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**FORMULATING AND  
IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE  
CODE OF ETHICS:  
Comprehensive Guidance Manual  
for Public Institutions**



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U.S.A.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is a growing awareness of the ethical dimensions of public service. Public service institutions operate in the public trust, and must constantly earn that trust through the provision of services that are of high quality, fully accountable, and of unquestionable integrity. These ethical standards that the public expects and demands are high, and any public service institution must have a strategy in place to ensure that these expectations are not left unfulfilled.

Beyond doubt, the most effective measure for establishing and maintaining high standards of ethical performance within a public institution is the virtuous example – as evidenced consistently over time – of the leadership and managers of that institution. Such institutions must attract, recognize, and celebrate such exemplars of integrity, as their leadership by example is the most persuasive force for upholding public service ideals.

Individual public servants also need guidance. The range of services undertaken by the public sector grows increasingly complex as development presents new challenges to the status quo, testing long held practices, assumptions, and relationships. To steer a course through these ethical challenges, public servants will be inspired by the ethical behavior and attitudes of their superiors and colleagues, but they also require clearly detailed information to assist them to recognize and understand the moral dimensions of any situation or dilemma, and to know which standards and values they should draw upon when seeking a satisfactory resolution. To this end, institutions have created codes of ethics.

A public sector institution's code of ethics reflects the commitment of all public servants within that institution – from the senior leadership through to the rank and file – to uphold the institution's values and to act ethically. The code articulates and explains those values, and offers guiding principles and standards that should be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

This Manual has been written to provide an explanation of the history and current application of codes of ethics. It provides detailed information to guide a public institution in the drafting of its own code, and the appropriate steps to take in ensuring that the implementation of the code achieves the goals of that institution's ethics initiative. It also provides further resources to assist institutions in their efforts to improve ethical performance, and to instill an ethics-friendly ethos within the institution.

Principal Author: Chloe Schwenke, Ph.D.



## 2. WHAT IS A CODE OF ETHICS?

### 2.1 Historical Overview

The term “code” is derived from a Latin term initially used to describe a wooden board, later to refer to writings on boards, and finally to books. The Romans used books to record the first comprehensive set of laws in Western society – Justinian’s code of 529AD – which swept away the disorganized jumble of regulations and informal practices that preceded it. Since then, a “code” has come to be associated with a set of rules, or an authoritative system.

“Ethics” can be interpreted in several ways. Most simply, this term is often used as a synonym for morality. More accurately, ethics described various systems of moral values, based upon a rational and persuasive set of arguments, intended to guide human behavior and decision-making. When linked to an institution or a profession, the term “ethics” is used to describe the special set of morally permissible or morally required standards that all members of that institution or profession identify themselves with, commit to observe, or which they take their guidance from. These standards or “ethics” apply only to that institution or profession and no one else, and they can vary from a statement of lofty ideals intended to kindle the aspirations of members or, on the contrary, a minimal threshold below which no member of the institution or profession dare venture under risk of censure, sanction, or expulsion. Professional ethics also established a sense of common moral obligation, under which the members of such groups identified a specific duty of care to those whom they served through their actions.

The professions were the birthplace of formal codes of ethics as written documents. The first record of a document that resembles a code of ethics dates from 1794 in England. Yet the articulation of standards of competence, performance, and service reaches much further back in time, in the form of how a society characterized certain positions held within that society, for example what constitutes a “gentleman” or a “physician”. In most cases these norms were assumed, but in some instances – as with the medical profession – they were formalized in the swearing of professional oaths, such as the ancient Hippocratic oath of around 100AD. These various character norms and practices established clearly understood expectations of ethical standards and mutuality – members of any elevated societal class or profession both desired and expected that their professional colleagues would be bound to honor such standards, and in return they pledged to do likewise, and to retain their honorable characters intact. This common commitment bound these persons together into a distinctive group – members of a profession, for example – and all members of such groups benefited by the status and economic benefits that society accorded these forms of institutions. No laws mandated that members of such early professions or elevated groups (“gentlemen” or “ladies”) adhere to such unwritten codes, yet the force of social ostracism and the threat to one’s honor were sufficient motivations to make this form of social contract effective.

The 1794 code of ethics noted above was produced by a medical doctor, Thomas Percival, of Manchester, England, following a dramatic failure of the unwritten “ethics of

character” system. In a system whose integrity depends on absolute faith in a gentleman’s honor as both a “gentleman” and a “professional”, any accusations of dishonorable conduct were treated as a challenge of the highest order. Such accusations had arisen in Percival’s place of work, the Manchester Infirmary, finally taking the form of a war of pamphlets from supporters and opponents of the doctor whose honor had been questioned. So heated was this dispute that the medical doctors refused to work, which unfortunately coincided with a particularly pernicious outbreak of influenza in Manchester. With critically ill patients being turned away while the battle of honor continued, the hospital’s trustees turned to Percival to draft rules to prevent any such dispute from arising in the future. These rules were adopted in 1794, and in time were refined to become a document titled: *Medical Jurisprudence or a Code of Ethics and Institutes’ Adapted to the Professions of Physic and Surgery*. Unlike the vague language of previous oaths, this written code set forth specific duties that medical practitioners were obliged to perform in fulfillment of their collective obligation to care for the sick, while still claiming the medical profession’s moral authority and independence to perform in a manner it felt to be best. Percival’s code also set the written precedent of the medical profession to determine appropriate standards of care, instead of having these dictated to them by others whose interests may be more on economic priorities, and to hold all fellow professionals accountable to the consistent achievement of this ethical standard of performance.

From the time of Percival, codes of conduct or codes of ethics have become well established within the various professions, starting first in England and the United States, and now around the globe. Codes of ethics have also come to be seen as useful to other forms of institutions, from private sector corporations and social clubs to public sector entities – ranging from the entire public service of a country to a specific ministry or agency. This proliferation of codes now means that an employee of any institution may find herself bound to several different codes simultaneously, if for example she is a registered lawyer employed in the public service within a specialized government agency. Her profession, the public service as a whole, and her specific agency may all have their own distinctive codes of ethics.

## **2.2 Codes of Conduct or Codes of Ethics?**

In the language of Percival’s time, there were common references to normative terms such as virtue or ethics. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, and the ideals of gentlemanly virtue came to be seen as anachronistic, this vocabulary gave way to a less normative language in which moral terms were seldom used. Instead, the emphasis shifted to a more scientific and behavioral evaluation of the *actions* of the individual or institution, instead of considering that person’s or institution’s *character*. Codes therefore came to be considered effective if they were seen to shape the actions or conduct of those bound to its provisions; in particular, codes sought to constrain people from conduct that was undesirable or harmful to others. Under this concept, references to any possible *motivations* of an individual to pursue any course other than his own self interest are less prominent, or absent altogether. Given this more narrow view of human nature, the

emphasis of a code was to prevent or constrain certain consequences of the actions of self-interested persons. Codes were conceived to guide conduct, without engaging in ethical justifications, or seeking to harness altruistic or other morally motivating factors.

More recently, and in light of a more realistic assessment of the effectiveness of codes of conduct, there has been a comprehensive re-evaluation of the role of morality and ethics in the complex patterns of human behavior, and an acceptance of the very real limitations of exclusively compliance based approaches – i.e., based on *constraints* – to achieve consistently high standards of acceptable behavior and performance. While not wishing to diminish the ability of codes to constrain bad or undesirable behavior and the actions that follow, it has become clear that human beings respond best to an ethical message that appeals to their *aspirations* to achieve high moral ideals, while making it clear that failing to achieve certain standards is impermissible. The arguments behind the codes have once again returned to a dialogue of ethics, and most modern codes are now referred to as “codes of ethics”. They aim to influence the way a person thinks as much as to guide (and in some instances constrain) that person’s conduct.

Interestingly, the way in which a code of conduct is formulated and implemented is quite different than that of a code of ethics. Since a code of conduct is primarily concerned with enforcing compliance, it is driven by management and imposed from the top. A code of ethics, by contrast, seeks to identify the ethical values that most effectively motivate the persons within the organization to think, perform, and behave ethically, capturing their natural moral aspirations and desires to have meaningful, valuable lives. These codes depend on widespread dialogue and deliberation to achieve consensus, and hence while generally motivated initially from the top of an institution, also grow from the bottom up.

### **2.3 Role of a Code of Ethics**

A code of ethics does not exist in a vacuum. The role of any code is best understood in the context of the actual realities and ambiguities faced by any organization, and by the individual persons evaluating options and making decisions within such institutional environments.

Similarly, a code of ethics does not take the place of moral judgment. Each rational person has an innate ability to make value judgments, informed (often unconsciously) by multiple moral resources and prior experiences, so that decisions made and actions taken reflect considered thought about the likely consequences, the inherent “rightness” or “wrongness” of the available options, and whether the available choices maximize the “good” and minimize the “bad”. Yet in all human activities, and increasingly so in the context of growing complexity in life, there are situations that challenge our innate sensibilities and internalized values. There are times when the facts present a picture that troubles us, or when none of the courses of action that seem to be available are likely to produce desirable results. People become baffled or frustrated in such situations, and lack clear guidance on how best to understand the situation that they have encountered, and

how best to resolve any dilemmas arising out of the situation. In such cases, a code of ethics may provide very helpful guidance. By referring to the appropriate provisions of the code, coupled with further iterations of moral reflection and empirical analyses, the best choices may be identified, and the best course of action pursued.

Ultimately the role of a code of ethics is to inform and guide thinking, by helping users to understand the deeper moral dimensions of any specific situation, apprising them of the most relevant established standards that might apply to that situation, and helping them through a process of moral evaluation.

