Board Resolution: Approval of Code of Conduct for the Artisanal Gold Council (AGC)

Whereas, the Board of Directors of AGC recognizes the importance of ethical behavior and integrity in all aspects of the organization's operations,

Whereas, the development of a comprehensive code of conduct is essential to provide guidance and standards for ethical behavior for all employees, executives, and national teams of AGC,

Resolved, that the Board of Directors of AGC hereby approves the Code of Conduct for AGC, attached hereto as Exhibit A, effective immediately.

Further Resolved, that the Board authorizes the Executive Director of AGC to communicate and distribute the Code of Conduct to all employees, executives, national teams and partners of AGC.

Further Resolved, that the Board directs management of AGC to ensure adequate training and resources are provided to all employees to understand and adhere to the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Further Resolved, that the Board reserves the right to amend the Code of Conduct for AGC as necessary to reflect changes in laws, regulations, or organizational needs, with any amendments requiring subsequent board approval.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Directors of AGC on April 10th, 2024.

Dr. Katherina Tarnai-Lokhorst
Chair of the Board of AGC
Mission and Vision Statements:

Mission: To improve the livelihoods and well-being of artisanal and small-scale gold mining communities worldwide through sustainable and responsible practices. We advise governments and industry on policy, solutions, national action plans, and institutional capacity for the transformation of the Artisanal Gold Mining Sector.

We mitigate health and environmental issues through education, improved processes, best practices, and capacity building.

Vision: A formalized, environmentally sound, and socially responsible Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector that supplies Responsible Artisanal Gold™ to markets, attract socially responsible investors and buyers, and encourages ethical consumer behaviours. A Sector universally recognized as a first-rate mechanism of transfer of wealth to those who are challenged by poverty and marginalization.

I. Purpose

The purpose of AGC's Code of Ethical Conduct is to establish a policy of ethical principles and values for our personnel and to provide clear policies that will help them achieve our organization's mission. Our Code is grounded in the principles of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which emphasizes the importance of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.

II. Ethical Principles and Values:

a. Upholding Ethical Standards:
AGC team members are expected to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, and professionalism, both within and outside of the organization. We expect everyone to act in compliance with all national and international laws and regulations relevant to our operations, and to always follow the AGC’s Code of Conduct.

b. Respecting Human Rights:

b.1. Our organization is committed to upholding fundamental human rights, social justice, and the equal rights of all people, regardless of gender, nationality, or any other personal characteristic.

b.2. Discrimination violates fundamental human rights, and we expect all personnel to treat every individual with dignity, worth, and respect. Stereotyping based on assumptions or preconceptions is unacceptable, and we encourage the recognition and appreciation of diversity among our personnel. We believe all individuals should be treated equally, without distinction or bias.

c. Transparency and Accountability:

AGC team members must maintain accurate and truthful records of all transactions and activities and provide timely and reliable information to relevant stakeholders as required. We are committed to responsible environmental management and will promote transparency and accountability in all our operations and activities.

d. Respect for Diversity:

d.1. All personnel are expected to exercise tolerance and understanding towards one another, regardless of their differences. This kind of respect creates a welcoming and supportive work environment sensitive to all personnel’s needs. To achieve this in a multicultural setting, we must actively affirm and appreciate diversity rather than passively accept it.

d.2. Our international outlook is based on our commitment to the objectives and purposes of our organization’s legal and policy instruments. This includes respecting the rights of others to hold different opinions and follow different cultural practices. It requires us to work without bias towards individuals of all genders, nationalities, religions, and cultures and to learn from each other. We must always be sensitive to how our actions and words may be perceived by others and avoid any expressions that could be interpreted as intolerant or biased. It is also essential to recognize that working methods may differ across cultures, and personnel should be open to adapting their approaches to work effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

e. Empowering Local Communities:

AGC team members are committed to empowering and supporting local communities in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector to improve their livelihoods sustainably. We respect local customs, cultures, and traditions, and we will engage with communities in an open and respectful manner.

f. Advocating for Responsible Governance:
AGC team members are advocates for the recognition and integration of the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector into formalized governance structures. We will work with governments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to promote responsible governance and regulation of the sector.

III. **Code of Conduct Policies:**

1. **Professional Conduct:**

   All AGC team members are expected to behave professionally and respectfully towards colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. This includes avoiding any behaviour that could be considered discriminatory, harassing, or intimidating.

2. **Conflict of Interest:**

   AGC team members must avoid any conflicts of interest that may arise in the course of their work. If a conflict of interest does arise, team members must declare it promptly to their supervisor and take appropriate measures to avoid any potential negative impact on the AGC.

   2.1. To avoid conflicts of interest, personnel are prohibited from accepting any benefits, including economic benefits, for themselves or third parties, either directly or indirectly.

   2.2. Personnel must not provide preferential treatment to private entities, governments, or individuals in their dealings with AGC. Additionally, personnel must not exploit or benefit from any information they obtain through their official duties that is not publicly available, nor may they allow third parties to do so.

3. **Gifts and Hospitality:**

   AGC team members must not accept any gifts or hospitality that could be perceived as a bribe or influence the AGC’s decision-making. All gifts and hospitality must be declared to the AGC’s management, and any gifts or hospitality offered to AGC staff must be reported to their supervisor.

4. **Harassment:**

   To ensure a workplace free from harassment:

   (a) All forms of harassment are unacceptable, and personnel should not partake in or be involved in any such behaviour. Personnel have the right to work in an environment free from harassment which undermines their dignity and any other behaviour that may create a hostile or intimidating work environment.
(b) Sexual or any other form of exploitation and abuse goes against universally recognized international legal norms and principles. It has always been regarded as inappropriate behaviour and is not tolerated by personnel.

(c) Such behavior is considered severe misconduct, and appropriate disciplinary measures and other necessary actions will be taken.

5. Discrimination and Bullying:

Discrimination based on any protected characteristic, including race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other characteristic protected by law, is strictly prohibited.

Bullying behaviour, such as teasing, intimidation, threats, or any other aggressive behaviour intended to harm, intimidate, or undermine an individual, is strictly prohibited.

Consequences: Personnel who engage in harassment, discrimination, or bullying will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The organization has zero tolerance for harassment, discrimination, and bullying and will take all necessary steps to prevent and address such behaviour.

6. Reporting:

Any AGC team member who observes or suspects a violation of the AGC’s Code of Conduct must report it immediately to their supervisor or the AGC’s Ethics and Compliance Officer. Reports will be treated confidentially, and AGC management is committed to investigating all reports thoroughly and taking appropriate action.

Conclusion:

The AGC’s Code of Conduct is a statement of our commitment to ethical, sustainable, and responsible practices in all our operations and activities. Our Code of Conduct guides the principles and values underpinning our work and sets out the behaviours and actions that we expect from our staff and team members. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of professionalism, transparency, and accountability, and we will take appropriate action to address any violations of our Code of Conduct.