



## **GUIDANCE AND PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING MISCONDUCT AND BREACHES OF THE ISO CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

The [ISO Code of Ethics and Conduct, referred to as "The Code"](#), applies to all actors in ISO's standards development work, and all actors shall respect and comply with the Code and play their part in its implementation and enforcement. Actors in the ISO technical work are:

- National standards bodies (NSBs);
- Delegates and experts from NSBs and liaison organizations;
- Committee leaders (Chairs, Committee Managers, Working Group Convenors and Secretaries, Project Leaders); and
- ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) staff.

The Code is not limited to what occurs in a meeting, but also includes, for example, what may occur during breaks, social events, between meetings, by correspondence and in social media. Meetings include both in-person and virtual meetings.

It is the responsibility of all actors to raise concerns as soon as possible if they observe behaviour that is not in accordance with the Code. An actor does not need to be the target of the breach in order to raise concerns.

### Notes:

- Clauses 1, 2 and 3 represent a stepwise approach to addressing concerns, with the expectation that concerns will be resolved successfully at the earliest stages, thereby limiting the necessity of pursuing Clause 3. All alleged breaches of the Code shall first proceed through Clauses 1 and 2 before Clause 3 can be pursued.
- When pursuing Clauses 1, 2 and 3, all known parties involved in such cases shall be granted respect and courtesy in order to have their perspectives heard and understood, without preconceived ideas on the possible outcome.

## **1 First steps to address cases of alleged breaches of the Code**

When you observe or experience a situation where you believe the Code has been breached, as soon as possible:

- 1.1 Seek to understand what motivated the breach.
- 1.2 When appropriate, raise your concern(s), either in person or in writing, by approaching the person(s) you believe have breached the Code. If you pursue your concerns in writing, retain written record(s) in case of later escalation.
- 1.3 If the alleged breach occurred openly in a meeting, you may wish to raise your concern in the meeting. Alternatively, to respect the other party(ies), consider using a break in the meeting to approach the person(s) and discuss your concerns.
- 1.4 Try to resolve the concerns by agreement to move forward in a mutually satisfactory manner.
- 1.5 If you are not comfortable approaching the person(s) directly, you may wish to seek support and assistance from your head of delegation or NSB and/or one or more of the following (to approach the person(s) in person or in writing):
  - 1.5.1 The committee or working group leadership;

- 1.5.2 The Technical Program Manager (TPM) of the committee;
- 1.5.3 Other delegates or experts of the NSB, or liaison organization with which the person(s) is associated.
- 1.6 It is expected that many such cases may be resolved favourably through professional and respectful dialogue between the person(s) raising concerns and the person(s) who may have breached the Code.
- 1.7 If concerns can be positively resolved by direct interaction as suggested in this section, there may be no need to document the incident, unless it is anticipated that the incident could be escalated as detailed in Clauses 2 and 3 below.
- 1.8 It may be helpful to have an exchange of email following the direct discussion in order to confirm that the issue was discussed and the outcome that led to the favourable resolution. Copy the relevant NSBs on any such emails.

## **2 Informal requests for resolution of concerns**

### **2.1 Alleged Code breaches at the committee level**

If efforts described under Clause 1 above have been pursued but have not resolved the concerns:

- 2.1.1 As NSBs are responsible for delegates, chairs and committee managers from their countries, a delegate or expert raising concerns shall work through his or her own NSB to have them contact the NSB of the person(s) alleged to have breached the Code.
- 2.1.2 Delegates or experts shall direct concerns about the conduct of liaison representative(s) to their NSB, to have them request that the TPM convey the concerns to the liaison organization.
- 2.1.3 Person(s) raising concerns and their NSBs shall ensure that the committee leadership (chair, committee manager, convenor, project leader) and the TPM are copied on these communications to NSBs.
- 2.1.4 Subject to decision by the NSBs and liaison organizations, the NSBs and liaison organization(s) may wish to consider the following options to address concerns expressed about their representative(s):
  - 2.1.4.1 The person(s) receive training on proper conduct in ISO committees from the NSB or liaison organization. Committee leadership and TPMs may be engaged with the NSBs and liaison organizations in such training.
  - 2.1.4.2 The person(s) are removed from their positions temporarily until training is provided.
  - 2.1.4.3 The person(s) are replaced in their roles (for delegates, experts, chairs and committee managers/secretaries).
  - 2.1.4.4 The person(s) are not supported for ongoing participation in ISO work (for delegates, experts, chairs and committee managers/secretaries) in the concerned or other committee(s).

A list of ISO NSBs is provided [here](#).

### **2.2 Alleged Code breaches at the working group level**

- 2.2.1 In the case of convenors and project leaders, the committees are responsible for the appointment of person(s) to these roles, but these individuals also serve their NSB or liaison organization since they have been engaged in the committee on their behalf. Therefore, their behaviour reflects upon their NSBs or liaison organization(s).
- 2.2.2 A delegate or an expert raising concerns shall work through his or her own NSB to have them contact the committee leaders, TPM and the NSB of the convenor(s) or project leader(s) that may have breached the Code.
- 2.2.3 Subject to a collective decision by the NSBs or liaison organization(s) concerned and the committee leadership, the following options may be appropriate to address concerns expressed about convenors and project leaders:
  - 2.2.3.1 The person(s) receive training on proper conduct in ISO or IEC committees from the NSB or liaison organization. Committee leadership and TPMs may be engaged with the NSBs and liaison organizations in such training.
  - 2.2.3.2 The person(s) are removed from their positions temporarily until training is provided.
  - 2.2.3.3 The person(s) are replaced (at any point) in their roles by the committee.
  - 2.2.3.4 The person(s) are not re-appointed to their roles by the committee.