## **2.4 Distinctive Characteristics of a Government Code of Ethics**

Codes of ethics exist for institutions and groups in the private sector, in professions, in civil society, and in the public sector. In all cases, such codes seek to make explicit the most important values that define the given institution, and the ethical obligations of that institution to its stakeholders. While the private sector has a primary relationship of obligation to the owners, shareholders, and employees; and a secondary but still vitally important relationship with the consumers of its products or services; its relationship to the general public (or the “public interest”) is often unclear or loosely defined. The primary ethical obligations of civil society organizations relate to the issues upon which the organization is founded or the specific interest group which it has been established to advocate for and serve; its secondary relationship of obligation is to its employees and members. The moral and ethical relationship of civil society organizations to the public is often better defined and more significant than with private sector institutions.

In comparison, public sector institutions are primarily constituted to serve the interests of the public, and – given that they are funded by public funds –they have very strong duties of accountability, transparency, and stewardship. Codes for such institutions will emphasize these accountability relationships, and the principles and ideals of public service.

## **2.5 Other Institutional Approaches for Improved Ethical Performance**

The formulation of a code of ethics is but one measure intended to improve ethical knowledge, awareness and performance within an institution. On its own, a code may have some initial impact in this context, but in time its influence will diminish and it will ultimately cease to have any discernable bearing on performance. If an institution is serious about improving ethical performance, it must consider a code of ethics as but one component in an integrated and sustained *ethics initiative*, and must therefore pursue many avenues of policy and action simultaneously.

Committed and assertive leadership from the top is the critical element to the success of any significant institutional transformation in attitude and actions. All good codes of ethics begin with a letter from “the leader” for that very good reason: leadership is the

transformational vector for any organization. Leaders of organizations must apply multiple methods to communicate and personally model the emphasis of ethics within the organization, while making the moral vocabulary more common in operational discussions. The institutions leaders should also identify a variety of resources to guide employees or members in the best means to increase their ethical awareness, particularly as they confront ethical dilemmas in their work.

The process of formulating a code of ethics by its nature generates an energetic dialogue on what are the values and moral relationships that characterize the organization, that motivate its employees or members, and that inspire it to excel. Keeping this dialogue alive and vibrant is an important method to retain and strengthen an ethical orientation within an institution. This can take the form of regular discussion groups, department meetings (or portions thereof) in which actual or hypothetical case studies are discussed, or similar presentations given that intentionally highlight the ethical aspects of any specific situation, episode, opportunity, strategy, policy, or dilemma.

Many institutions also provide a short course of formal training at the completion (or revision) of an institution's code of ethics, to assist employees or members to *internalize* the ethical thinking that both shaped the code and that defines the institution's character. To be effective, such training should take place periodically on a regular basis.

Depending on the size of the institution and the character of its activities, it may be appropriate to establish an ethics resources center – either physically, or virtually on a website, or both – within the institution. Such a center would be able to provide more detailed reference material and case studies on ethical analysis, problem solving, and policy formulation.

Finally, the ethical institution might consider ways in which it can reach outwards as well as inwards, attempting to influence the larger environment so that the institution's higher standards of ethical performance come to exert a leadership influence on the policies, laws, and attitudes of the society in which that institution is located. This could take the form of active advocacy for legal reform (such as the introduction of "whistleblower" laws), public outreach on issues of ethical concern, revisions to its own procurement operations to encourage integrity from those whom it contracts, and networking with other institutions or organizations on ethics.

There are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful, including ethical theory and principles generally, and theories and research relevant to the specific range of services that the institution provides. There may also be other relevant codes of ethics, as many public sector institutions employ professionals (lawyers, accountants, engineers, etc.) who each have their own professional codes of ethics. In responding to the standards of their respective professional codes, professionals employed in the public service can be a catalyst for the pursuit of higher standards by all within that public institution.

Public servants also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices, and of the similar values and beliefs of the public whom they serve. Efforts should focus on finding common ground by identifying those values that are held by all concerned to be universal, and working out issues based on that values consensus. The alternative of first articulating all of the competing values that divide people generates a divisive environment in which finding common ground – and mutually acceptable solutions to ethical dilemmas – is very challenging.

There may be times when conflicts arise between personal, institutional, and professional values that an individual feels equally committed to; generally in such instances the most demanding of these standards are the ones that should be applied.

### 3. PRINCIPLES OF A PUBLIC SECTOR CODE OF ETHICS

#### 3.1 The Ethical Roleplayers

A code of ethics will make the relationships between the ethical roleplayers explicit, by describing the obligations that each set of roleplayers has to the others, and how these obligations might best be satisfied. The main categories of public sector roleplayers are described below.

##### Public Institution

A public sector institution is an organization funded by public revenues, staffed by civil servants (and contractors) employed by the government, with a specific public service mission established under law or regulation. As such, a public sector institution has a variety of moral obligations, which a good code of ethics will delineate. These moral obligations include honoring the trust that the public places in the institution to exercise good stewardship of public resources (i.e. to achieve optimal value and minimal waste in using the public's resources to attend to the public service mission assigned to that institution), and to be open and accountable to the public in this context.

Public institutions are commonly granted various forms of authority under law and statute to enable the institution to perform its mission. In some cases, as with the police, tax officials, courts, and the military, officials are legally empowered to exercise *coercive* force to achieve their mission, for example in compelling citizens to pay their taxes. The use of such coercive force, however, presents a clear challenge to the citizen's enjoyment of important human rights and freedoms, and the public institution that is authorized to use such means must therefore always carry the burden of accountability to justify why it applies coercive force, and the manner in which it does so, so that the public is reassured that the use of such measures is necessary, reasonable, and carried out to the greatest extent possible without inflicting undue harm or disrespecting the dignity of those who are being compelled to act in a certain way.

Public institutions also have specific moral obligations to their employees, including the duties to provide them with decent working conditions, fair terms of employment, regular and objective performance reviews and – where justified – promotions and salary increases.<sup>1</sup> Such institutions are obliged to respect the confidentiality of their employees, to pay them in a timely manner, and to be open and responsive to any suggestions or grievances that any employees may bring forward. Public sector institutions must not discriminate unfairly against their employees on the basis of gender, ethnicity, age, or disability (and on other bases as may be defined by any particular society, such as an employee's sexual orientation).

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<sup>1</sup> The obligations of public institutions to their employees are seldom described in traditional codes of conduct, which tend to focus exclusively on the behavior of public servants, and the obligations of such public servants to their institution and to the public.

## Public Servant

A public (or “civil”) servant is an employee of the public sector. He or she is called a “servant” to make explicit that the employment of such a person is intended to further a public good, and to serve the public interest. Public servants are entrusted with the health, finances, safety and well-being of those who they serve, and with the ethical stewardship of the taxpayers’ money.

Some public servants are known more for their specific function (e.g. military officer, judge, fire fighter, mayor) than generically as a public servant, yet all who are employed using the public’s revenues are public servants. This logic applies equally to those who are elected to public office, who also receive a public salary.

Public servants are morally obligated to perform their duties in the public interest, with integrity, objectivity, impartiality, and professionalism. They must be willing to have the public examine their performance in this context, so transparency and accountability to the public are also key moral obligations (except only in cases where the national interest is best served by secrecy, in which case other accountability mechanisms apply). Many would also argue that the transparency of public servants should go even further, with all such persons in decision-making positions being required to declare any perceived, potential, or actual conflict of interest that can adversely affect their objectivity, and bias their performance of their duties.

Individual public servants are under a moral obligation to render their services in conformity with their public institution’s standards, such as respecting the integrity of those individuals they are serving without inappropriate discrimination based on economic or social status, gender, ethnicity, or similar clearly defined factors. A more general moral obligation pertains to each public servant to demonstrate care, civility, honesty, integrity, courtesy, and competence in all his or her interactions with citizens and with public sector colleagues.

Instances may arise when public servants’ personal or professional ethical obligations conflict with the policies or relevant laws or regulations of a public institution.<sup>2</sup> When such conflicts occur, public servants must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in their public sector institution’s code of ethics. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, public servants should seek proper consultation with colleagues and superiors before making a decision.

Violation of standards in a code of ethics does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of any code should ideally be subject to a peer review process, which are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the public institution to counsel and discipline its own employees or contractors. In some instances, further proceedings of a

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<sup>2</sup> An example would be a public servant who is assigned to work on weekends, which then conflicts with her religious convictions regarding working on the Sabbath.

legal nature may be required, and public institutions should have internal disciplinary mechanisms to handle such situations.

Public trust is the essential element of social capital, which in turn makes public institutions viable. Respecting and cultivating the public trust requires public servants to place the public's interest above their own personal interests, and to exhibit consistently high ethical standards and behavior. Clearly all public servants and their institutions have a particular responsibility *continuously* to earn the public's trust in government.

### Public

Since the government exists, under social contract theory, to serve the interests of the public and to be accountable to the public in this context, members of the public are important stakeholders of any public sector organization or institution. In many cases, a particular group of citizens as a subset of the general public is the specific focus of a public sector entity, such as children being the “public” primarily served by institutions of public education. Yet even in such cases where a designated group of the public is the focus of that institution’s activities and obligations, there are many clear moral obligations that extend to the public at large within that society. These include the obligation to respect the laws and standards of the government, and the duty not to frustrate the public sector (or individual public servants) in its (or their) pursuit of official duties. Arguably, members of the public have deeper civic obligations that include voting, staying informed on critical public issues, actively holding public institutions accountable, and being engaged in on-going civic dialogue on matters that pertain to the public interest.

## **3.2 Public Service Standards and Expectations**

The basic economic transaction of paying monies in exchange for services implies an expectation that the services will satisfy the need, and that the payment will be appropriate to the services being provided. Members of the public support public institutions through the payment of taxes and official fees, and in turn have expectations of a certain standard of service. A reciprocal obligation also applies, in which the public institution expects to receive the financial, logistical, administrative, and political support that it requires to carry out its assigned duties to the reasonable satisfaction of its stakeholders.

