



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (NESREA)



CODE OF CONDUCT, 2024



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AND REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY
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Acknowledgement

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Code of Conduct has been developed with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and funded by the Government of Germany and the United States of America Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (US INL), within the purview of the implementation of the projects: “Strengthening Nigeria’s Response to the Trafficking of Wildlife and Forestry Products Phase II” and “Increasing Quality Investigations and Prosecutions of Wildlife Cases”, respectively.

The document was developed following a consultative process with officers of the Agency. The Director General/Chief Executive Officer of NESREA, Dr. Innocent Barikor, Directors and other high-level officers reviewed and validated the draft document. They committed their time, expertise and energy throughout the process of developing, refining and finalising the Code.

Sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to creating this important document.

¹ A two-day review and validation workshop was held on 3-4 June 2024 in Abuja. It was facilitated and organised by UNODC.



United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime



Acronyms and Terminology

A. Acronyms

Acronym	Description
ACTU	Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit
HRM	Human Resources Management
NESREA	National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency
PSR	Public Service Rules (rev. 2021)
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

B. Terminology

Term	Description
Agency	National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency
Code	NESREA Code of Conduct
Management	The Director General/Chief Executive Officer, Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors of NESREA
Top Management	The Governing Council, Director General Chief Executive Officer & Directors of NESREA



Foreword

Under its establishment law, NESREA is charged with the protection and conservation of Nigeria's environment, a task that demands a high level of proficiency and ethical conduct. As custodians of Nigeria's environmental resources, our commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development is paramount. Thus, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism, in fulfilling our corporate mission.

To promote integrity, honesty and responsibility among NESREA officials, this Code of Conduct is developed under Objective 5 of the National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria – “Remove Enablers of Crime: Prevent Corruption and Financial Crime from enabling Wildlife Crime”. It is also part of the effort to implement the corruption risk mitigation plan that was developed by NESREA in 2021, with UNODC support.

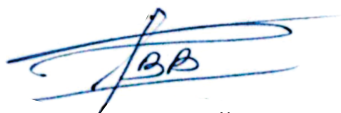
The Code of Conduct is a guide for all NESREA employees, regardless of position or seniority. It outlines the standards of behaviour and professional conduct expected of us in our daily work activities. It lays out the fundamental values and principles that underpin our work and interactions within the organisation, with the regulated community and the public.

We understand that our actions impact not only the present but also the future well-being of our country. Therefore, we strive to foster a culture of patriotism, impartiality, accountability and

transparency in everything we do. The Code provides clear guidance on how to navigate ethical challenges and make decisions that align with NESREA's values and objectives. By adhering to the Code, we uphold the public trust placed in us and contribute to the achievement of NESREA's vision of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all Nigerians.

I urge every employee to familiarise himself with the Code, embrace its principles, and incorporate them into his daily activities.

I extend my sincere appreciation to UNODC for supporting the development of the Code. I also would like to applaud every NESREA employee who commits to upholding its principles. Thank you for your dedication to NESREA's mission. Let us continue to work together to safeguard Nigeria's environment for present and future generations.



Dr. Innocent Barikor
Director General/CEO
National Environmental Standards and Regulations
Enforcement Agency (NESREA)
Friday, 18 October 2024.



National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)

Mission Statement:

To inspire personal and collective responsibility in building an environmentally conscious society for the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Vision Statement:

To ensure a cleaner and healthier environment for Nigerians.

Background

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) is an agency under the Federal Ministry of Environment, created by the NESREA Establishment Act 2007 (as Amended). It has the responsibility “for the protection and development of the environment, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of Nigeria's natural resources in general and environmental technology, including coordination and liaison with relevant stakeholders within and outside Nigeria on matters of enforcement of environmental standards, regulations, rules, laws, policies and guidelines.” This broad mandate gives it an important role in the protection and sustainable management of Nigeria's natural resources.

Crimes that affect the environment, encompassing illegal activities such as hazardous waste dumping, air and water pollution, land pollution, illegal fishing, illegal logging, trafficking of wildlife and forestry products etc., constitute a major obstacle to the effective discharge of NESREA's mandate. These criminal activities degrade ecosystems, pose huge health risks to the population, and create economic loss as well as reputational damage for the nation.

