiency, confidentiality and collaboration through digital tools and inter-departmental coordination.
- 25. ETH will onboard the new case management system in Q1 2026, with full go-live at mid-year. The system will centralize case data, streamline workflows and strengthen confidentiality in line with international standards. Training for ETH staff and focal users across departments will ensure smooth adoption and data consistency.
- 26. ETH will launch new online, user-friendly systems for declaring and clearing outside activities and gifts. These platforms will streamline the declaration process, strengthen compliance tracking, and improve transparency. Accompanying outreach materials and guidance will support awareness and usability.
- 27. ETH will continue its cross-departmental coordination with PCD, the Office of the General Counsel, AUO, the Office of Enterprise Risk Management (RMO) and COM to maintain consistency between the ethics, oversight and risk management functions. Regular coordination meetings will ensure early identification of systemic risks and harmonized messaging across governance channels.
- 28. In 2026, ETH will also introduce structured feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and accessibility of ethics services (e.g. advisory, training and mediation). Feedback insights will inform ETH's strategy, helping tailor outreach, training materials and communication tools to staff needs and identified risk areas.
- 29. ETH will work closely with RMO to integrate ethical risk considerations into IFAD's broader risk assurance framework. Building on the 2025 risk assurance mapping, ETH will periodically review identified ethics-related risks – such as conflicts of interest, harassment, and reputational exposure – and collaborate with RMO to track mitigation progress. This coordination will ensure that an ethics perspective is embedded in corporate risk discussions and that divisional workplans reflect appropriate preventive measures.
- 30. Externally, ETH will maintain active participation in inter-agency ethics networks, including its pivotal role in the governance of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations, Rome-based ethics coordination and exchanges with MFIs. These partnerships will help benchmark IFAD's standards and incorporate best practices into internal operations.
- 31. Deliverables (2026):
 - (a) Coordination with RMO on ethical risk monitoring and mitigation follow-up (Q1-Q4).
 - (b) Case management system live and staff trained, and standardized reporting and dashboards for case analytics (in place in Q3).
 - (c) Coordination meetings with key internal oversight partners and participation in global United Nations and international financial institutions (IFI) ethics networks (Q1-Q4).
 - (d) Online outside activity and gift declaration platform (Q3).
 - (e) Targeted client feedback mechanisms to capture user experience and inform ETH strategy (Q2-Q4).

VII. ETH capacity and resource requirements for 2026

32. ETH will maintain a structure of four core staff under the regular budget (Chief, Senior Ethics Officer, Ethics Officer and Ethics Associate). To ensure the successful roll-out of new initiatives, ETH will also engage short-term and specialized high-level consultancy advisory support in 2026.

33. Two key consultancy streams are foreseen:

External mediation services. ETH will continue to coordinate a roster of professional mediators contracted as external consultants. These mediators will handle workplace mediation requests across all regions, ensuring impartiality and timely resolution of disputes. Funding will cover professional fees, travel and capacity-building sessions for mediators to align with IFAD's mediation framework.

Conflict of interest framework consultancy. The consultant engaged in 2025 to support the development of IFAD's upgraded COI framework will remain under contract until at least mid-2026. This consultancy will provide ongoing technical advice to finalize the framework, design implementation tools and assist with the integration of COI standards into the revised Code of Conduct, digital declaration systems and training materials.

34. The non-staff resource budget for 2026 will therefore cover:

- External mediation services and related capacity-building costs
- Consultancy services for COI framework design and roll-out
- Communication and outreach materials for the revised Code of Conduct
- Training development and staff travel for awareness and mediation missions, including travel costs

35. Through these investments, ETH will ensure it has the capacity and technical resources required to complete key institutional reforms and deliver its 2026 objectives efficiently.

36. The 2026 workplan consolidates IFAD's ethics framework, advancing from policy design to institutional implementation. Through strengthened systems, enhanced COI management, and expanded training and mediation services, ETH will ensure that ethics remain central to IFAD's organizational culture and governance. The Ethics Office will continue to work collaboratively across departments and with peer organizations to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency and accountability in all IFAD operations.

IFAD Ethics Office – 2026 Workplan KPIs

Section	KPIs
Introduction	% of policies updated
Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Framework	Guidelines finalized and launched by Q4;
SH/SEA prevention and response	Policy communicated to all IFAD personnel
	% of training delivered
	# of meetings attended on UN/IFI initiatives
Informal resolution and mediation	% of matters solved informally
Ethics in operations and training	# of personnel that completed training
	# of training delivered per region
Operational systems and efficiency	Case management system operational by Q3
	# of meetings with IFAD divisions