While there is a widespread general awareness of this reciprocal relationship, often these standards and expectations are not made explicit. To some considerable extent, a code of ethics will raise awareness of the ethical dimensions in this context. Often, public institutions also will produce a *Service Charter*, which is a separate document that provides detailed information to the citizens served by that institution on the mission and range of services offered by that institution, and what constitutes reasonable expectations and specific rights for members of the public to demand when interacting with that institution.

*Service Charters* and *Codes of Ethics* together define and clarify service expectations, and since the quality of the service received by members of the public from their public sector institutions has a significant impact on citizens' confidence in their government, this relationship is important. In making this judgment, members of the public evaluate five principle drivers of public satisfaction, which include reasonable access to the public institution, timely service, availability of knowledgeable staff oriented to serve the public, fair treatment, and a successful outcome.

Describing detailed standards of public service is not the proper subject of a code of ethics, yet any public institution would be well served to consider these standards while engaged in the deliberations necessary to the formulation of a code of ethics. Institutional ethics initiatives, for this reason, often jointly focus on the sequential formulation of a *Code of Ethics* and a separate but related *Service Charter*.

### **3.3 “Ownership” of a Code of Ethics**

The success of a code of ethics is measured in changes of awareness, attitude, orientation, and ultimately, performance. These changes have the power to transform an institution, and to improve dramatically the results an institution achieves – but only to the extent that the code of ethics is perceived by the institution, its employees, and its stakeholders as a valid and relevant reflection of the values that define that institution. It is rare that this degree of veracity can be achieved by the exclusive imposition of a top-down statement of values and standards; instead, the process of developing an effective code of ethics depends on engaging the members (employees, contractors, other key stakeholders) of that institution in a dialogue about their work, the opportunities and challenges posed by their activities, their networks of ethical obligations and interdependencies, and the moral values that they select as the “core” values and secondary values defining the character of their institution. For a code of ethics to have the desired impact in changing the institutional culture and improving the ethical quality of the institution’s performance, its code of ethics must be “owned” by all of the key stakeholders of that institution. To achieve that level of ownership, there must be a robust and inclusive bottom-up dialogue that compliments a top-down commitment to improved ethical awareness and performance.

### **3.4 Implementation Principles**

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes, or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which public servants aspire and by which their actions can be judged.

A public servant’s ethical behavior should result from his or her *personal* commitment to engage in ethical practice, so the implementation of a code requires first that there be a

consensus within the public institution on the value and importance of ethics generally, and of such a code specifically. Cultivating such a consensus requires *transformational* leadership: clear, unequivocal commitment must be communicated by senior leadership in words and actions, along with that leadership's endorsement of the centrality and importance of improved ethics to the institutional culture. Only when all members at every level of a public institution understand the importance and usefulness of a code of ethics (and the related other interventions intended to strengthen the ethics culture), will such stakeholders give the code the attention it deserves – both in the formulation stages, and in the application of the code.

Applying a code is not always straightforward, as the code seldom gives definitive guidance. Instead, the code helps users to frame their ethical thinking more clearly, and to evaluate the appropriate alternatives with greater sensitivity and care. To achieve better results, a public institution also should incorporate a training curriculum that applies the code to a variety of hypothetical or historical case studies, demonstrating to trainees the various steps in conceptualizing ethical standards and performance, identifying moral dilemmas, evaluating the range of morally permissible (or morally required) options that would resolve or diminish the negative impact of a moral dilemma, and applying appropriate solutions to achieve consistently higher standards of ethical performance.



## **4. BEGINNING THE PROCESS**

### **4.1 Establishing the Need for a Code**

Small public sector agencies and institutions often naturally reflect the values of their employees and leaders, who together place their personal imprint on the ethics of the institution. When the leadership and the majority of the employees are people of well developed moral character, they simply choose to conduct themselves to high standards of personal integrity, and they demand the same of others within their institution – although often these standards and expectations are not articulated in any formal way.

As institutions grow in size, or as the members of smaller institutions change over time, it can become more difficult to rely on ethically committed leadership or the moral example of the majority of employees to set an appropriately high, consistent standard of ethical performance. In such times of unclear ethical standards, it is very difficult for a public sector institution to decide whether conditions warrant the expenditure of scarce financial resources on the participatory processes necessary to formulate a code of ethics and to implement related measures (such as ethics training). Managers and leaders of such institutions would do well to canvass their employees to determine the extent to which there is an awareness of ethics in the institution, and a desire to achieve a more explicit ethics culture in the institution. If there is little interest among management and employees, there will be little chance of success for such an initiative. That being said, the public has a direct stake in the ethical performance of public institutions, and that stakeholder interest may be sufficient to motivate – often from higher placed political authorities – a change of management and leadership within that institution, so that an ethics agenda becomes a priority.

The importance of leaders who are committed to high ethical standards, who demand this from their subordinates, and who model these standards in their own public service, cannot be underestimated. At least a few well-placed leaders and a sufficient number of ethics-focused employees must be identified to begin an initial dialogue on the need for a formal articulation of such ethics standards, and the concurrent need for a program to generate an institutional culture appropriate to high ethical standards. Even in cases where public institutions have a troubled track record with many embarrassing ethics failures, and a public who is actively demanding better ethical performance from that institution, creating an ethics code will still make little sense in an environment without sufficient leadership commitment and at least some interest from most employees.

As public institutions mature, an increasing number of difficult issues, challenges and “close calls” in the provision of its public services may achieve recognition, yet clear choices of the best course of action to follow do not always present themselves to decision-makers at every level in the institution. Employees and their colleagues need better to understand the institution’s expectations and where they can go for help if they have a question or a concern.

Achieving and maintaining the highest ethical standards requires a partnership between employees and management. The leadership and managers of a public sector institution should proactively support employees by communicating values and giving individual guidance, while empowering employees to participate actively in ethics problem-solving.

One measure in which a public institution might actively support employees to achieve higher standards of ethical performance is by establishing an Ethics Office and appointing an Ethics Director. This is a top-down initiative, and in time must be met by a complimentary bottom-up initiative, but the institutionalization of an Ethics Office would begin to ensure that: a) the institution's policies and practices continue to be aligned with ethical principles; b) ethical expectations are clearly communicated; and c) there are multiple channels for feedback through which people can ask questions, voice concerns and seek resolution to ethical issues.

A reputation and track record for ethics and integrity is vital for establishing the public trust that is the basis for all successful public sector activities. Having an institution's leadership and management committed to ethics is the starting point, and finding or cultivating this interest among the employees must soon follow. A management led Ethics Office will provide a resource, but not until an ethics culture has been fostered throughout the institution will significant improvements in ethical performance be noted. One key element in creating that ethics culture is the formulation and implementation of a code of ethics.

## **4.2 Who Formulates the New Code?**

As described above, the leadership and management generally take the lead in identifying the need for a code of ethics, and initiating the process to formulate one, although there are instances where the initiative begins with the employees. In either event, where does one begin the process of formulating a new code of ethics, or replacing an outdated code?

### A Deliberative Process

While many will argue that a code of ethics is the result of a formal process of *dialogue*, the more accurate description is that it is derived from *deliberation*. "Dialogue" refers to a participatory process that is focused on bridging linguistic, social, and knowledge-based divides among often widely differing participants. The emphasis of dialogue is on creating an effective level of communication, rather than on the content of what that communication is intended to accomplish. "Deliberation", in comparison, is a dialogue with a purpose – in this case to bring ethics into the mainstream of the public institution's awareness, character and operations. Deliberation of this kind can be defined as a problem-solving form of discourse that involves problem analysis, establishing evaluative criteria, and identifying and weighing alternative solutions. Through a participatory process that is structured and managed to be respectful, egalitarian, and conscientious, the public institution's membership (leaders, managers, employees, and contractors) aim for a reasoned consensus on what ethics means to them, and how ethics should guide the operations of the institution.

### Achieving Broad-based Participation

Since a code of ethics identifies and articulates the most important moral values that define the institution's character and actions, it is important that there is a broad base of consensus on what those values are. Typically this is achieved through a process of a one day workshop (described in detail in Section 7 of this Manual) with relatively senior, experienced representatives of all departments of the institution. Such a workshop typically is opened by the Minister or other very senior person, to communicate the seriousness and importance of the day's work.

The participants then are introduced to the history and purpose of a code of ethics. This is followed by a facilitated process<sup>3</sup> of frank deliberation to discuss the nature of their particular work, describe their stakeholders, and identify the most difficult challenges and ethical dilemmas that they currently encounter. Through this deliberative process, in which each participant commits to the reciprocal arrangement of hearing the other person out, respecting the confidentiality of what that person shares, and keeping an open mind, a picture of the current institutional culture begins to emerge. This growing awareness is then applied by the participants as they rank which moral values from a long list (see Appendix A) are the ones of greatest significance and priority to them in terms of solving the challenges and dilemmas that have been articulated, improving the quality of the institutional culture, and improving the quality and effectiveness of the services the institution provides.

Participants at the workshop are also asked to describe the character and importance of the relationships that affect their work. In some instances, the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by a public institution are tightly linked to the quality of the relationships within that institution (e.g. between public servants, or between the institution and its employees) or between the institution and the members of the public that it serves. Where such relationships are seen to be of particular importance, the choice of the type of code of ethics used will usually revert to a "relationships" type of code, instead of the more common "principles" type of code (see Section 6 for further details).

