

**THE STATE OF ERITREA  
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

**CODE OF ETHICS FOR STAFF MEMBERS OF THE  
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

**I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Code of Ethics for staff members of the Office of the Auditor General (hereinafter referred to as the **Code**) establishes the requirements of institutional ethics for all staff members of the Office of the Auditor General, civil servants and contractual employees and Members of National service of the Office of the Auditor General whose work is related to public audit (hereinafter referred to as **Auditors**), as well as the principles and requirements of professional ethics for Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General, and governs the conduct of Auditors in the discharge of their duties at the Office of the Auditor General and outside their work at the Office of the Auditor General.
2. The Code shall apply to government Auditors and staff of corporate divisions (HRD, administration & finance, and IT) working at the Office of the Auditor General (Auditor General and Deputies of the Auditor General) to the extent that their status is not governed by other legislation.
3. The Code is based on the Eritrean Law, on the accepted behaviors and good practice on Public Service, and Public Administration, the Rules of Ethical Conduct for Civil Servants approved by the Government of Civil Service Administration (CSA) of Eritrea, the INTOSAI (International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions) Code of Ethics, and other directives issued by concerned authorities in Eritrea.
4. **The objectives of this Code are as follows:**
  - 4.1 to regulate the general requirements of institutional ethics for Auditors and special principles and requirements of professional ethics to be observed by Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General in the discharge of the functions laid down in Legal Notice No. 14/1993 and outside their work at the Office of the Auditor General;
  - 4.2 to ensure responsible, efficient, reliable, lawful, and impartial performance of the Office of the Auditor General that deserves respect and trust;

- 4.3 to prevent the emergence and spread of corruption in the Office of the Auditor General;
- 4.4 to ensure that Auditors serve the society and the state and carry out their duties for selfless purposes;
- 4.5 to align private and public interests of Auditors;
- 4.6 to help Auditors avoid conflicts with employees of the audited entity;
- 4.7 to protect Auditors from any actions that could undermine the authority of the Office of the Auditor General and the reputation of its Auditors.

## 5. Definitions:

- 5.1 **Discrediting** means any act (or omission) of an auditor which undermines the authority of the Office of the Auditor General, destroys trust and confidence in it, and compromises it;
- 5.2 **Conflict of interests** means a situation where an auditor, when discharging his/her duties or carrying out an assignment, is obliged to make a decision or participate in decision-making, or to carry out an assignment which also relates to his/her private interests.
- 5.3 **Private interests** means private economic or non-economic interest of an auditor (or a person close thereto) which may affect their decision-making in the performance of their duties.
- 5.4 **Violation of institutional ethics** means any act (or omission) of an auditor which violates the institutional ethics requirements laid down in this Code, principles of professional ethics, principles of ethical conduct, principles of professional ethics laid down in other regulations and guidance, and discredits the authority of the Office of the Auditor General;
- 5.5 **Institutional ethics requirements** means the rules of conduct laid down herein that are in line with international standards and are binding on Auditors;
- 5.6 **Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General** means civil servants who carry out public audit and, in accordance with their duties, have public or internal administrative powers;
- 5.7 **Civil servants and employees of the Office of the Auditor General whose work is related to public audit** means civil servants, members of national service, and contractual employees working at the Office of the Auditor General under employment contracts whose job description and staff regulations specify functions related to participation in public audit, as well as other civil servants or employees performing functions related to public audit under a separate assignment, like administrative engagements.
- 5.8 **Public interests** mean the public's expectations with regard to impartial and fair decision-making by Auditors.

## **II. GENERAL ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITORS**

6. Auditors shall:
  - 6.1 follow the main principles of ethical conduct for civil servants set out in The CSA's Ethical Conduct for Civil Servants, the INTOSAI Code of Ethics, as well as the special principles and requirements of professional ethics and generally accepted standards of morality;
  - 6.2 discharge their duties set out in The State of Eritrea Law on Public Service, the Special Principles and Requirements of Professional ethics detailed in part III of this document, the Labor Code of The State of Eritrea, and other legislation with honesty, integrity, responsibility, and beyond reproach;
  - 6.3 behave selflessly and in such a way as to be useful to society and the state;
  - 6.4 avoid conflict of public and private interests;
  - 6.5 declare private interests, promptly inform their immediate superior about conflict of public and private interests and abstain from participation in further decision preparation, discussion and adoption procedure;
  - 6.6 refrain from influencing other Auditors in their work, unless this is provided for in the managerial role;
  - 6.7 refrain from violating human rights and dignity;
  - 6.8 in the discharge of their duties and outside working hours, refrain from discrediting the name of the official and the authority of the institution by their conduct, set an example for others, follow the recommendations for a dress code at the Office of the Auditor General;
  - 6.9 refrain from abusing alcohol, refrain from using psychotropic or narcotic substances not for medical purposes;
  - 6.10 refrain from using property of the state, state bodies and institutions in violation of the law;
  - 6.11 refrain from abusing their duties or using documents that verify their position and powers, and requisites of the Office of the Auditor General in order to influence persons outside their control to make a decision to their advantage;
  - 6.12 follow the requirements of The State of Eritrea's procedures for paperwork management, document preparation and execution, and the Internal Rules of Procedure of the Office of the Auditor General.

