

Liana Ethical Principles

Approved by Liana board 21.08.2024

Role of Ethical Principles

Liana Ethical Principles, together with the current *Rules* and current *Liana strategic plan & Operating principles*, form the template according to which Liana's activities are formed.

These Ethical Principles are followed in all of Liana's activities. **Following the Ethical Principles is the responsibility of every member of Liana** who performs any activity in the organization, regardless of the type and duration of the task. The member must **also ensure that Liana's partners with whom Liana has entered into a cooperation agreement, and persons facilitating Liana activities, comply with these principles, or that the partner organization complies with its own ethical principles that cover aspects corresponding to these principles.**

In addition, Liana complies with Finnish legislation, internationally approved environmental and social responsibility standards, local legislation and international commitments applicable to Liana action. We are also sufficiently familiar with the key legislation applicable to our partners' activities (e.g. local labour and tax laws) so that we can guarantee the legality of our cooperation.

As a recipient of project funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, we undertake to comply with the Standard Terms and Conditions set by the Ministry for projects financed by the Ministry. These documents cover a much wider set of binding terms and conditions than Liana's own documents listed above. However, much of Liana Ethical Principles have been adopted from two ministry documents, namely the Ethical rules ([Eettiset säännöt](#), KEO-30 / 25.9.2020) and the [Standard Terms and Conditions](#) (in force from January 2025).

Similarly, Liana will understand and comply with terms and conditions of any other donor and will not accept funding from a donor whose terms and conditions contradict our principles.

Liana has its own Reporting Portal <https://www.liana-ry.org/whistleblowing/> for reporting any suspected and/or actual non-compliance with the Liana Ethical Principles, and the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Ministry, as applicable to the Ministry funded projects. Reports are handled by Liana Board.

Liana is obliged by the Ministry's Standard Terms and Conditions to immediately notify the Ministry of any suspected and/or actual non-compliance with the Standard Terms and Conditions in the activities funded by the Ministry. Non-compliance with the Standard Terms and Conditions is considered *misuse of funds*. Failure to report misuse may potentially be a criminal offence.

In addition to Liana's own Reporting Portal, the Ministry has its own whistleblowing channel at <https://vaarinkayttoilmoitus.fi/#/?lang=en> for reporting any suspicions of misuse of development cooperation funds. Prevention and reporting of any suspected or actual misuse of funds is the responsibility of everyone involved in Liana activities.

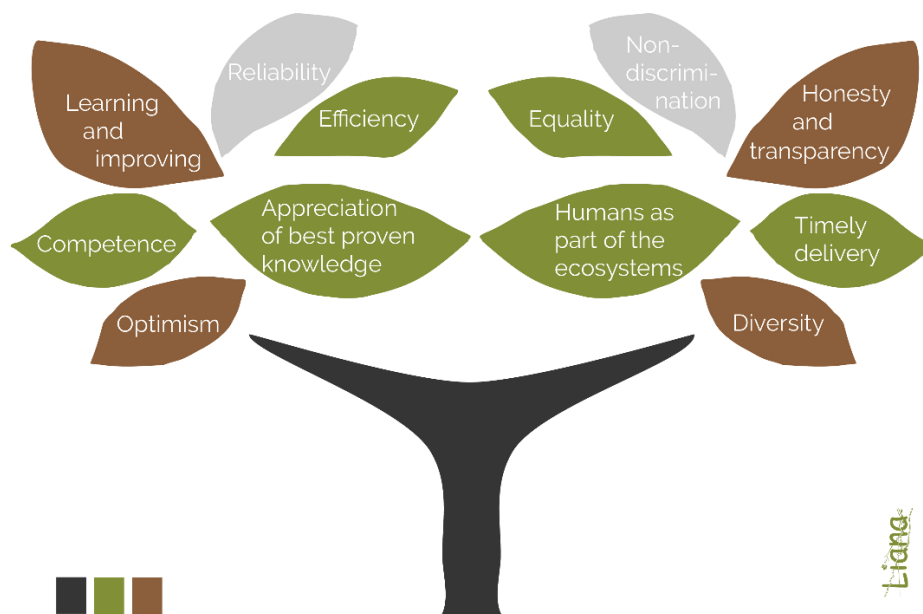
Operationalising Liana values

Liana's actions are guided by its **purpose** statement in its Rules:

"The purpose of the organisation is to function in development cooperation using holistic approaches that combine improving the state of the environment and human well-being."

Liana's purpose defines the *objectives* of Liana's functions. Intrinsicly the purpose means 'doing good'. However, every action has also risks, unintended consequences and side effects. We **analyse** these both beforehand and during the entire activity, **avoid and minimize risks and negative side effects, and take action to deal with them.**

Liana's values are defined in Liana strategy & Operating principles (Figure)



Successful activities require **competence, efficiency and timely delivery.**

- We ensure that anyone contributing to Liana activities only undertakes tasks for which they have necessary skills, knowledge and experience.
- We ensure that our activities are based on best proven knowledge that comes from both scientific knowledge and experience knowledge. We are *agile* to realign our activities and practices based on new emerging knowledge, experience and understanding.
- We ensure that our actions are efficient, reliable, and timely. We use the funds granted to us efficiently and prudently.
- **Learning and improving** are intrinsic parts of our activities.