The damaging effects of forest depletion and wildlife trafficking are of particular concern. Forests are a vital component of the Earth's ecosystem and the deforestation rate in Nigeria is reported to stand between 3.7 – 4% annually, amounting to a huge cumulative loss of forest cover over the years. The destruction of this crucial resource has the potential to cause wide-reaching socioeconomic, cultural, and individual suffering.

The problem of forest destruction is exacerbated by wildlife crime which is interpreted “to mean poaching and/or illicit trafficking in wildlife, forest and fisheries products”. The illegal

activities aggravate the loss of precious biodiversity and undermine the sustainable management of endangered species of fauna and flora. The spate of seizures of illicit wildlife products in recent times, however, attests to the Government's heightened commitment and effort to prevent and reduce the incidence of these crimes.

NESREA is a major player in galvanising the national effort to curb crimes that affect the environment. In this preventive role, the Agency is keenly aware of the need to proactively strengthen its systems against corruption which has been identified as a key enabler of forest loss and wildlife crime in the country. Corruption fuels all sorts of illegalities. The catastrophic consequences of not addressing corruption as it relates to the illegal exploitation of forests and other environmental crimes will be felt long into the future and may in some cases be irreversible. To institutionalise integrity, accountability and professionalism in its operations, NESREA has developed this Code of Conduct as a guide to its officers on the standards of behaviour required of them.

The Code reflects what NESREA stands for and what it values. It covers the ethical principles that govern official interactions, how to navigate ethical dilemmas, whistleblowing, disciplinary procedures, consequences for violations and rewards for exemplary conduct. Embracing the principles of ethics contained in the Code and integrating them into daily practices, will enhance NESREA's effectiveness and uphold the trust of Nigerians.

¹ National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act 2007 (as Amended), Section 2.

² Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Forest Policy 2020, Foreword, page iii.

³ https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2023/Rooting_Out_-_Introduction_to_addressing_corruption_fuelling_forest_loss_2023.pdf page 5.

⁴ https://www.unodc.org/conig/uploads/documents/National_Strategy_to_Combat_Wildlife_and_Forest_Crime_in_Nigeria_2022-2026.pdf page 13

⁵ <https://dailyfocus.com.ng/customs-fou-zone-b-pangolin-scales-worth-n3.9-billion-arrests-one-suspect/>

⁶ https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2023/Rooting_Out_-_Introduction_to_addressing_corruption_fuelling_forest_loss_2023.pdf page 5

⁷ https://www.unodc.org/conig/uploads/documents/National_Strategy_to_Combat_Wildlife_and_Forest_Crime_in_Nigeria_2022-2026.pdf page 16.

Section One

Groundwork

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Code of Conduct (the Code) sets forth the minimum behavioural expectation for officers of the Agency within and outside working hours which shall be binding on all. The Code covers relevant areas of professional, legal, ethical and personal principles.

Article 1

The Code applies to:

- a. All members of staff of NESREA appointed or employed in line with the provisions of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act 2007, (as amended), service providers, consultants, etc., employed or engaged by NESREA for the execution of specific contracts or general assignments and any person who at any time is performing any function on behalf of the Agency.
- b. All individuals or corporate entities that transact official business with the Agency.

Article 2

The Code is an integral part of the Conditions of Service for all appointments or employments in NESREA. It is subject and complementary to applicable extant laws, policies, rules and regulations governing the Federal Public Service.

Article 3

Purpose of the Code

The purpose of the Code is to ensure the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and accountability among officers of NESREA. It establishes clear guidelines for ethical behaviour and commitment to the Agency's mission of safeguarding Nigeria's environment.

Article 4

Objectives of the Code

The objectives of the Code are to:

- a. Guide NESREA's officers and other entities who work within NESREA premises in their everyday official operations and interactions.
- b. Empower NESREA's officers with practical tools for making ethical decisions in both personal and professional realms.
- c. Foster a shared understanding of NESREA's corporate values and expectations regarding ethical conduct across all levels of personnel.
- d. Promote integrity in service delivery and enhance the reputation of NESREA.