## **III. SPECIAL PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR AUDITORS OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

7. In carrying out public audit and performing functions of public administration, Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General shall observe the following special principles of professional ethics:
  - 7.1 Integrity;
  - 7.2 Independence, objectivity and impartiality;
  - 7.3 Confidentiality;
  - 7.4 Competence and Professional Due Care.

## **8. Integrity**

Integrity shall be the basis of professional activity of the employee of the Office of the Auditor general. Public confidence in government is maintained and strengthened by auditors' performing their professional responsibilities with integrity. Integrity includes auditors' conducting their work with an attitude that is objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, and non-ideological with regard to audited entities and users of the auditors' reports. Within the constraints of applicable confidentiality laws, rules, or policies, communications with the audited entity, those charged with governance, and the individuals contracting for or requesting the audit are expected to be honest, candid, and constructive.

Making decisions consistent with the interest of the program or activity is important part of the principle of integrity. In discharging their professional responsibilities, auditors encounter conflicting pressures from audited entity, various levels of government, likely users. Auditors may also encounter pressures to violate ethical principles to achieve personal or organizational gain. In resolving those conflicts and pressures, acting with integrity means that auditors place priority on their responsibilities to the public interest.

In observing this principle, Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General shall:

- 8.1 comply with the Constitution of the State of Eritrea, and statutory requirements;
- 8.2 demonstrate impeccable conduct with the staff of audited entities; refrain from giving rise to distrust.

## **9. Independence, objectivity and impartiality**

Independence shall be the basic principle of the activity of the Office of the Auditor General. The credibility of auditing in the government sector is based on auditors' objectivity in discharging their professional responsibilities. Objectivity includes being independent in fact and appearance when providing audit and attestation engagements, maintaining an attitude of impartiality, having intellectual honesty, and being free of conflicts of interest. Avoiding conflicts that may, in fact or appearance, impair auditors' objectivity in performing the audit or attestation engagement is essential to retaining credibility. Maintaining objectivity includes a continuing assessment of relationships with audited entities and other stakeholders in the context of the auditors' responsibility to the public. The concepts of objectivity and independence are closely related as such, Independence impairments impacts objectivity.

The preservation of an independent, objective and politically neutral position in the daily activities of the employee of the Office of the Auditor General allows for timely noticing the influence which might pose a threat to the formulation of a reasoned opinion; therefore, it is crucial to carry out all the necessary activities to exclude the circumstances doubting objectivity — in establishing and maintaining relations with colleagues and audited units, as well as in performing daily work and presenting the results of his/her work.

In observing this principle, Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General shall:

- 9.1 refrain from falling under the influence of the employees of the audited entity and other persons, refuse gifts in kind and in cash, services or discounts offered thereby that can or could affect their independence, objectivity and impartiality;
- 9.2 be politically neutral and refrain from public expression of their political, ethnic and religious beliefs and from agitation;
- 9.3 avoid any conflict of interest and relations with the employees of the audited entity that may cause conflict of interest;
- 9.4 refrain from using their official duties for personal purposes, avoid relations that may lead to corruption risks and could cast doubt on the objectivity and independence;
- 9.5 be equally attentive and demanding to all persons throughout the audit process;
- 9.6 listen to the arguments of all parties in conflict situations and seek an objective judgment;
- 9.7 be fair and without personal prejudice, ensure that decisions taken are lawful, and have no selfish motives;
- 9.8 refrain from intentionally distorting information in public audit documentation;
- 9.9 participate in the decision-making of the audited entity or indicate their agreement thereto on issues unrelated to the public audit that is being conducted
- 9.10 respect the persons and institutions with whom they communicate, treat all persons equally, regardless of their nationality, social origin and status, gender, racial or ethnic origin, language, age, religion, political beliefs, or other provisions. Auditors of the Office of the

Auditor General shall not carry out a public audit and participate in an audit if they:

- 9.11 have blood or marriage relationship with the head of the organization, manager, head of the administration, chief financial officer (accountant), project promoter, of the audited entity;
- 9.12 used to be employees of the audited entity and less than one year has passed since the end of the employment relationship; as employees of the audited entity, were engaged in and responsible for activity during the period covered by the scope of the audit;
- 9.13 are shareholders of the audited entity, if any, or if less than one year has passed since the transfer of shares;
- 9.14 have received a loan from the audited entity or have other financial obligations to the audited entity;
- 9.15 are affected by other conditions that may influence their independence
- 9.16 Upon the occurrence of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 9.11 - 9.15, Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General shall refuse to carry out an assignment or a public audit, or participate in an audit, notifying their immediate superior and a Director General thereof in writing.