From this point, a draft *Code of Ethics* is prepared of the appropriate type.<sup>4</sup> This draft *Code of Ethics* will be based on the ranking of the moral values that were prioritized in the one day workshop. Those three to five values that were deemed by the workshop participants to be of greatest relevance and priority are classified as "core values", and up to eight or even ten other values that received significant ranking are also included as important values in the draft code. The draft code is shared among all participants at the earlier workshop, who in turn are encouraged to share the draft widely within their departments. In ideal conditions, this will take the form of half day sessions in each department, where the original workshop participant (as the representative of that department) will inform employees and colleagues of the intentions and processes involved in the formulation of the code, update them on progress made so far, and ask for their validation of the choice of core values and other important values reflected in the

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<sup>3</sup> A "facilitated process" is a participatory process led by an experienced (and usually external) facilitator.

<sup>4</sup> The draft of a code of ethics often is prepared by an external consultant, hired for this purpose.

draft. In many instances, employees will propose an alternative ranking of values, which should be noted. Employees will also be invited to comment on any particular provision of the draft code.

The process often culminates in a second workshop, this time for half a day, involving the original participants.<sup>5</sup> At this workshop, all of the comments raised by the employees in the various departments will be discussed, and final decisions taken on the type and content of the final code of ethics. Based on the outcome of this second workshop, a final version of the *Code of Ethics* will be produced, and submitted to the leadership of that institution for formal adoption, and for use as the basis of the design of the subsequent ethics training course necessary for the implementation of the new code.

#### The Role of Outside Experts

The process described above is not a routine that many members of public institutions will have prior experience with. Many issues raised in the workshops will be controversial, particularly when participants finally feel free to identify the ethical weaknesses of the institution and the lack of acceptable quality of some of its services. It is a difficult and unfamiliar process of introspection, best facilitated by a trained outside expert in ethics, public deliberations, and institutional capacity strengthening.

An outside expert comes to the process with a level of objectivity and professional detachment that no employee of the institution would be able to provide. The outside expert is not there to pass judgment, and will not be threatened by any disclosures made. The outside expert is also best able to synthesize the observations and conclusions of the workshops process into the draft and final versions of the *Code of Ethics*, free of bias towards the interests of any particular stakeholder.

### **4.3 Centrality of Leadership Role**

#### Change and the Institutional Ethos

Institutions resist change. Many leaders of institutions are also invested in maintaining the status quo, as they have achieved their rank and status by working within an institutional context that they know well and are able to succeed in. They know the “rules of the game”, and they know how to “win” under these rules.

For these reasons, the prospect of raising potentially controversial issues by means of the evaluation of the ethical qualities of the services provided by that institution, or the degree to which ethics awareness permeates the existing institutional culture, may not be embraced by leadership. It may mean significant changes are needed to the “rules of the game”. However, without committed leadership support, the introduction of any ethics initiative (which would include, but not be limited to, a *Code of Ethics*) will be doomed to irrelevance.

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<sup>5</sup> An internal peer review process is sometimes substituted for this second workshop.

In cases where senior leadership shows little interest in charting an ethics course for the institution, it may be left to the advocacy efforts of stakeholders (employees, middle managers, even the public) to push this onto the agenda, and to encourage senior leadership to consider such a transformative process more favorably. Alternatively, very senior political leadership or legislative action may compel public institutions to incorporate an explicit ethics approach into their internal culture and operations.

#### Putting Ethics on the Agenda

Among the first steps in raising an ethics focus within a public institution is to clarify what is meant by such an initiative. Historically, the formulation of an ethics (or “conduct”) code was largely seen as the drafting of a set of prohibitions and constraints, intended to curb the greed and self-serving interests of public servants. Such codes of conduct were characterized by long lists of “Thou shalt not” provisions, and accomplished little except defining the line beyond which one might not trespass without risk of dire consequences. Arguably, everything under that threshold was fair game, and those subject to such codes of conduct often became expert at finding loopholes and bending the rules.

Modern ethics initiatives are quite different. While recognizing that certain constraints and sanctions are necessary to prevent or punish unacceptable behavior, the main emphasis of modern codes of ethics is to paint a picture of the moral standards and ethics that the institution and its members *aspire* to achieve, and identify themselves with. Modern codes try to harness the natural human inclination to pursue the public good, to find meaning, and to help others, while recognizing that each person has a legitimate claim to pursue certain interests to make his or her life better – more enjoyable, comfortable, secure, and meaningful.

Public institutions who pursue an ethics initiative should be guided to approach ethics in this more positive, holistic sense. Getting ethics on the agenda as a reflection of each employee’s moral values, of the institution’s moral character, and as a useful guide to helping all stakeholders of that institution to make better choices is a far more inviting way to introduce the initiative than the alternative – a set of measures to punish bad behavior.

#### Fostering an On-going Ethics Deliberation

When a public institution begins the process to formulate (or update) a code of ethics, and to design and implement related training programs, certain important deliberations and discussions will begin. In this process of formulating the code, employees, managers, leaders, and other stakeholders will be found using a moral vocabulary – principles, values, rights, obligations, relationships – that will initially sound unusual and even awkward.

The internal discussion about ethics that arises when formulating a code is often new, but it has significant value in raising the awareness of all stakeholders to the ethical dimensions of their choices and actions. The more that such discussions and deliberations are internalized and made routine within any institution, the better prepared will that

institution's members be to deal effectively with ethical dilemmas. For this reason, institutions should explore ways in which deliberations about ethics issues can be incorporated in the routine internal procedures of the institution, at various levels of formality and size. Institutions can support this by making such expectations clear, by providing guidance (e.g. from an internal ethics office, or by featuring on a regular basis invited speakers to address ethical challenges).

#### **4.4 Conceptualizing Ethical Performance**

##### Articulating Expectations

Performance of public institutions is measured and perceived by the results that are achieved (both in quantity and quality), relative to the resources expended (funds, time, political capital). For this reason, many public institutions adopt management practices focused on results, and on the articulation of specific expectations of achievements and quality. Ethics is at the heart of such results-based management, as the character of the results achieved reflects the performance of the public institutions in pursuing "good" governance, evaluated in values terms: respect for universal human dignity, concern for human well-being, strengthening nation-building, and deepening democracy.

Measuring the qualitative or values-based ethical aspects of performance – both in the way that the individual public servant thinks and performs, and of the performance of the public institution – also requires the identification and dissemination of specific expectations. Adding this ethical dimension to the indicators used in results based management will enable all stakeholders to evaluate if the institution truly is grounded in clearly specified ethical principles.

Achieving improved ethical results requires more than results-based approaches, implementation plans, and training curricula. The quality of leadership of a public institution also must be strengthened, and the concept of "ethical performance" must be accepted and internalized both by the public institution as well as by individual public servants. Everyone concerned must take responsibility for achieving results that stand up to ethical scrutiny.

What is an ethical result? In the context of a public institution, a result can be considered "ethical" or morally justified to the extent that it is the product of a careful process in which decision makers have considered such factors as who will be the winners and the losers and what that will mean to each group, what *means* and *ends* are appropriate to the larger goals of improved ethical performance, and what the specific reciprocal set of moral obligations consists of. This can and should all be articulated in specific indicators of ethical performance, that – along with other amoral indicators – are regularly measured, evaluated and reported on.

In nearly any significant decision, interests will clash, and trade-offs must be made. Some ethical dilemmas may arise, and not all will be resolvable. In making these determinations, the public institution and its leadership must show – and be seen to show

– care, compassion, diligence, and thoughtfulness; they must demonstrate due respect for the protection of human rights and freedoms, and a genuine concern for satisfying the legitimate needs and aspirations of the public. Members of the public must be respected, and no one’s vital interests or human rights can be automatically dismissed or “sacrificed,” or manipulated for some arguably greater goal.

### Setting Standards

Codes are intended to guide thought and actions, and to do so, they must establish standards. These standards, however, take various forms – both *aspirational* and *compliance* based.

Aspirational standards take the form of moral ideals or principles that are intended to challenge one to rise to a higher level of moral awareness and principled action. Such standards are intentionally lofty, although they may also establish threshold conditions below which it is considered morally impermissible to stray. Such standards are intended to motivate, to harness the basic human desire to find meaning in the pursuit of ideals and in the caring service of others. Among some institutions, particularly within the recognized professions, aspirational standards are linked to a more comprehensive moral mission, such as the moral orientation of medical practitioners to pursue health and save lives, of lawyers to pursue justice and prevent harm, or of engineers to create safe structures to facilitate human functionings.

Compliance standards set out specific boundaries which one must not transgress in one’s pursuit of self-interest. They are intended to ensure that the needs and interests of colleagues, the larger institution, and society as a whole are respected, and can range from specific rules about use of public property (e.g. official vehicles) to avoidance of compromising oneself through receiving inducements from parties who wish to influence your decisions in a corrupt manner.

### Modeling Ethical Performance

The stipulation of specific standards – both aspirational and compliance based – are essential elements of a good code of ethics. It is worth noting in passing, however, that the formal recognition by a public institution of exemplars of integrity and ethical performance from within or without the institution is probably the best means to communicate the overall sense of what ethical standards are intended to achieve. Any institutional ethics initiative should include provisions to identify and “celebrate” such moral exemplars, as their personification of ethical performance sets the best standard of all: the internalization of ethical thinking and acting into one’s character traits.