Article 5

General Principles

The following values and principles guide the conduct of all officers of NESREA:

- a. Patriotism
- b. Compliance
- c. Professionalism
- d. Respect for human dignity
- e. Transparency
- f. Accountability
- g. Integrity

Article 6

Implementation of the Code

The Human Resources Management (HRM) Department is responsible for implementing and enforcing compliance with the Code.

a. Dissemination

- i. The HRM Department shall produce and distribute hard copies of the Code to all officers (including new intakes as they assume duties); and upload the soft copy on the Agency's website.
- ii. Every officer who receives a copy of the Code shall acknowledge receipt and sign an undertaking to comply with its provisions.
- iii. Any officer in doubt about the clarity or application of the provisions of the Code shall seek clarification from his/her superior officer or the HRM Department.
- iv. The HRM Department shall publish the core principles of the Code and display them prominently in all the Agency's offices, and post them on all its social media handles.

b. Training

- i. The HRM Department shall organise training for all officers on the Code, application of its provisions to work functions and consequences of infractions. Training shall be conducted in collaboration with the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit of NESREA (ACTU-NESREA).
- ii. Training sessions on the Code shall be included in induction courses for new officers.
- iii. The HRM Department shall schedule refresher training on the Code and ensure that every officer attends the refresher training at least once in two years to keep him/her aligned with the provisions and principles.
- iv. Officers taking up supervisory roles must attend refresher sessions on the Code.
- v. To strengthen the ethical culture in the Agency, management staff and other supervisors shall champion the Code by:
 - Role modelling its principles;
 - Providing clarity to officers on its provisions;
 - Enforcing it; and
 - Ensuring that officers under them attend the mandatory training (basic and refresher).

Article 7

Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementation

- a. The HRM Department is responsible for tracking the

- b. A systematic approach to doing this is to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework by defining objectives, indicators, monitoring activities and evaluation methods, and use the evaluation information to identify areas for improvement in promoting a culture of compliance and integrity.

Article 8

Review of the Code

- a. The Code shall be reviewed every five years to make it responsive to emerging ethical issues.
- b. Staff and stakeholders shall have adequate opportunity to contribute to the review process.

Section Two

Code of Conduct

A. Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Article 9

- a. An officer shall:
 - i. Be loyal to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; respect the National Flag and Anthem; and abide by the words of the National Pledge in the course of his/ her duty.
 - ii. Be law-abiding and not engage in wilful violation of the law or knowingly commit any criminal offence, whether on or off duty.
 - iii. Be committed to the pursuit of NESREA's mandate, without fear or favour.
 - iv. Adhere to all applicable extant laws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures and ethical standards relevant to his/ her areas of responsibility.
 - v. Comply with all lawful instructions but refuse to obey directives to commit illegality of any kind.
 - vi. Not direct subordinate officers to do anything other than what is legitimately required of them in the performance of official duties.
 - vii. Report to work punctually.
 - viii. Not absent him/herself from work without due permission or excusing circumstances as in the case of emergencies.

- ix. Report promptly to the HRM Department, directly or anonymously, any unethical act or omission committed by any individual governed by this Code.
- b. An officer on the Procurement schedule shall observe strictly all the provisions of the Public Procurement Act 2007, the Procurement Procedures Manual, Public Procurement Goods and Works Regulations and the Code of Conduct for Procurement Officers.

B. Work Environment and Relationships

Article 10

Use of Identification

An officer shall:

- a. Display his/her identity card visibly on his/her person during official hours and while on official duty outside the office.
- b. Use the identity card only for establishing identity, authority, or access to resources for official duties and other legitimate purposes.
- c. Not transfer the identity card to any other person.
- d. Safeguard the identity card and official passport, as applicable; and report the loss of either or both to the Police and NESREA within 24 hours.
- e. Not use his/her identity card, official vehicle number plates, operations vest or any other form of official

identification to intimidate others, or gain personal privileges, favours, or rewards for him/herself or others.

- f. Surrender the identity card, official passport (as applicable) and all other identification materials to NESREA upon resignation, retirement, termination of or dismissal from employment.

Article 11

Health and Safety Issues

NESREA commits to doing everything within its power to provide a safe and conducive work environment for its officers. On his/her part, every officer shall:

- a. Observe all prescribed safety and security precautions in the performance of his/her duties on-site and off-site.
- b. Promptly report any on-site or off-site injury or accident to the superior officer.
- c. Report any safety or security hazard he/she observes in the physical environment or work process to the HRM Department.
- d. Ensure upon the close of work, that all electrical appliances and water taps are switched off in his/her immediate work environment and else where that he/she notices.

