

## Section 1.10 General Administration

<b>1.10 Whistleblowing Guidelines</b>	<b>No: IITA/20201/1.10</b>
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### Introduction

IITA is committed to adhering to the highest standards of ethics in achieving its goals and mission. IITA aims to provide an equitable, ethical, healthy, and safe working environment for its staff and partners.

IITA is responsible for ensuring that funds for research are properly managed and accounted for. Staff and other stakeholders are responsible for helping the organization to ensure that its responsibilities and commitments are met. One of the ways they can do this is by reporting unethical activities and suspected wrongdoing to the appropriate or relevant authorities (i.e., “whistleblow”). Incidents reported in terms of these guidelines will be dealt with objectively, confidentially, and promptly.

These guidelines will assist in strengthening IITA’s ethics culture through promoting accountability, quality, integrity, fairness, and the provision of a rewarding working environment.

### Purpose

These guidelines provide staff and stakeholders with mechanisms for reporting illegal and unethical business practices (e.g., corruption, fraud, misuse of resources, abuse of authority, harassment, etc.). Staff or stakeholders can make confidential, anonymous submissions, or, if they wish, they can identify themselves.

These guidelines are supplementary to IITA’s Code of Conduct, the Fraud Management Policy, Child Protection Policy, Research Ethics Policy, and other IITA policies.

### Scope

Whistleblowing guidelines apply to all categories of staff within IITA. These guidelines provide the necessary channel to resolve any concern on integrity violations or misconduct or any unethical practices that staff or stakeholders consider that IITA should be made aware of. Integrity violations, unethical practices, or misconduct may include, but are not limited to:

- Misuse of IITA or donor/project funds
- Misuse of IITA assets
- Irregular dealings with third parties such as funders, suppliers, contractors, and partners
- Irregularities or conduct which constitute an offense or breach of IITA’s policies and procedures, rules and laws and regulations that apply to IITA
- Misrepresentation of facts
- Harassment
- Intentional omission or hiding of facts, where intentional, is defined as the willingness to bring about something planned or unforeseen.

These guidelines do not protect staff who report issues based on unsubstantiated rumors.

No person may use the provisions of the guidelines to avoid remedial action in case of wrongdoing.

### **Submission of Complaints**

Any IITA staff or stakeholder who has reason to suspect that there is fraud, misuse of resources, violation of ethical principles, or other wrongdoing within IITA, is encouraged to report this and has several options to do so:

1. Through the whistleblowing hotline. The whistleblowing channel is managed by Lighthouse Services, Inc. and provides an independent, secure, and confidential way to report. It is available 24/7 via a toll-free number or online.

The link to IITA's hotline is [www.lighthouse-services.com/cgiar](http://www.lighthouse-services.com/cgiar).

Information regarding making a report by telephone is available [here](#).

2. Directly to the Office of Ethics and Business Conduct of the One CGIAR via email: [ethics@cgiar.org](mailto:ethics@cgiar.org). If these are submitted anonymously, i.e., via email addresses that do not identify the sender, no effort will be made to identify the reporter.

Please note that whistleblowing is not intended to address general complaints about the workplace, interpersonal issues, or other issues not related to violations as described above. General complaints should instead be raised with IITA's supervisors, Dignity Advisors, Human Resources or Senior Management.

When reporting incidents, staff or stakeholders should provide full details in respect of the fraudulent or unethical practice by providing details or supporting documents regarding:

- Who
- What
- How
- Where
- When
- Value involved (if relevant)

Staff or stakeholders are encouraged to report any suspected incidents without delay. Older incidents are difficult to investigate as evidence may have been lost, facts may have been forgotten, and key staff that may have observed the contravention may have left the organization.

### **Treatment of Complaints**

A preliminary analysis of all reported incidents, whether through direct reporting or through the whistleblowing hotline, will be performed. The main purpose of the preliminary review is to try and identify the party that will be best suited to carry out the investigation. The following will be considered during the preliminary analysis:

- The extent of involvement of third parties such as suppliers, funders, or partners in the allegations

- Skills and resources needed to conduct the investigation
- Levels of objectivity required
- The seriousness of the allegation/s.

The IITA Director General, Director, Office of Ethics and Business Conduct and the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee will be informed of all incidents recommended for investigation.

Complainants should not launch investigations; their role is limited to providing facts and information about an incident.

### **Feedback**

Status updates will only be provided to complainants who choose to disclose their identities. The outcome and recommendation reached by any appointed party investigating a reported incident should never be disclosed or discussed with the complainant. The only feedback that will be provided to the complainant is on the status of the investigation.

### **Confidentiality of Complaints**

The identity of the staff or third party communicating the complaint and the nature of the complaint shall under no circumstances be disclosed to or be shared with persons not directly involved with the investigation or parties impacted by the investigation. Disclosure of investigation results will only be on a need-to-know basis; any violations will lead to disciplinary action.

### **Prohibition of Retaliation**

Retaliation against an individual for reporting in line with these guidelines or for carrying out an investigation is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action being taken against the person committing the act of retaliation. Staff who choose to voice their concerns or complaints through the media, to donors, partners, or through structures outside these guidelines will be disciplined.

All supervisors will be instructed to communicate these guidelines to their staff, and they (supervisors) should demonstrate fairness and integrity in dealing with complaints that are brought to their attention.

### **Frivolous or Malicious Complaints**

Employees who use these procedures to bring complaints that are found to lack merit or credibility and/or are made out of bitterness, personal vendetta, or other malicious intent, will find themselves subject to disciplinary action.

### **Contacts**

Enquiries on these guidelines should be directed to the offices mentioned below:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Contacts</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
Policy related	DDG, Corporate Services	Ext. 2771
Procedure related	Head Internal Audit	Ext. 2411