## **4.5 Making Institutional Values Explicit**

### Institutional Vision and Mission

It is now relatively commonplace for institutions to articulate (or have imposed on them) a specific vision and mission. These terms are often used interchangeably, and there is often confusion as to what each is intended to communicate. In the majority of cases, a

vision statement is considered to be a qualitative, normative (moral) but fairly general description of a *state of affairs* that the institution aims to facilitate or engender, such as a ministry of health having the vision of a healthy society, as described below:

*Malaysia is to be a nation of healthy individuals, families and communities, through a health system that is equitable, affordable, efficient, technologically appropriate, environmentally adaptable and consumer-friendly, with emphasis on quality, innovation, health promotion and respect for human dignity, and which promotes individual responsibility and community participation towards an enhanced quality of life.*

A mission is more action-focused and mandate driven, and is used to describe the scope and types of actions that the institution is expected to pursue to achieve its vision. A ministry of health may have a fairly simple mission statement such as the following:

*To improve the health status of the people of Trinidad and Tobago by promoting wellness and providing quality health care in an affordable, efficient, equitable and sustainable manner.*

Alternatively, the mission statement can be more extensive, as with the following example:

*As a critical sector of the economy, the Ministry of Health shall seek to improve the health status of all people living in Ghana, through the development and promotion of proactive policies, provision of universal access to basic health service, and the provision of quality and affordable health services. This will be delivered in a humane, efficient and effective manner by well-trained, friendly, highly motivated, and client-oriented personnel with involvement of all stakeholders.*

*The Ministry of Health has specific mandate to access and monitor the country's health status, advise central government on health policies and legislation, formulate strategies and design programmes to address health problems of the country, and implement, monitor and evaluate (in collaboration with other related sectors and agencies) all health programmes and activities in the country.*

*As a policy, the MOH is to maximise the potential health life years of all individuals resident in Ghana by reducing the incidence and prevalence of illness, injury and disability, and the prevention of premature death.*

Vision statements and mission statements make ethical values explicit. They set ideals, and may provide motivation and inspiration, but they are often too general to provide detailed guidance for someone seeking to unravel and resolve a moral dilemma. For this more detailed application of explicit moral language, a code of ethics is used.

### Sources and Relevance of Moral Values

Moral values are commonly held beliefs that guide judgment as to what is good, right, and proper. Ethics are systems of values, from which certain guiding principles can be formulated. These ethical principles in turn influence the specific ideals and standards

that people adopt to guide them in making choices, shaping their characters and their actions.

Public ethics, simply defined, are moral standards, principles, and civic virtues that guide the policies, programs, and actions of a public institution, and the behavior of a public servant both in his or her private capacity as an individual (to the extent that their private actions may affect the public interest) and also in his or her capacity as a public servant. Public ethics considers what is right or wrong, good or bad, a virtue or a vice, caring or callous, particularly when the choice to be made has the potential for generating results that will have a significant impact on others.

Individuals acquire moral values from their parents, their religious leaders, their schools, their peers, and from many sources. As they grow and learn, they refine these values through deliberation with others, through experience, and through thoughtful reflection. The ethical individual demonstrates both motivation by and conscious commitment to many moral values.

Public officers, who carry an additional burden of moral responsibility as a public servant and as a steward of public trust, often require specialized training and oversight to increase and sustain their moral awareness, to assist them to discern the most ethically responsible response to any given situation, and to achieve ethically responsible results in their performance.

#### Forming and Sustaining the Ethical Institution

Institutions in the public service are intended to reflect the values that are enshrined in their vision and mission statements, and that are held by their members. These moral values are shaped, to a large extent, by the leadership of the institution, and are refined through internal deliberation and debate, and by outside scrutiny. In terms of accountability and results, the role of leadership in setting ethical standards both through policy and example is central to the ethical integrity of any institution.

In many institutions, specific training is offered in ethical policy and program applications, to ensure that a conscious process of ethical discernment and morally sensitive decision-making guides the activities and impact of the institution, and the character of the results achieved. An ethical institution monitors its results to ensure that the desired objectives are achieved in a morally acceptable manner, and ensures that there are mechanisms in place to hold itself and its leadership accountable for its ethical performance and results.

#### Common Institutional Moral Values

The values that each institution identifies with and determines to be important to its culture vary enormously. The following examples are but representative of a much longer list of values (see Appendix A). For each value described below, there is a principle noted that is associated with that moral value, and then a brief narrative explanation of the principle.

**Value: *Acting in the Public Interest***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel act to achieve that which supports and promotes the good of society as a whole.*

The Ministry and its personnel strive to engage with the members of the public who they serve, so as to be appropriately advised of the public's concerns, needs, interests, and aspirations – and to respond accordingly with appropriate services and support, within the mandate of the Ministry.

**Value: *Collective Responsibility***

- **Ethical Principle:** *Ministry personnel support and depend upon each other to achieve the mandate of the Ministry.*

Ministry personnel are a community, committed to common values, and entrusted by the public to perform essential services. Personnel within the Ministry accept this shared and collective responsibility to the public with both pride and commitment, and assist and are assisted by their Ministry colleagues to attain these standards in response to the public trust. Ministry personnel also hold each other accountable for diligently striving to satisfy the public trust and achieve the Ministry's mandate with integrity and courtesy.

**Value: *Diligence***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel demonstrate conscientiousness in paying proper attention to their responsibilities and duties.*

The Ministry and its personnel apply the necessary degree of care required in any given situation to achieve a task; and demonstrate the persevering determination necessary to perform a task or meet an obligation in a timely and thorough manner.

**Value: *Honesty***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.*

The Ministry's personnel cannot serve two masters, and they must do all that they reasonably can to anticipate when conflicts between their interests might arise, and to prevent this from happening wherever possible. When it is not possible to avoid a conflict of interests, the public servant should declare that this conflict exists, and seek advice from a supervisor to resolve the conflict of interests.

**Value: *Integrity***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel act at all times in such a way as to uphold the public trust.*

Ministry personnel are continually aware of the Ministry's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards, and practice in a manner consistent with them. Ministry personnel perform their duties and arrange their private affairs – especially their financial obligations – so that public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the Ministry are conserved and enhanced. The Ministry's personnel should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Value: Justice and Fairness**

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel demonstrate respect, fairness, and courtesy in their dealings with both citizens and fellow public servants.*

Respect for human dignity and the value of every person should always inspire the exercise of authority and responsibility by the Ministry and its personnel. The Ministry and its personnel should have respect for individual autonomy and be facilitative of individuals making their own moral choices. In the exercise of their official duties, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, the Ministry and its personnel shall make choices on merit, but simultaneously demonstrate due sensitivity to concurrent requirements to promote diversity, gender equity, and due concern for those with disabilities.

**Value: Leadership**

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.*

Values are applied best when modeled by leadership. The Ministry and its personnel must demonstrate their commitment to values-based public service through transformative leadership, inspiring and sustaining the best standards of ethical practice and effective service delivery.

**Value: Moral Equality**

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel are to think of all persons as having the same moral worth and being entitled to equal respect and consideration in the treatment of their interests.*

The Ministry and its personnel may not privilege the interests of some members of the public at the expense of others. All members of the public, and all Public Servants within the Ministry, are to be treated with appropriate respect, courtesy, care, and attentiveness, regardless of their social or economic status, gender, ethnicity, age, disabilities, or other attributes or characteristics.

**Value: Professionalism**

- **Ethical Principle:** *Ministry personnel practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise, achieving results through serving with excellence, objectivity and impartiality.*

Ministry personnel continually strive to increase their professional, technical, and administrative knowledge and skills and to apply them courteously in their duties, contributing to the knowledge base and effectiveness of the Ministry. The Ministry and its personnel elevate service to others above self-interest. The Ministry and its personnel draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help citizens in need and to address health problems.

**Value: Pursuit of Excellence**

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel consistently strive for quality.*

The Ministry and its personnel work together to identify the traits that would make their public services of the highest quality, and apply themselves to the most effective methods to pursue these as goals of the Ministry.

**Value: *Respect for Human Dignity***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel are to think of all persons as having the same dignity, moral worth and entitlement to equal respect and consideration in the treatment of their interests.*

The Ministry and its personnel may not privilege the interests of some members of the public at the expense of others. All members of the public, and all Public Servants within the Ministry, are to be treated with appropriate respect, courtesy, care, and attentiveness, regardless of their social or economic status, gender, ethnicity, age, disabilities, or other attributes or characteristics.

**Value: *Service and Customer Care***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The primary goal of the Ministry is to provide quality services to people in need with courtesy, diligence, care, respect, and sensitivity.*

The Ministry and its personnel elevate service to others above self-interest, and should not act in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or friends. The Ministry and its personnel are committed to being responsive to and meeting the needs and expectations of all citizens by providing the highest level of service possible. After any interaction, the Ministry and its personnel should ensure that those served and fellow public servants feel that they were respected, fairly treated, listened to, and involved.

**Value: *Teamwork***

- **Ethical Principle:** *Ministry personnel support and depend upon each other to achieve the mandate of the Ministry.*

In the Ministry, every assignment is important. The Ministry works as a team, valuing each person and his or her job, encouraging different views, and supporting its personnel as colleagues in a common cause. As a team, the Ministry and its personnel are able to challenge colleagues openly, and speak up on controversial issues without fear, demonstrating that relationships within the Ministry are based on trust, respect and integrity. As a team, the Ministry and its personnel are entrusted by the public to perform essential services well. Personnel within the Ministry accept this shared and collective responsibility to the public with both team pride and commitment, and assist and are assisted by their Ministry colleagues to attain these standards in response to the public trust. Ministry personnel also hold each other accountable as team members diligently to strive to satisfy the public trust and achieve the Ministry's mandate with integrity and courtesy.

**Value: *Transparency and Accountability***

- **Ethical Principle:** *The Ministry and its personnel are committed to earning the trust of all citizens by providing the public with all appropriate information as to its mission, policies, and activities – promptly and with courtesy. The Ministry's personnel are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions, and the reasonable consequences of those decisions and actions, and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.*

The Ministry and its personnel have an ethical obligation to all citizens to conduct their activities with accountability and transparency. The Ministry should regularly and openly convey information to the public about its mission, activities, accomplishments and decision-making processes. Except where the public interest is best served by confidentiality or where prohibited by law or regulation, the Ministry and its personnel should ensure that all appropriate information is easily accessible to the public and should create external visibility, public understanding and trust in the Ministry. The Ministry and its personnel should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands this.