We do our activities with utmost **honesty, integrity and transparency.**

- We use the funds entrusted to us with utmost honesty for the purposes they are intended.
- Our bookkeeping enables adequately itemized transparent financial reporting.
- We are honest about the results of our activities and the challenges we encounter.

Liana does not only value **human diversity, gender equality and non-discrimination, but actively promotes them** in its activities.

We recognise that **people are part of the ecosystem** and are not separate from or opposed to the natural environment. Thus, our activities consider all components of the system and not assume that human needs are at the centre or the only consideration.

We recognise that achieving change can be challenging and take time. We cultivate **optimistic attitudes and idealism** to work towards a better world, and we use **solution-focussed approaches** as we encounter challenges.

Environmental responsibility in action

Liana's activities use "holistic approaches that combine improving the state of the environment and human well-being." (Rules)

While doing this we monitor and assess inevitable unwanted environmental and climate impacts of our activities (e.g. use of plastics, use of paper, driving and travelling), including impacts potentially emerging in supply chains, and continuously improve the environmental friendliness by reducing the use of materials and the generation of waste, and carbon footprint. We use the strategy Avoid, Reduce, Compensate: If you cannot avoid, reduce; if you cannot reduce, compensate.

Social responsibility, respect for human rights, non-discrimination

We take into account international commitments concerning human rights.

In activity planning and decision-making during implementation, we analyse potential human rights impacts, including impacts in procurement chains. We ensure our activities do not contribute, directly or indirectly, to adverse human rights impacts.

Discrimination refers to any unequal treatment of individuals, such as segregation, disfavour or favouritism that is not based on work requirements or quality but instead indicates attitude-based unequal treatment.

Discrimination based on race, skin colour, gender, marital status, pregnancy, religion, social or ethnic origin, nationality, physical characteristics, age, political opinions, trade union membership, sexual orientation and all other forms of discrimination are prohibited. If necessary, discriminated groups are supported with positive discrimination.

We do not disseminate religious or political positions in Liana activities. We do not represent Liana activities (for example by wearing an organisational logo) when participating in political and religious activities in our private lives.

Zero tolerance of corruption and fraud

Corruption is dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. It is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.

Fraud is any intentional act, typically by unjustifiably claiming, or by omission to deprive another of property, or to circumvent procedure by deception or other unfair means.

Liana has zero-tolerance of corruption and fraud, or any other dishonest action. Liana ensures that members responsible for Liana activities, employees, volunteers or local representatives, are persons with demonstrated integrity. For persons intended for the above positions at least two recommendations are requested, unless the persons are previously known from Liana activities.

Liana's activities that use money have a detailed accounting system that can be used to verify the correct use of funds for each transaction. The member responsible for the activity ensures that the partner organisations has demonstrated ability and procedures in place to do the same. In addition, there must be a reporting system (e.g. with photos) that can be used to verify the activities or materials for which the funds have been used. The member responsible for Liana action must monitor these closely to ensure funds are used as intended. Diversion of resources away from the intended purpose is fraud.

Both Liana and partner organisation's accounts are audited as required by the donors and the Finnish legislation and local legislation.

The employment and volunteer opportunities offered in Liana activities are based solely on the applicant's merits and suitability and do not involve favouritism or other corrupt practices.

Prevention and reporting of suspected or actual corruption and fraud is the responsibility of everyone involved in Liana activities. Suspicion of corruption and fraud are investigated by the board and addressed as required by the Finnish legislation and within the legislation of the country where it occurred. Liana activities have no place for persons found to be guilty of corruption and/or fraud.

Zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment¹

Liana does not tolerate sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). It also does not tolerate *inaction* (e.g. ignoring, covering up) to SEAH. Prevention and reporting of suspected or actual SEAH is the responsibility of everyone involved in Liana activities.

Definitions²:

Sexual exploitation: *Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another. Examples of sexual exploitation include requiring sexual favours as a condition for giving assistance to a person.*

Sexual abuse: *The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Examples of sexual abuse include attempted rape, forcing someone to perform oral sex/touching, and rape.*

Sexual harassment: *Verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted and by which a person's psychological or physical integrity is violated intentionally or factually, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere. Examples of sexual harassment include:*

- *gestures and other non-verbal communication with sexual undertones³*
- *comments of sexual nature⁴ about individuals and/or their body, conduct, sex life or gender identity*

¹ Edited from: [Finland's policy on the prevention and elimination of sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance](#) (1 March 2023)

² The definitions of sexual exploitation and abuse are based on UN Secretary-General's bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse", 9th October, 2003. The definition of sexual harassment is from Ombudsman for Equality of Finland.

