

Code of Conduct

What is a Code of Conduct and why is it important for HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation focuses on implementing activities through its partners (Community Development Councils (CDCs), Economic Interest Groups (EIGs), other associations of people) to reach out to the communities.

A Code of Conduct is the basis to build up partnership that is guided by transparent and mutually agreed principles for successful achievements.

It has to be discussed with all the partners in order to find a common understanding for a fruitful and efficient collaboration. We respect the cultural values of our partners and expect them to equally respect our fundamental values. Therefore, further principles defined by the partners or an adaptation to cultural realities of the benefitting communities of the below stated principles can be added in written to this Code of Conduct before signing.

The signing of this Code of Conduct is a pre-condition to enter into a partnership agreement with HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

Once agreed, the Code of Conduct is binding for HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation and its partners.

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation as an NGO

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation, founded in 1955, is one of the most experienced and largest non-governmental development organisations in Switzerland which is engaged in 30 developing countries worldwide.

It is a member-based, non-profit association with no religious, political or ethnic affiliation and as such it is fully independent and impartial. HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation respects the cultural values of the communities that it is working with.

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation's vision is a just and peaceful world in which all human beings live in a self-determined way in dignity and safety, are able to satisfy their basic needs, have access to resources and services which are indispensable for life and take care of the environment for now and for the future generations. Therefore HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation supports long-term development and does not do relief distribution.

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation works in Afghanistan since 2006. Its mandate is to support the rural communities in remote areas to improve their living conditions in an inclusive manner through integrated water and land resource management, strengthening their resilience to natural disasters like flash floods and droughts and to improve their means of livelihoods, their organizational capacity to access services (agriculture inputs, marketing of products, information, etc.). HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation works also on access to drinking water and mobilizes for appropriate sanitation and hygiene practices as basis for improved health. Furthermore HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation supports also quality and access to education for all, boys and girls through public schools, madrasas, home based schools and women resource centres.

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation does not accept any funding from countries with military presence in Afghanistan nor implements projects on behalf of the government in order to remain impartial. HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation is looking for funds for supporting the projects in Afghanistan with the Swiss government and the Swiss population, organisations and institutions.

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation works in the districts of Ruye Doab (Samanagan), Tala Wa Barfak (Baghlan), Kahmard and Saighan (Bamian), Sirkany and Khas Kunar (Kunar), Goshta, Lalpur and Mohmand Dara (Nangarhar).

HELNETAS Swiss Intercooperation will not expand its geographical coverage in the coming years (2013 – 2016) due to human resources constraints.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation cannot develop people but people can only develop themselves. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's role is to support the development processes.

Underlying principles for a partnership

Partnerships shall be based on mutual trust. The underlying principles for a constructive partnership are:

- **Participation:** The community members are participating in the decision-making processes concerning the local development activities supported under the partnership.
- **Inclusiveness:** The partners shall ensure that all members of the community, men and women, irrespective of their social status, ethnic origin, religious or political orientation, age and disability, can take part in decision-making regarding development activities and in enjoying its benefits.
- **Contribution:** The beneficiaries of the projects shall actively contribute in form of labour, kind or cash in the projects that they are benefitting from and commit to maintain what has been achieved.
- **Rule of Law:** The partners will respect the laws and regulations of the country for all what is related to this partnership. Contractual agreements made are binding for all signing parties.
- **Transparency:** The partners recognize that transparency shall apply throughout the partnership. That means that the partners will proactively inform the community members, institutions or organizations about the progress, cost and expenditures and beneficiaries. Regular social audits will be conducted. The partners do not accept corruption and commit to eradicating it.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** The partners will spend the project funds in the most effective and cost efficient way – reaching the result as agreed, in a timely manner, and choosing low cost options without compromising on necessary quality. The resources have to be invested for the development of the communities and not for the enrichment of individual persons.
- **Accountability** (downwards and upwards): The partners have to fulfil their commitments towards the communities as well as to the donors and local authorities, the partners are answerable to them.
- **Conflict sensitivity:** The partners attach high importance to avoid doing harm (unintended or intended) to anybody. The activities undertaken under this partnership shall strengthen good relationships among the community members and their neighbouring communities and shall not create tensions or contribute to fuelling them. Therefore partners analyze and try to understand existing and potential conflicts and adapt their interventions accordingly. Security and safety of communities and partners have to be considered in all circumstances.
- **Sustainable use of natural resources:** The partners are conscious, that activities under this partnership shall contribute to rehabilitate degraded environments, and ensure sustainable management of land and water, taking where possible a long-term perspective.