## 5. IDENTIFYING INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

### 5.1 Understanding Institutional Roles and Stakeholders

For any public institution to be effective, it must be responsive to important ethical concerns associated with the end goal of its services: fostering human development. The precise definition of “development” varies with each society and is sensitive to context (e.g. development with identity, capacity development, economic development, local development, etc.), but is well captured by the United Nations Development Program’s definition of “sustainable development”:

*The sustainable human development concept redefines economic growth as a means for enhancing all human lives and defines human development as enlarging the range of choices available to people in all spheres of their lives. Under this model, development is understood to be a process that not only generates growth but distributes the benefits of growth equitably. Development enhances peoples’ capabilities and creates opportunities for using these capabilities. It helps to empower the poor rather than marginalize them. Development regenerates rather than destroys the environment. And development ensures choices for present and future generations.<sup>6</sup>*

Many moral values are linked to this complex development end goal, including the many moral attributes of human well-being, human flourishing, social justice, and enjoying all of the essential human freedoms that define us as dignified human beings.

Public institutions, while not losing sight of the end goal of development that they foster, must also focus on the path to that goal – the means. The means to the end of full, sustainable human development are many, and include the policies and strategic actions of all of the roleplayers of development. Such policies and actions define how development is to be pursued, and many moral values apply to these processes. For example, in their quest to foster and sustain development, public institutions should be sensitive to the equitable distribution of development’s benefits, how decision-making happens and whose interests are being forwarded (and at what cost to the losers), how public integrity might be strengthened, how best to achieve gender equality and tolerance for diversity, how to translate respect for human rights and human dignity into meaningful actions and results, how to support good leadership through a commitment to civic virtues, and how not to lose sight of compassion for those in need as a primary motivator of development assistance. Attending to these many moral concerns poses challenging dilemmas to public institutions, who in turn depend upon appropriately sophisticated ethics awareness to respond appropriately.

Bringing ethics into the culture of any public institution is significantly simplified when all stakeholders understand the ethical dimensions of the institution’s mission, and its activities in fulfillment of that mission. By limiting any ethics initiative to just the introduction of a code of ethics and an associated training program, an institution misses

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP’s Human Development Report 1997

the “bigger picture” of the role that institution has the potential to play in shaping development thinking and actions in an ethically consistent, responsible manner.

## **5.2 Prioritizing Moral Values within an Institution**

Moral values are commonly held beliefs that guide judgment as to what is good and proper. Ethics are systems of values, from which certain guiding principles can be formulated. These ethical principles in turn influence the specific ideals and standards that people adopt to guide them in making choices, shaping their characters and their actions. Public ethics, simply defined, are moral standards and principles that guide the actions of a public institution and the behavior of a public servant both in his/her private capacity as an individual and also in his/her capacity as a public servant. Public ethics considers what is right or wrong, good or bad, a virtue or a vice, caring or callous, particularly when the choice to be made has the potential for significant impact on others.

In the constitutions of most countries, and in similar formal statements of principal espoused by governments, there are explicit moral values identified as being characteristic of the identity and aspirations of that society. In some instances, specific institutions of government also have already identified important values that they deem to be applicable to policies, activities and personnel. Examples of such values include patriotism, integrity, responsible stewardship of public resources, collective responsibility for acting in the public interest, accountability, political neutrality, democratic values, professionalism, justice and fairness, and national diversity. As individual public institutions begin their deliberations on their codes of ethics and their overall ethics initiatives, some of these historically stated values might be adopted as “core values”, but there is no obligation to import such precedents unless the stakeholders concur on their relevance. As with any consensus on values and ethics, deciding which values are core and which are amenable to change is the subject of on-going deliberation and periodic revision.

### Core Moral Values

Considering the complex nature of public institutions, their wide range of activities, and the diversity of their staff, one can argue that an extensive number of important moral values are relevant to decision-making, program design and implementation, internal management, and overall ethical performance. Codes of ethics certainly are not intended to limit ethical decision-making to be influenced by just a few important values. Most public institutions, however, begin acting intentionally in ethically responsible ways only after a process of self-identification with a few distinctive moral values. For example, a ministry of agriculture might define its identity in terms of such values as justice and fairness, integrity, and collective responsibility. A ministry of local government might see itself reflecting such values as diligence and professionalism, while a ministry of health might feel drawn to such core values as transparency and accountability, service, and customer care. Without having participated in the code formulation process, it is very difficult for an outsider to understand why these particular values have been chosen as “core values”, but anyone who has participated in the code formulation workshops will

reflect back on the many shared experiences, challenges, dilemmas, and relationships that led the participants to select these particular values as being most indicative of their institution's moral character.

#### Other Important Moral Values

In the process of identifying core moral values, there are generally many contending moral values considered by participants. Through a process of evaluating the relevance and "weight" of each value reviewed, it is possible to identify a second tier of moral values that may not be seen as identifying values, but which are nonetheless considered very important in shaping the way the public institution thinks and performs. These second tier values warrant recognition, as they possess significant potential to clarify and guide institutional policies, awareness, decision-making and activities, and to this end they are also included in the code of ethics.

#### Periodic Re-examination of Moral Values

While moral values change slowly in stable societies, they do change. So too does the population of any public institution's workforce, and new staff bring their own distinctive value systems with them to the job. This combination of the legacy of formally articulated institutional values, a changing mix of societal values, and the aggregate of the personal moral convictions of the institution's workforce all mean that the ethical bearings of any public institution are not immutable. It is appropriate to revisit the public institution's identification of core and other important values – even if this means redrafting the vision and mission statements – on a regular periodic basis of approximately every five to eight years.



## 6. THE RIGHT CODE

### 6.1 Choices of Types of Codes

There are four basic types of codes of ethics in common use today. During the ethics code formulation workshop process, the four types of codes are discussed and the participants make a choice of which form of code is likely to suit their requirements best.

First, there is the **short form**, which usually extends to not more than a page or two and seeks to highlight a few important guiding principles at a high level of abstraction. Short forms are used to identify some important prohibitions and constraints, and to delineate some key moral obligations. Due to their brevity and the level of abstraction, such codes of ethics offer very little fine-grained guidance to persons dealing with morally problematic issues, and therefore may not be helpful in shaping a corporate ethos except in general terms. For this reason, such “short form” codes of ethics are seldom used in current practice.

The second form of code is the most common, and is often referred to as a **principles code**. These codes describe a variety of important ethical principles that have been selected due to their relevance to the organization’s activities, and the probable effect of such activities on beneficiaries and stakeholders. Each of these guiding principles is explained, and often linked to the kinds of decision-making situations common to that organization. For example, a government organization that deals with sensitive and confidential material would be likely to emphasize principles of confidentiality, professionalism, patriotism, diligence, and privacy. These and related principles are then explained and specific standards of expected (compliance-based approach) or desirable (aspirational approach) behavior, obligation, and responsiveness are made explicit.

A principles form of code is often chosen when the organization is engaged in a wide variety of activities and functions for and with multiple stakeholders; the principles which are highlighted in such codes offer targeted advice and guidance when engaged in these activities. For example, such codes may help an employee to understand her ethical obligations and expected standards when activities involve reporting obligations, conflict of interest situations, protection of privacy, preventing corruption and bribery, access to information, use of official property or equipment, supervisory accountability, personnel actions (hiring, firing, retirement), and data management.

The third common form of code of ethics is a **relationships code**. These codes focus on the primary types of relationships that describe the activities and the stakeholders of any given institution, and what ethical standards and considerations should influence the quality, integrity, and character of these important relationships. While still based on specific ethical principles, these principles are described in the context of relationships, instead of in the context of a long list of common activities. When organizations or institutions (or professions) such as social workers, nurses, hospitals, career counseling agencies, or health ministries are directly concerned with managing, fostering, or caring for relationships, this type of code often provides a more accessible form of guidance to

achieve acceptable standards of ethical performance. A relationships code, just like a principles code, begins with an articulation of the most important or defining ethical principles for that particular organization, institution, or profession. Following this, however, the relationships code goes on to describe the principal types of relationships that characterize the institution. These typically include the relationship of the institution to the public which it serves, the relationship of each employee to the institution, the relationship of the institution to the employee, and the relationship of each employee to other employees (including supervisors and subordinates). Sometimes such codes include the relationship of that institution to the broader public of the nation in which it is situated.

The fourth common form of code is the **hybrid code**, which combines elements of both the principles code and the relationships code as described above.

#### Parameters for Making Code Type Selection

The choice of which form of code to select is largely determined by an evaluation of the character of the public institution's services to its stakeholders. For some public institutions, there exists a distinctive set of beneficiaries who will evaluate the quality of the services that they receive based on the quality of their relationship with that institution. This is typically the case in public institutions that provide long term services to specific groups, such as in many types of health care facilities. In these instances, a relationships form of code is recommended.

In other institutions, the beneficiaries of their services change regularly, and/or the range of the services that the institution provides is so wide that no standard forms of relationship between service provider and service recipient are evident. In such cases a code that is based on the most important ethical principles of thought and action relevant to that institution's mandate will be most effective. In such cases, a principles form of code is likely to be the best choice.

There are public institutions whose mandate and activities fit somewhere between the two codes described above. In such cases, a hybrid form of code is utilized, which describes the desired ethical characteristics of certain important relationships involving that institution, but which also provides a significant amount of ethical guidance based on appropriate principles.

The final choice – that of a short code – is not recommended, and is rapidly falling out of use in public sector institutions. Short codes offer very little detailed guidance, and come much closer in character and spirit to a vision or mission statement.