³ Examples: Unwanted deliberate touching, standing close, rubbing, leaning over, cornering, staring, looking a person up and down, winking, throwing kisses, making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements, giving personal gifts.

⁴ Examples: Unwanted sexual teasing or jokes, referring to an adult as a girl/babe/honey etc, whistling at someone, turning work discussions to sexual topics, telling sexual jokes or stories, personal questions about social or sexual life

- *pornographic material, sexually suggestive visuals⁵, letters or postcards, e-mails, text messages or phone calls.*

All parties involved in Liana activities are required to:

- *Understand* the policy and the above key terms. Everyone responsible for Liana activities and facilitating Liana activities affirms in writing that they have understood the policy.
- The member responsible for Liana activity ensures this policy is explained to beneficiaries when they get involved in any activities.
- Ensure that each activity has a local SEAH *complaints/reporting or whistle-blowing mechanism and follow-up mechanism/procedure*, in addition to the Liana Reporting Portal. Any allegations and complaints and any reported/suspected cases must be handled effectively and resolved ensuring confidentiality and protecting victims/survivors from harm.
- Make the above (local and Liana) *complaints/reporting mechanisms known by the population being assisted.*
- The local complaints/reporting mechanism have complaints *handled by staff other than those who manage programmes and are in contact with communities.*
- *Safeguard the rights, needs and safety of those who have experienced SEAH or those who reported it.* Absolute confidentiality is required to process complaints and take action against the perpetrators.

Harassment and abuse of power

Liana does not tolerate harassment and abuse of power in its activities. Harassment and abuse of power have a direct adverse effect on person's wellbeing and performance in activities and thus compromise activities. This applies to both beneficiaries and people contributing to Liana activities.

Intimidatory harassment involves the thoughtless or intentional use of physical or organizational power to coerce a person into performing a particular action, stop performing his/her duties, or to instil in the person a feeling of humiliation or intimidation.

Intimidatory harassment should not be confused with legitimate comment or advice, including relevant negative comment or feedback, delivered in a reasonable manner by a supervisor or colleague on work performance or work-related behaviour.

Conflict of interest

Conflicts of interest⁶ arise when one's personal interests interfere or appear to interfere with Liana's interests.

We recognize that conflicts of interest may lead to corruption.

We avoid conflict of interest situations with openness and transparency. All persons involved in Liana activities are obliged to express their concerns if they find themselves in a potential or actual conflict of interest situation.

⁵ Examples: Posters and calendars on the wall

⁶ Examples: Conflicts of interest can be related to family members (spouse, romantic partner, parents, children, siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, and in-laws) or close friends, remuneration of using personal property for Liana action (e.g. renting out a private vehicle for project use without tendering), competing of the same funding source.

Persons responsible for or facilitating Liana activities must not exploit their position and any related privileges for personal gain or to benefit related parties.

Working with children

Liana follows Finnish legislation concerning requirements for persons working with underaged (Act on investigating the criminal background of those working with children).

In countries where it is not possible to confirm suitability through official channels, Liana ensures the suitability of a person to carry out Liana activities with children by obtaining at least two recommendations, one from a former colleague and the other from a government official who knows the person.

Persons selected to perform activities with children always work with another adult present.

Children are assigned an easily reachable contact person (suitable as described above), other than the person performing the activity, to whom they report behaviour that they find inappropriate or unpleasant. This person reports these using the channels listed in the Liana Ethical Principles.

It is prohibited to have children do work that has an adverse impact on their studies or is harmful to their health or development. *Child refers to a person who is under 15 years of age or under the minimum age defined in national legislation if that is higher than 15 years; and is under the age at which the national compulsory education ends.*

Reporting requirements and consequences for violations

Anyone with concerns, suspicions or knowledge of incidents regarding violations of the Ethical Principles is obligated to immediately report them using the above given channels. Failure to report a suspected violation constitutes a violation of these Ethical Principles.

All reporting channels ensure adequate confidentiality and allow for anonymous reporting. Any report submitted to management or via local complaint channel must be passed on to the Liana Report Portal. Nobody who reports suspected violations with honest intent needs to fear any disadvantage or other consequences even if the report later turns out to be unfounded.

Violations of these Ethical Principles may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including immediate termination and/or the annulment of cooperation agreements. Liana reserves the right to report criminal offences in compliance with applicable laws.

Obligation to comply with the Ethical Principles

All Liana members responsible for Liana action, must confirm in writing (e.g. by signing this document or confirming by a WhatsApp message, or email) that they have read and understood the Ethical Principles, and that they will comply with them. They must also prove that they have ensured that these Ethical Principles have been read and understood and are followed by local partners and/or persons facilitating Liana activities.

I have read and understood these Ethical Principles and I agree to follow them

Signature _____

Name _____

Date _____