## **10. Confidentiality**

The main result of the work of the Office of the Auditor General, i.e. an audit report, shall be created based only on the information obtained during the working process; therefore, information protection shall be given priority. Therefore, the employee of the Office of the Auditor General, in receiving and processing information during the working process, shall foster confidence in audited units that the information provided is properly stored and will be disclosed only pursuant to the set procedures.

To ensure the quality of his/her work and prevent preconditions for doubting the reputation of the Office of the Auditor General as a reliable partner, it is important for the employee of the Office of the Auditor General to ensure the protection of the obtained information, preventing its disclosure, either deliberately or due to negligence, as well as preventing the use of the obtained information for any personal purposes.

In observing this principle, Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General shall:

- 10.1 refrain from disclosing any information obtained through public audit to any third party either in writing or orally, except for cases prescribed by law, and shall not use such information for private purposes;
- 10.2 use the information about the audited entity, which was collected during public audit, only for preparing the public audit report and public audit opinion and performing other tasks;
- 10.3 protect state and official secrets and refrain from using or letting others use official or work-related sensitive information in a procedure and to an extent other than prescribed by the law.

Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General also shall not:

- 10.4 use the information obtained during public audit for their own or other people's benefit, or use this information as a tool to harm others;
- 10.5 publish data on public audit and shall not disclose classified information to any third party;

## **11. Competence and Professional due care**

A professionally competent employee allows for ensuring the attainment of goals set by the Office of the Auditor General. The quality of the work of the Office of the Auditor General depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities of the employee.

Professionalism ensures reliance upon the results of the work of the Office of the Auditor General. Therefore, understanding the significance of his/her work, the preservation, improvement and exchange of knowledge, skills and abilities by both training new colleagues and exchanging experience with the representatives of audited units and professionals of the field is the everyday work of the employee of the Office of the Auditor General.

In observing this principle, Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General shall:

- 11.1 have a good knowledge of legislation, Audit manuals of the Office of the Auditor General, International Standards for Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs), AFROSAI-E guidance documents, and other Legal Acts and apply these in a professional manner as well as comply with good public auditing practice;
- 11.2 act in accordance with their authority in the discharge of their duties;
- 11.3 have knowledge of legislation governing the activity of the audited entity;
- 11.4 behave in a professional manner and apply high professional standards in their work in order to carry out their duties properly and impartially;
- 11.5 observe professional precaution when carrying out and supervising audit and preparing public audit reports and opinions;
- 11.6 Continually update their professional knowledge, improve their qualifications and skills needed to perform their official duties.
- 11.7 examine the substance of audits, avoid haste and superficiality, but avoid delay in the audit process;
- 11.8 base their conclusions, recommendations and decisions only on relevant and reliable evidence collected in accordance with the provisions of relevant legal acts;

#### **IV. RELATIONS BETWEEN AUDITORS**

12. Relations between Auditors shall be based on politeness, honesty, respect, tolerance, and trust, and relations between Auditors and their superiors – also on active assistance.
13. Auditors shall show solidarity with their colleagues, protect them from undue criticism and warn them about bad influence.
14. Auditors shall refrain from analyzing audits and actions performed by their colleagues in public or assessing personal qualities and competence of other Auditors.

#### **V. FINAL PROVISIONS**

15. Auditor shall not execute assignments of their immediate superior if the assignment forces them to break the law and this Code. The auditor shall inform his/her immediate superior thereof and shall also notify the Auditor General or a Director General in writing.
16. Each auditor shall acquaint themselves with the Code and commit in writing to follow it. The signed commitment shall be kept in the personal file of the Administration and Finance Division of the OAG. The form of the commitment is provided in the Annex hereto.
17. Violations of institutional ethics of Auditors shall be investigated in the procedure laid down by the Auditor General.
18. In cases where the Auditors' conduct is not governed by this Code, they shall comply with the ethical standards set out in other legislation as well as generally accepted standards of morality.

## **Acknowledgements**

This policy is prepared in reference to the following documents

- Code of Ethics of the Office of the Auditor General of the States of Finances, Rwanda
- Code of Ethics of Office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of Bangladesh
- CODE OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS FOR OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE OF LITHUANIA
- Code of Ethics of the Office of the Auditor General of Belize
- The INTOSAI Code of Ethics and ISSAIs
- Regularity Audit Manual of 2014 of the Office of the Auditor General
- Various directives of CSA and other Governmental bodies

**Annex to Code of Ethics for Auditors of the Office of the Auditor General of the State of Eritrea**

I \_\_\_\_\_, auditor for the Office of the Auditor General, have reviewed the stated ethical principles and pledge to adhere to the principles to the best of my ability. In the event, I cannot comply with or adhere to the identified principles I will immediately notify my superior of the circumstances involving the ethical principles.

**Auditor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director General:**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