#### Naming a Code

While it is perfectly acceptable simply to name the code as such, there is no requirement to call a code of ethics a "Code of Ethics". Many stakeholders are either intimidated by or uninterested in becoming acquainted with a document with such a name. Instead, it is now becoming more common practice to encourage participants in a code formulation workshop to think of a name that is more likely to attract an interested readership and

inspire ethical behavior, as well as to capture something of the ethical orientation of the institution in the title. These names often include “Code of Ethics” as a sub-title, but the opportunity is seized to give the code a name with some thematic value content.

Examples of names of actual codes of ethics include:

- For the Inter-American Development Bank: *“Earning Public Trust” ~ The Code of Ethics of the Inter-American Development Bank*
- For a Ministry of Agriculture: *Striving for Excellence: A Code of Ethics for the Ministry of Agriculture*
- For a Ministry of Health: *Health with Integrity*
- For a Ministry of Local Government: *Public Service Through Integrity: A Code of Ethics for the Ministry of Local Government*
- For the World Bank: *Living our Values*
- For Pricewaterhouse Coopers: *The Way We Do Business*
- For Deloitte and Touche: *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct - Personal Integrity, Public Trust*



## 7. FORMULATING THE CODE

### 7.1 Planning the Process

As noted earlier in this document, the need for a code must be established and an appropriate level of commitment identified among the senior leadership of an institution before any meaningful progress can be achieved. Assuming these critical factors have been addressed, the process for formulating (or revising) a code of ethics should begin.

It is possible to carry out such a process relying entirely on internal staff, provided the institution has staff with sufficient experience in codes of ethics. More commonly, however, a consultant is brought in for this purpose, not only because that consultant possesses the appropriate expertise, but also because that consultant – as a disinterested outsider – is often best able to facilitate an effective process. (For the purposes of this Manual, all future references will be to “the consultant”, although this may be interpreted to refer to someone within the institution who is assigned this duty).

One of the most challenging aspects of this process is the logistics of scheduling, so that all of the important stakeholders can be present for the one-day workshop, and so that they can allocate time as appropriate to the subsequent stages. If necessary, the workshop may have to be scheduled relatively far in advance, as it is essential to have a fully representational set of participants present for that first day. It is also very important to have the most senior political or civil service official from the institution present at the opening, to officially call the workshop to order, and to stress the seriousness and priority of the initiative.

The code of ethics formulation process consists of the following steps:

- 1) **Values Workshop** ~ This one-day workshop gathers together a representative group from the institution, including senior level leaders and managers. (For small public sector agencies, it is possible to include all personnel, up to a recommended maximum of 50 persons). This group is introduced to the history of codes of ethics, and how the use of codes of ethics has now come to be an essential part of good institutional corporate governance. The group is taught about the different types of codes in common use, and their comparative strengths and weaknesses. The agenda then shifts to an exploration of what is meant by “ethics” and moral values, and how these affect the culture, attitudes, quality, and performance of an institution and its personnel. The notion of reciprocal ethical obligations is described and discussed, and a list of the principle moral stakeholders of the institution is created on a flipchart. The concept of a moral or ethical dilemma is also described.

The workshop then asks participants to identify the kinds of work that each constituent part of the institution performs (as described by a representative from that organizational function), and to identify which specific moral stakeholders relate to that particular set of institutional functions. Finally, the participants are asked to identify common moral dilemmas that arise in the performance of that

group's functions, or in general operations within the institution. These are all noted and listed on flipcharts.

After lunch, the participants are introduced to the list of common moral values (see Appendix A). Each value is discussed and described, and opportunity is given to add or subtract specific values. Once consensus is reached on the list, the participants are asked to refer back to the list of functions that institution carries out, and to consider which of the values most directly pertains to each function listed. This is "scored" on the list of values (on a flipchart) to weigh the relevance of specific values to the institutions range of operational functions.

The participants are then asked to review the various moral dilemmas earlier identified and listed. As before, each listed dilemma is matched with the moral values that most closely relate to the resolution of that dilemma, and the list of values "scored" accordingly.

The list of moral values is then evaluated based on the weight allocated to each, and through a process of deliberations with the participants, a consensus on the final ranking is achieved. Those values with the greatest weighting are selected as "core values", and then a secondary list of important (but not quite "core") values is agreed upon.

At this stage, participants are once again reminded of the main types of codes (principles, relationships, and hybrid), and are invited to deliberate which form of code best fits their own institutional context. After consensus on this decision is reached, the penultimate task of the workshop is to suggest a range of potential names for the code of ethics. These alternative names are discussed, and if a clear favorite is identified, this is noted.

Finally, participants are advised of the next steps in the process, and what is expected from each of them throughout the remainder of the process.

- 2) **Drafting of the Code** ~ The consultant takes the notes made from the workshop, and goes away to make an initial draft *Code of Ethics* based on the type of code and the "core values" (and other important values) chosen by the participants. When this document is completed (and prominently marked as a "draft"), copies are made and circulated to all participants at the workshop for their review. Typically this process can be completed within a week.
- 3) **Validating, Reviewing, and Revising the Draft** ~ Depending on the size, geographic distribution, and institutional complexity of the institution, an appropriate internal process is selected by senior management at the institution to ensure that the widest feasible circulation of the draft is made, and that comments are collected in an organized manner. In many instances, smaller sub-groups within the institution will hold 2 to 3 hour meetings to review the draft, at which time all who were not able to participate in the original one-day workshop will be

advised briefly as to the use, meaning, and significance of the code. All proposed revisions will be collected and forwarded on to the consultant.

In some instances, this process is also augmented by a series of one-on-one interviews between the consultant and members of the institution, to solicit further feedback. The decision whether to include this level of input has to do be made based on the complexity and size of the institution.

Depending on the size and character of the institution, sometimes a second workshop is held to finalize the *Code of Ethics*.

Once all comments are collected, the consultant (and/or the second workshop) revises the draft accordingly, and submits it to senior management at the institution for their final review and adoption.

- 4) **Adopting the Code** ~ Following the process above, there should be a very comprehensive level of knowledge within the institution that the code is being formulated. Once senior management approved the final draft, appropriate letters from both the most senior political official (e.g. the Minister) and the most senior civil servant in the institution are written, to be included before the prologue to the code. The code is then published and widely distributed within the institution.
- 5) **Implementing the Code Workshops** ~ Typically, a consultant (who may or may not be the same person as involved in the code formulation phase) is engaged to formulate a training curriculum to assist members of the institution to understand and apply the code. This training workshop typically lasts 2 to 3 hours, and includes an information session on the meaning and content of the formally adopted code, and a brief discussion on the significance of the moral values highlighted in that code. The majority of the training workshop is allocated to exploring several case studies of ethical dilemmas (real or hypothetical) that are relevant and understandable to the members of that institution. The facilitator of each session will examine, in each case study, how the code can be used to guide decision-making, as well as identifying other available resources and appropriate measures to obtain ethics advice in situations that are complex.

Workshops are best when they include not more than 20 participants, so that there can be an opportunity for discussion and deliberation involving all participants. In small institutions, these workshops might all be led by the one consultant sequentially. In larger institutions, it is best for the expert consultant to train others within the institution to become in-house trainers, able to lead all necessary workshops to reach all of the institution's staff.

Without this training, the effectiveness of the code will be minimal, so while this process can be both complicated and expensive to organize and carry out in a larger institution, it is an essential element of any effective ethics initiative.

- 6) **Periodic Updates** ~ It is appropriate to carry out a similar process every three to eight years, to ensure that the values contained in the code remain the priority values of that institution, to reflect on how well the code has served over time to guide the members of that institution in their decisions and actions, and what recommendations might be made to make the code more effective and relevant to changing circumstances.
- 7) **Linking the Code to Education and Outreach** ~ The code serves not only to guide the institution in its policies, programs, and actions, but also as a very comprehensive formal statement of the ethical principles and ideals that best identify the institution, both in terms of its aspirations and its motivations. As such, the code can be used to educate the stakeholders of the institution and the public in general about the important ethical standards and goals that the institution is committed to pursue.

If that institution decides to also produce a *Service Charter*, in which it explains to the public the services it provides and the standards that the public ought to expect and demand in that context, the *Code of Ethics* should be frequently cross-referenced. Specific standards that pertain to ethical results and the ethical quality of the relationship between the institution and the public should be featured in such a *Service Charter*.

- 8) **Linking the Code to Institutional Transformation** ~ Some institutions will view the formulation of a code of ethics to be nothing more than a bureaucratic requirement, and will only provide a modest level of support to the initiative. Other institutions, and particularly their leadership, may find that raising the expectations of members of the institution and the public regarding ethical standards of performance is threatening to their current leadership or management style, and in such cases the message will very quickly become known that the “code initiative” is not a serious one.

There are institutions, however, with leaders who are committed to a more ambitious transformational agenda. Such leaders have a deep commitment to public service and to national development goals, and want their institution to be highly effective in that context. They also have nothing to fear from an increased level of transparency and accountability, and much to gain by cultivating both the public’s trust, as well as the loyalty and public service motivations of the employees and contractors who serve in that institution. In such cases, the formulation of a code of ethics and the implementation of an associated training course is the first tangible evidence of a far-reaching transformation in the institutional culture and ethos – the way the institution thinks, acts, and identifies itself. When viewed in this larger context, the code is a pivotal statement of principles and standards, as well as a challenge to all concerned to meet or excel these standards.

## **8. ELEMENTS OF A CODE**

### **8.1 Title**

As noted earlier, the code's title must communicate content. It may be as simple as "Code of Ethics", or it may be more evocative by including something that alludes to some of the core values of that institution (e.g. *Promoting Excellence and Ethics in Management Consulting*). Other examples of titles in common use include: *Code of Ethics and Conduct*; *Code of Ethical and Professional Standards in \_\_\_\_\_*, *Compliance Code*, or *Code of Values*.