- e. Play his/her role in ensuring a clean and hazard-free work environment for him/herself and others.
- f. Not smoke, consume alcohol or use narcotics (hard and other mood-changing or sleep-inducing drugs) within official premises on-site or off-site. If he/she has a medical condition that warrants the use of classified drugs, he/she shall notify his/her superior officer and HRM Department.
- g. Refrain from consuming alcohol or using narcotics within an eight-hour time frame before starting duties, particularly if assigned sensitive tasks such as operating motor vehicles or handling delicate equipment.
- h. Avoid all acts of intimidation or violence.
- i. Not have any dangerous weapon in his/her possession, within official premises on-site or off-site (e.g., knives, daggers, guns, etc.) unless entrusted to them for their duties.
- j. Not gamble within official premises.
- k. Undergo training in basic emergency procedures, at the instance of the Agency.
- l. Familiarise him/herself with safety protocols and first aid, for emergencies such as fire, explosion, riot, trauma etc.

Article 12

Use of Resources

An officer shall:

- a. Use NESREA's properties and facilities (including vehicles and equipment) strictly for official purposes except where prior authorisation to apply them to other uses is obtained.
- b. Not be wasteful with the Agency's physical assets and/or financial resources under his/her care and custody. He/she shall ensure such assets and resources are protected, accounted for, conserved, and appropriately disposed of in compliance with extant policies and regulations.
- c. Not dispense personal favours using NESREA's funds or resources.
- d. Report any loss, theft or damage to the Agency's property or facility promptly to the HRM Department.
- e. Not use the Agency's ICT devices (desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.), other electronic equipment for personal purposes.
- f. Use his/her time at work honestly to perform official duties

Article 13

Respect for Persons and Beliefs

An officer shall:

- a. Accord due regard and courtesies to superior officers, colleagues, subordinate officers, representatives of NESREA's regulated community and other persons connected to the official business of the Agency.
- b. Not disrespect a superior officer in and outside the office. Acts of disrespect and insubordination may include but are not limited to, refusal to obey lawful directives, verbal abuse, use of foul or incendiary language (written or verbal), rudeness, violent attack, issuance of threats, etc.
- c. Being a superior officer, not physically assault or verbally abuse subordinate officers.
- d. Recognise and respect the religious beliefs of other officers and people by maintaining necessary boundaries in discussions and being tolerant of the views of others.

Article 14

Impartiality and Non-Discrimination

An officer shall:

- a. Act impartially without discriminating on any ground of identity or circumstance in his/her official conduct

with other officers, representatives of NESREA's regulated community and other persons connected to the official business of the Agency.

- b. Not do or direct to be done, in abuse of his/her office, any arbitrary act prejudicial to the rights of any other person knowing that such act is unlawful or contrary to any Government policy.

Article 15

Prohibition of Sexual Harassment

An officer shall not:

- a. Behave in a sexually suggestive way towards or sexually harass any other officer, representative of NESREA's regulated community, or other persons connected to the official business of the Agency.
- b. Make comments, jokes, gestures, and insinuations about the sexuality of any other officer, representative of NESREA's regulated community, or other persons connected to the official business of the Agency.
- c. Use language that is offensive or sexual.
- d. Use his/her position to obtain sexual favours from any other officer, representative of NESREA's regulated community, or other persons connected to the official business of the Agency.

¹⁰Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as Amended), Fifth Schedule, Part I

- e. Make career decisions (promotion, training, growth opportunities, etc.) for any officer based on the granting of sexual favours or try to advance career by offering sexual favours.
- f. Engage in any form of sexual assault, including but not limited to rape, against any other officer, representative of NESREA's regulated community, or other persons connected to the official business of the Agency.

C. Work Conduct

Article 16

Posting

NESREA commits to providing the necessary financial resources to back up staff postings from their current locations to others. On his/her part, an officer shall:

- a. Accept being posted or stationed anywhere his/her service is considered most useful, except in the case of female officers where the fact of marriage or motherhood may be a factor for consideration on compassionate grounds.
- b. Not seek the intervention of prominent persons or any other person in matters of discipline, transfer, promotion or posting.