### **2.3 Alleged Code breaches by ISO/CS staff**

In the case of allegations of ISO/CS staff breaching the Code, a delegate or expert raising concerns shall work through his or her own NSB to have them convey the concerns to the Office of the CEO, with a request to address them.

## **3 Formal requests for action by the TMB and possible consequences**

- 3.1 There may be some cases where despite their efforts, NSBs, liaison organizations, committees or TPMs, are unable or unwilling to address the alleged breach the Code. If necessary, and as the last resort, an NSB may submit a formal request to the TMB. Such formal requests shall contain full detail of the alleged breach and all available supporting documentation. This may also include additional corroborating information (see Clause 4.2). Should the TMB, based on its review of the information presented to it, determine that a breach of the Code occurred, it may at its discretion, decide to take one or more of the following actions:
  - 3.1.1 The TMB may decide to remove specific person(s) from leadership and/or participation in the concerned committees and/or working groups for a minimum of one year.
  - 3.1.2 The person(s) are not re-appointed in his/her role as committee chairs.
  - 3.1.3 Instruct the NSB to replace a committee manager, and if unwilling to do so, the TMB may reallocate the secretariat to another NSB .
  - 3.1.4 Withdraw the liaison status of any liaison organization with which the person(s) are associated or remove the person(s) associated with the liaison organization from participation. If a liaison organisation loses its status it can re-apply after one year.
  - 3.1.5 Downgrade from participating to observer status for one year any NSB and its other delegates and experts that condone and support, or are unwilling to take action in relation to, the person(s) who were determined to have breached the Code. Note that such action will result in that NSB losing any committee leadership roles it holds

within the relevant committee or its working groups, as well as active participation rights in working groups under that committee.

- 3.2 In all cases where concerns are raised to the TMB for action, the person(s) who are the subject of the concerns shall have the right to respond, through their NSB, to the documented concerns. The TMB will consider documentations from both sides when making any determination.
- 3.3 Any TMB decisions in such cases are subject to possible appeal under clause 5 of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1.

## **4 Additional guidance**

### **4.1 Communications and documentation of cases**

- 4.1.1 All cases of alleged breaches of the Code shall be documented to the extent possible and shall take into consideration the principles in Clause 4.2 on “confidentiality and privacy”.
- 4.1.2 The collection of supporting documentation and the submission of written informal requests for assistance (Clauses 1 and 2) or formal requests for TMB action (Clause 3) shall be the responsibility of the party raising the concern(s), in consultation with their NSB or liaison organization.
- 4.1.3 Retention of all documentation regarding such cases shall be the responsibility of the relevant committee’s TPM.
- 4.1.4 To ensure that ISO/CS may provide effective oversight of all such cases, the TPM shall be copied at all stages as this will assist them in helping to resolve the dispute and ensure timely follow-up.
- 4.1.5 If necessary, the TPM may seek additional corroborating information, which could include: reviewing meeting survey responses, seeking input from other committees in which the subject person(s) participates, and outreach to other parties who may have relevant information.

### **4.2 Confidentiality and privacy**

- 4.2.1 In order to sustain professional courtesy for all those involved, documentation of cases of inappropriate behaviour shall be shared on a need-to-know basis only. Care should be taken when including and disseminating information on confidential issues. Information about the alleged breach shall not be unnecessarily shared with others in the committee/working group in which the misconduct or breach occurred, nor to those outside the ISO committee without justification.
- 4.2.2 It is important to avoid or limit any negative consequences to the reputations, professional roles/status, etc. of the concerned parties.

### **4.3 Anonymity and protection**

- 4.3.1 Parties raising concerns, informally or formally, need to take responsibility for their concerns and cannot be anonymous, but their privacy will be protected to the extent possible.
- 4.3.2 In all cases of alleged breaches of the Code, all parties shall provide respect and protection without prejudice or retaliation to those who bring forward the concerns.

- 4.3.3 Person(s) raising concerns are encouraged to consider the purpose for which they are raising a concern. Any concerns raised about another individual under this Guidance shall be directly related to an alleged breach of the Code and not for any individual or organizational advantage within ISO/IEC. Such allegations may be subject to informal requests for assistance or formal requests for action by the TMB.
- 4.3.4 No person who in good faith reports any alleged breaches of the Code shall suffer intimidation, harassment, discrimination or other retaliation. Any evidence of negative actions against persons raising concerns shall be considered in the case brought forward by those persons or may be addressed as a new and separate case of breach of the Code.

#### **4.4 Presentation of the Code at meetings**

A standing agenda item is required at the beginning of all committee and working group meetings to highlight the Code and to remind all participants of the expectation that they will respect and comply with it.

#### **4.5 Unlawful Activity**

- 4.5.1 In case of unlawful activities at a meeting, work with the committee leaders and host, and cooperate with the local law enforcement authorities if necessary.
- 4.5.2 In case of unlawful activities by correspondence between meetings, work with the committee leaders, the TPM, and the ISO/CS legal counsel, as well as the legal counsels of your employer and your NSB or liaison organization.