### **8.2 Leadership Letter**

As with the institutional initiative to improve the ethical culture of the institution, the code begins with an inspirational expression of leadership commitment to this endeavor. In this letter, the senior leadership (e.g. the Minister) will indicate the importance of this code and what it represents as a part of a broader and deeper initiative within the institution to become more aware of ethics and to be better guided by ethics in the relationships, attitudes, thinking and actions of the institution. It typically makes clear why a code is needed, and clarifies both the separate legal obligations and ethical obligations of the institution, and how these two sets of obligations overlap extensively. The letter describes the process by which the code came to be formulated and adopted, to assure all that this process has been participatory and inclusive, and that the resulting code truly captures the important values of the institution. The letter challenges all who read it to set a good example, while describing some of the challenges facing the institution to make it clear how important it will be that readers accept such a challenge.

It is not uncommon to divide these points into two letters, one from the senior political officer (e.g. the Minister) and a separate one from the senior civil servant (e.g. the Permanent Secretary).

### **8.3 Table of Contents**

Since codes must be "user-friendly" and accessible to be effective, there is no reason not to include a table of contents.

### **8.4 Prologue**

While the leadership letter(s) will explain much about why the code was formulated and how it is intended to be of service, the Prologue provides an opportunity to provide a more expansive narrative about the code, its need, and its purpose. It will describe the significance to the institution of the code, how it will be implemented (through regular

training), monitored, and enforced, and who is covered by its provisions (e.g. only employees? Contractors?). The Prologue will describe how a code is both a compliance document – standards that must be met “or else” – and an aspirational document, with ideals that all will be encouraged to strive for. Finally, the Prologue will describe how one uses the code in regular activities of the institution.

## **8.5 Statement of Values**

This element of the code has been explained in some detail in earlier sections of this Manual, but to summarize briefly, this section of the code is where the institution introduces itself to its members, the public, and all of its stakeholders in moral terms – the values that it as an institution feels most clearly guide its performance and the quality of the services it provides. These values are often classified in two categories: “core values” and “other important values”. Each value is listed, along with both a statement of the principle that best captures that value in application, and a narrative description of what that value and principle mean in practice.

## **8.6 Other Code Provisions**

While not required, some codes are expanded to include additional features, such as a section describing what laws and regulations pertain to that institution. There may also be a description of the institutional mechanisms that are in place to monitor ethical performance (to reward excellence and to sanction poor ethical performance), and any appeals procedure that might apply. There may also be an invitation to readers and users of the code to provide feedback, so that the code might be improved in the next round of revisions. Some codes provide a section on application of the code, giving a range examples of ethical dilemmas that might arise, and how the code is best used to address and resolve these dilemmas.

## **8.7 Information and Resources**

An individual seeking to apply a code may be frustrated in finding that there is no clear provision of the code to guide him or her in how best to resolve a particular ethical quandary. For this reason, this section directs the reader to other sources within the institution (e.g. an ethics officer or ombudsman) or within government who will be able and ready to provide this needed advice.

The institution is not alone in its efforts to improve ethical thinking, attitudes, relationships, and performance. This section also is very important in that it allows readers to connect to a very wide network of external resources for institutions and organizations worldwide who are pursuing a similar path. These resources include reference books, websites, links to sample codes of ethics, and similar resource listings.

## 9. OTHER RESOURCES

There are a wide variety of resources available to assist institutions in their efforts to formulate or revise a code of ethics. The list below is not all-inclusive, but it does provide a useful starting point.

### 9.1 Recommended Resources

*“Earning Public Trust” ~ The Code of Ethics of the Inter-American Development Bank*

Inter-American Development Bank

1300 New York Avenue, NW

Washington, DC, 20577, USA

Code of Ethics in PDF format is available at

[http://www.iadb.org/leg/documents/pdf/ethics\\_code\\_eng.pdf](http://www.iadb.org/leg/documents/pdf/ethics_code_eng.pdf)

*Codes of Ethics in Latin America*

World Library and Information Congress

Paper from the 69<sup>th</sup> IFLA General Conference and Congress

1-9 August 2003, Berlin, Germany

This short paper describes the current status of professional codes of ethics in Latin America, and is directed primarily at professional librarians. It does however provide an interesting overview of how codes of ethics are being used in Latin America

Paper accessible on the Web at: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla69/papers/087e-Fernandez-de-Zamora.pdf>

Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions

Illinois Institute of Technology

HUB Mezzanine, Room 204, 3241 S. Federal Street

Chicago, Illinois 60616-3793, USA

Telephone: 1-312-567-6913

Fax: 1-312-567-3016

Email: [csep@iit.edu](mailto:csep@iit.edu)

Web: <http://ethics.iit.edu/codes/>

The Center has one of the world’s largest collections of codes of ethics available on the web, including codes from governments, corporations, professional organizations and societies, and academic institutions, as well as a “hard copy” archive of over 800 codes.

Office of Public Service Values and Ethics, Canada

L'Esplanade Laurier

300 Laurier Avenue West

10<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Tower

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0R5

Telephone: 1-613-957-2458

Fax: 1-613-941-5311

Web: [http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve/index\\_e.asp](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve/index_e.asp)

This office and its excellent website provides a wealth of resources on public sector codes of ethics, including a link to a PDF copy of the Canadian *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service* ([http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve/vec-cve/vec-cve\\_e.asp](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve/vec-cve/vec-cve_e.asp)).

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations

Two UN Plaza-Room DC2-1712

New York, NY 10017

Tel: +1-212-963-3393

Fax: +1-212-963-9681

Email: [qianh@un.org](mailto:qianh@un.org)

Web: <http://www.unpan.org>

The mission of UNPAN - United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance - is to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices throughout the world in sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services, through capacity-building and cooperation among the United Nations Member States, with emphasis on south-south cooperation and UNPAN's commitment to integrity and excellence. It's website offers many examples of public sector codes of ethics.

United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN)

Web: <http://www.unpan.org/asia-trainingmaterials.asp>

UNPAN is a virtual online network. Its mission is to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices throughout the world in sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services, through capacity-building and cooperation among the United Nations Member States, with emphasis on south-south cooperation and UNPAN's commitment to integrity and excellence. UNPAN has produced the UNDP 'PARAGON' *Generic Training Module on Public Service Ethics*.

*Code of Ethics Toolkit*

Society for Human Resource Manager

c/o Ethics Resource Center

1747 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 400,

Washington, DC 20006, USA

Telephone: 1-202-737-2258

Fax: 1-202-737-2227

Email: [ethics@ethics.org](mailto:ethics@ethics.org)

Web: <http://www.ethics.org/>

This useful manual by the Ethics Resource Center is directed at chapters of this particular Society, and is intended for that organizations exclusive use. Requests for permission to access this document should be directed to the ERC .

## 9.2 Additional Resources

### Online Ethics Center for Engineering and Science

National Academy of Engineering

500 5th Street, NW,

Washington, D.C. 20001, USA

Contact: Ms. Cecile Gonzalez,

National Academy of Engineering Senior Media/Public Relations Assistant

Telephone: 1-202-334-1678

Fax: 1-202-334-2290

Web: <http://onlineethics.org>

This academic center originated at MIT, moved for several years to Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, and is now based at the National Academy of Engineering in Washington, D.C. The Center is focused on the professions and sciences, and offers a range of resources in this context – including examples of codes, and an extensive glossary of ethics terms. There are also several codes in Spanish, and Spanish text versions of portions of the site are available. The center's mission from its inception has been "to provide engineers, scientists and science and engineering students with resources useful for understanding and addressing ethically significant problems that arise in their work life."

### *Business Ethics in Latin America*

Journal of Business Ethics, Volume 16, Number 14, October 1997

Publisher: Springer Netherlands

- This paper describes business ethics, which is a relatively new field in Latin America, and describes how codes of ethics form part of a comprehensive strategy to improve ethical standards in business in the region.

### *Building Public Trust: Ethics Measures in OECD Countries,*

PUMA Policy Brief No. Seven, September 2000

- This short paper describes some of the core values that underpin the public service in OECD countries. It explains the important role of effective communications in transmitting values, and the necessary measures to ensure and monitor integrity in daily management. It also provides the findings of an OECD survey into what steps are most effective for public institutions to adopt in seeking to build public trust. This paper is accessible in PDF on the Web at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/60/43/1899427.pdf>

### *Creating a Code of Ethics for Your Organization*

By Chris MacDonald, Ph.D.

<http://www.ethicsweb.ca/codes/>

- This website offers practical advice and many links to support anyone involved in formulating a code of ethics. Its focus is primarily on corporate and professional codes of ethics, but many of the basic principles of codes of ethics are well covered.

Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

<http://caricad.net>

Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD)

<http://www.clad.org.ve>

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

<http://www.eclac.org>

## **Appendix A**

### List of Some Common Moral Values

Accountability  
Acting in the Public Interest  
Collective Responsibility  
Compassion  
Courtesy  
Democratic values  
Devotion  
Diligence  
Diversity  
Empathy  
Fairness  
Freedom  
Generosity  
Honesty  
Honor  
Humility  
Integrity  
Justice and Fairness  
Leadership  
Loyalty  
Moral Equality  
Patriotism  
Political Neutrality  
Preservation of Nature  
Professionalism  
Pursuit of Excellence  
Respect for Elders  
Respect for Human Dignity  
Responsibility  
Reverence for Life  
Self Respect  
Service and Customer Care  
Social Harmony  
Stewardship of Public Resources  
Teamwork  
Tolerance  
Transparency  
Truth