Article 17

Propriety and Ethics in Official Business

Every officer shall:

- a. Apply his/her competencies professionally and diligently to his/her work schedule to achieve NESREA's mandate.
- b. Abide by the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all official dealings.
- c. Record and report all relevant official information accurately and honestly, following approved procedures.
- d. Not knowingly make false statements or entries in any official document or fail to make correct entries.
- e. Not wilfully destroy or alter official information, without authorisation.
- f. Not under-declare the value of seized items, falsify or conceal any report (e.g., report of seizures, searches, inspection, investigation, project monitoring, surveillance, etc.).
- g. Not make false financial claims (e.g., overtime and travel allowances).
- h. Account accurately for all monies entrusted to him/her by the Agency.
- i. Not engage in any fraudulent collusion or interfere in the procurement processes of the Agency.
- j. Be guided by the tenets of cooperation, collaboration and coordination in NESREA's stakeholder relations and engagements.
- k. Not collude with anyone or any entity to undermine NESREA's mandate.
- l. Display the courage to stand up for and always do the right thing.

¹¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kEZebexFa8O-1JooKQwvp8xl0yMVyFLC/view>,
Public Service Rules 2021, Rule 100427

Article 18

Communication

An officer shall:

- a. Observe hierarchy in all official communication and communicate to higher authority only upon the express knowledge and endorsement of his/her superior officer, except where the sensitivity and confidentiality of the subject warrant a bypass of this procedure.
- b. Observe the utmost decorum in written and spoken language.

Article 19

Correspondence

An officer shall:

- a. Send official correspondence to external parties only under the direction of an appropriate superior officer.
- b. Not use official stationery for private correspondence.
- c. Not issue private letters of endorsement in his/her official capacity whether on official stationery or otherwise.

Article 20

Political Activities

- a. An officer shall be politically neutral and non-partisan in the discharge of his/her official responsibilities.
- b. An officer shall not, without the express permission of the Government:
 - i. Hold any office, paid or unpaid, permanent or temporary in any political organisation.
 - ii. Offer him/herself or nominate anyone else as a candidate for an elective public office.

¹¹ibid., Rule 100422

- iii. Publicly indicate his/her support of or opposition to any party or candidate.
- iv. Engage in canvassing in support of political candidates.

However, nothing in this article shall be deemed to prevent an officer from voting in an election.

Article 21

Engagement with the media

An officer shall:

- a. Not, without the permission of the Director General/ Chief Executive (DG/CEO), NESREA, act as an editor of any traditional media or social media, except in the pursuance of his/her official duties or concerning the Agency's magazines, professional journals and publications by voluntary organisations.
- b. Not make official pronouncements or speak to the media in his/her official capacity without authorisation.
- c. Not publish in any newspaper, magazine or journal or allow him/herself to be interviewed or make public comments on matters of an administrative or political nature, except in the pursuit of his/her official duties.
- d. Not make any publication except with the permission of the DG/CEO, NESREA. The permission shall be given only on the condition that the manuscript is not in any way against the interest of the Government or the public.
- e. Exercise the utmost care in his/her personal use of social media by ensuring that his/her posts and activities conform to the dignity of his/her office and do not tarnish the image or undermine the integrity of the Agency.
- f. Not use social media or any public platform to settle scores

- or attack the personality of any NESREA officer.
- g. Not use NESREA's logo on his/her personal social media account but he/she may re-post official public messages of the Agency.

Article 22

Use of Official Information

An officer shall:

- a. Not disclose official information to unauthorised persons.
- b. Ensure strict confidentiality of official information particularly that which is proprietary e.g., information on enforcement actions of the Agency, procurement and recruitment processes, etc., except as authorised to be released under the Freedom of Information Act 2011 or any other official directive.
- c. Safeguard proprietary information that he/she has access to or is in control of against loss, abuse, theft, alteration or damage.
- d. Safeguard the passwords and access protocols to any official computer and data bank in his/her care.
- e. Not use privileged information for monetary rewards, personal gains or to sabotage official/public interest.
- f. Not disclose confidential information about any officer of the Agency (e.g., personal telephone number, home address, locations usually visited, etc.) to anyone except when authorised.
- g. Not copy or abstract official minutes, records or other documents unless authorised.
- h. Not, upon leaving the service of the Agency, copy, take or retain any document containing confidential information.

He/she shall also not take with him/her any public record except as permitted by the provision of PSR 2021, Rule 100419.

Article 23

Conflict of Interest

- a. A conflict of interest exists when an officer:
 - i. Has an interest outside his/her official duties that significantly takes away the time or attention he/she should devote to official affairs.
 - ii. Has a personal relationship with an individual seeking action, contracts, or opportunities from NESREA; or a corporate entity that falls under the regulatory
 - iii. Oversight of the Agency or their representatives, which could lead to personal gain (financial and/or non-financial) due to his/her ability to influence the official process.
- b. An officer shall not:
 - i. Place him/herself in a situation where his/her private interest conflicts with his/her official role or competes with the interests of the Agency.
 - ii. Participate in official decision-making processes (e.g. regulatory, enforcement, procurement, recruitment, etc.) concerning persons or entities with whom he/she has a direct relationship, such as his/her spouse, relatives and friends.
 - iii. Be awarded or benefit from any contract from or connected with NESREA.
 - iv. Receive or be paid the emoluments of any public or private office at the same time he/she receives or is paid the

- vi. Be seen to regularly intervene for individuals or corporate entities in official processes that are not within his/her prescribed duties.
- vii. Undertake any private agency in any matter related to his/her official duties.
- v ii. Engage in any side business except as allowed by the Code of Conduct for Public Officers and the PSR 2021.
- ix. Hawk merchandise or engage in trading within the office premises.
- c. Any officer with a conflict-of-interest issue in an official process shall disclose such interest and recuse (remove) him/herself from the process except as otherwise directed by a superior officer.
- d. No officer may render professional assistance to institutions or Government agencies during working hours or receive remuneration for it except with the written permission of the DG/CEO, NESREA.

Article 24

Gifts and Hospitality

- a. An officer shall not:
 - i. Solicit, demand or accept gifts and benefits (directly or indirectly) from persons or corporate entities with whom he/she has official dealings. Benefits include but are
 - ii. not limited to entertainment, hospitality, favours, discounts, donations, etc., extended to him/her and/or his/her family, relations and close associates.

¹³ Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Section 6

¹⁴ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended), Fifth Schedule, Part 1

¹⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kEZeBexFa8O-1JooKQwvp8x0yMVyFLC/view>

Public Service Rules 2021, Rule 100425

¹⁶ Ibid., Rule 100312

¹⁷ Ibid., Rule 100308

- iii. Solicit but may accept honorariums from government institutions or any other source as approved by the DG/CEO, NESREA.
- b. An officer may accept gifts from family members and friends (unconnected to his/her official duties) during customary occasions. An officer may also accept small personal gifts, such as those that may be exchanged between colleagues. An officer in doubt of the propriety of receiving and retaining a gift shall consult his/her superior officer or the DG/CEO, NESREA.
- c. Gifts received in the context of public or ceremonial events are considered as gifts to the Agency.
- d. An officer who receives a gift shall declare and record the particulars of such gift in a Register maintained by the Agency.

Article 25

Transparency

An officer shall:

- a. Make necessary official information on the processes regarding his/her schedule available for the benefit of internal or external persons who need to access and use such information.

¹⁹ibid., Rule 100433

- b. Maintain proper records of official transactions to ensure efficient tracking.
- c. Not suppress official information for personal advantage.

Article 26

Accountability

- a. An officer shall:
 - i. Be answerable for his/her actions and decisions.
 - ii. Neither neglect nor ignore his/her duties.
- b. An officer in charge of revenue collection shall:
 - i. Be conscientious and accountable in the discharge of his/her duties.
 - ii. Not grant rebates or reduce the revenue legitimately accruable to the Government except as may be authorised.

Article 27

Prohibition of Bribery and other forms of Corruption

- a. An officer shall not:
 - i. Solicit, demand or accept bribes or engage in other forms of corruption (e.g. embezzlement, fraud, gratification, misappropriation, nepotism, favouritism, extortion, etc.) in the course of his/her official duty.
 - ii. Use his/her position to confer unfair advantage on him/herself and others.

- iii. Take personal advantage of discounts and commissions due to the Agency.
- b. An officer of the Agency who solicits, demands, or accepts any advantage, bribe or gratification irrespective of value from NESREA's regulated community or other persons with whom he/she has official dealings shall be liable to criminal processes as appropriate.
- c. No one shall offer or give any officer of NESREA any property, gift or benefit of any kind as an inducement or bribe for the granting of any favour in the discharge of official duties.
- d. Any officer who is offered or given a bribe or gift; or anyone from whom a bribe or gift has been solicited or demanded shall promptly report the matter to the ACTU-NESREA for action.

Article 28

Appearance

An officer shall:

- a. Not appear in the office or anywhere in his/her official capacity dressed in a manner considered improper, inappropriate or immodest.

¹⁹ Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Section 12

²⁰ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kFZebexFa8Q-1JookQwvp8x10yMVYf1C/view>, Public Service Rules 2021, Rule 100313

²¹ Ibid., Rule 090205

- b. Observe the NESREA Dress Code of corporate or full traditional dressing on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The NESREA uniform is to be worn on Thursdays.
- c. Display good personal grooming and maintain appropriate standards of personal hygiene.
- d. Dress formally when participating in meetings from non-work environments.
- e. Not wear NESREA uniform outside his/her official duties.

Article 29

Environmental Champion

Every officer shall:

- a. Champion NESREA's mandate by refraining from perpetrating environmental violations.
- b. Commit to being an ambassador for sustainable environmental practices on and off duty.

D. Personal Finances

Article 30

- a. An officer:
 - l. May hold shares in public and private companies in Nigeria or abroad. However, he/she shall not be a Director in private companies, and may only be a Director in a public company if nominated by Government.

²² Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Section 15 (1)

²³ Civil Service Handbook, page 66

²⁴ Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Section 15 (3)

- ii. Shall disclose to the appropriate authority within the Agency, if there is a potential or actual conflict of interest in respect of any personal or family shareholdings.
- iii. May borrow money from approved financial institutions and other sources only as provided in PSR 2021, Rule 100432 (2).
- iv. Shall not borrow money from anyone subject to his/her official authority (e.g., subordinates and/or persons with whom he/she has official dealings).
- v. Shall not allow him/herself to get into serious financial embarrassment arising out of heavy indebtedness, as to affect his/her work or be an integrity risk to the Agency. At no time should his/her take-home pay at the end of the month be less than two-thirds of his/her total emolument.
- vi. Shall not by him/herself or with his/her family members grant a loan to or stand surety for any individual having official dealings with the Agency.

b. Superior officers shall:

- i. At intervals, counsel staff on the prudent management of their finances, particularly those having financial problems and monitor their performance.
- ii. Report to the management any significant decline in performance attributed to financial difficulties.
- c. The job schedule of a heavily indebted officer shall be reviewed if his/her job involves enforcement responsibilities, access to sensitive information or the handling of public funds.

Article 31

Asset Declaration

- a. Every officer shall:
 - i. Declare his/her assets and liabilities and those of his/ her spouse or unmarried children under the age of twenty-one years to the Code of Conduct Bureau upon entry into the Agency, subsequently every four years, and at the end of his/her service. The responsibility to collect, fill out and return the Assets Declaration Form rests solely with the declarant.
 - ii. Affirm his/her asset declaration to the HRM Department.
- b. Any evidence of undeclared assets owned by an officer that cannot be justified by his/her legitimate income and circumstances shall be deemed to have been acquired in breach of the law and be escalated to the ACTU-NESREA for action.

²⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kEzebexFa8O-1JooKQwvp8xl0yMYfLC/view>, Public Service Rules 2021, Rule 100402

Section Three

Reporting, Disciplinary Procedures & Reward for Exemplary Conduct

Article 32

Employee Obligations

- a. Every officer shall read, understand, and comply with the Code as well as other policies and procedures of NESREA.
- b. Any officer who is under pressure to act illegally or improperly contrary to the Code, other NESREA policies or procedures, and relevant laws, must report promptly to the Director, HRM Department.
- c. Every officer has a duty to blow the whistle (report) on breaches of the Code that he/she becomes aware of to the Director, HRM Department.

Article 33

Whistleblowing

- a. The regulated community, other stakeholders of NESREA and the public are urged to blow the whistle on breaches of the Code to the Agency.
- b. A whistleblower's report must be based on reasonable grounds for the person who reports, to believe that the information is true at the time of the report.
- c. Top management is committed to fostering an environment that promotes whistleblowing and safeguards whistleblowers from negative measures and unjustified treatment.

This entails ensuring that any officer acting as a whistleblower is shielded from any act or omission that could have an adverse impact on his/her professional life, career or environment (e.g., refusal of promotion, demotion, arbitrary or harsh postings, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, malicious allegations, threats, isolation, lack of trust, removal of responsibilities, etc.) because of his/her report or actions taken by NESREA in response to his/her disclosure.

- d. The regulated community or other stakeholders who are whistleblowers shall similarly not experience any delay, refusal of service, or other forms of detriment due to their disclosure.
- e. Any officer who inflicts any form of retaliation on a whistleblower (whether internal or external) due to their disclosure shall be guilty of acting in a manner unbecoming of a public officer, and shall be sanctioned appropriately.
- f. Where an officer knowingly makes a false report about another officer(s), the matter shall be treated as making a false claim against a Government official(s), which is serious misconduct. It shall be sanctioned as applicable.
- g. External parties who knowingly make false reports about NESREA staff may be liable to legal action by the victim(s).

Article 34

Channels for Reporting Breaches of the Code

- a. The HRM Department shall provide locked Suggestions/ Complaints Boxes in designated places to make it easy and confidential for staff/stakeholders to channel information, reports and complaints.
- b. An officer shall make his/her report in writing, with or without his/her name, and address it to the Director, HRM Department. The Department shall acknowledge receipt (if the complainant is identified) within 24 hours and initiate an investigation into the matter within two working days of receiving the report or earlier, depending on the exigencies.
- c. If an officer of the Agency makes a report to the HRM Department about any violation of this Code and believes that the response does not adequately address his/her concerns or no action is taken, he/she has the choice to escalate the issue to the DG/CEO, NESREA, and if appropriate action is still not taken at that level, he/she can forward the report to the Governing Council, NESREA for further investigation or action.
- d. Reports from individuals external to the Agency shall be submitted in writing, with or without the complainant's name, and addressed to the DG/CEO, NESREA. The Office of the DG/CEO shall acknowledge receipt (if the complainant's name and address are known) within 24 hours. An investigation into the matter shall commence within five (5) working days of receiving the report or earlier, depending on the exigencies.
- e. Reports may also be made through the telephone line: 09153993191 (functional during working hours); or email: dg@nesrea.gov.ng; or website: www.nesrea.gov.ng.

²⁹ibid.,

- f. The handling of reports received by whatever means shall be guided by the Oath of Secrecy and treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Article 35

Disciplinary Procedures

- a. Any breach of the provisions of the Code shall be investigated and processed in accordance with the procedure outlined in PSR 2021, Rules 100302 – 100306.
- b. Any violation of the provisions of the Code constitutes misconduct/serious misconduct as applicable and shall result in disciplinary action leading to any of the following corrective measures and sanctions:
 - i. Dismissal, Termination or Retirement
 - ii. Reduction in rank
 - iii. Reduction in salary
 - iv. Withholding or deferment of increment
 - v. Loss of Pay
 - vi. Surcharge
 - vii. Reprimand
 - viii. Written warning, and
 - ix. Verbal warning
- c. Where the violation is criminal, it shall be escalated to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for further action in line with the provisions of PSR 2021, Rule 100407.
- d. Every disciplinary issue arising from a breach of the Code shall be handled promptly with justice and equity, ensuring a fair hearing for the individual(s) involved.
- e. Any person who is indicted by the disciplinary process has the right to appeal the outcome by following the guidelines in PSR 2021, Rule 110102 and PSR 2021, Rule 110204.

Article 36

Reward for Exemplary Conduct

- a. In line with the provisions of the PSR 2021 Rules 060105 and 060108, Departments and Units shall at the end of each year, based on decided parameters by Management, forward their nominations of deserving officers to the Director, HRM Department for collation and recommendation to NESREA top Management for awards on outstanding conduct and professionalism in service.
- b. Whistleblowers shall be considered for awards for ethical conduct on the condition that the confidentiality of their role as whistleblowers is protected.

Article 37

Commencement

The Code shall take effect on the date it is signed by the DG/CEO, NESREA.

Article 38

Citation

The Code shall be cited as the NESREA Code of Conduct.

²¹Ibid., Rule 100702





Appendix:

Reference Documents

- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)
- Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act 2004
- Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000
- National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency Act 2007 (as amended)
- Public Procurement Act 2007
- Freedom of Information Act 2011
- Public Service Rules (PSR), rev. 2021
- Civil Service Handbook
- National Ethics and Integrity Policy 2020



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