



# RIS

Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries

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## Prevention of Sexual Harassment

### 1. Objective

The objective of this policy is to create a healthy working environment for both the genders by establishing guidelines to deter any Sexual Harassment, define the mechanism for raising awareness at workplace, and setting a process of accepting grievances on sexual harassment, their investigation and appropriate action on the findings of the enquiries.

### 2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees and associates of RIS.

### 3. Process

#### a) Reporting:

- i) Any individual who feels subjected to harassment by an employee or associate can report the incident to Complaints Committee or Director General.
- ii) In case the complainant seeks an informal redressal the individual shall orally report the same to the Committee and the Chair/Convener can suggest appropriate action that can be taken.
- iii) For complaints of serious nature the complaint shall be in writing to ensure consistency and accuracy. The committee shall respond in three working days of its receipt.

b) Investigation:

i) The committee shall arrange a meeting between the complainant and alleged harasser within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

ii) A copy of the statement of the complainant shall be given to the alleged harasser in advance to enable the alleged harasser to seek advice before the meeting.

iii) The committee shall nominate two persons from the committee to carry out investigations, within one week, under strict confidentiality, so that at all times the dignity of concerned individuals is respected.

iv) The report of investigation shall be submitted to the Director General one working day before the committee convenes for hearing. The alleged harasser and the complainant shall also receive one copy of the report.

v) During the hearing the complainant and the alleged harasser both can bring one colleague for support who shall not participate in the proceedings except advising the concerned party privately.

vi) Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded.

vii) The conclusions of the committee decisions shall be informed in writing to the concerned parties, within one working day following the hearing with recommended actions to be implemented by the Finance and Administrative Officer.

viii) If the conclusions of the redressal committee are unsatisfactory to any individual, an appeal in writing can be made to the Director General.

ix) Possible Actions: The actions taken may range from warning to termination, depending on the intensity of the violation of conduct.

x) False Complaint: If the investigations unambiguously reveal with strong supporting evidences that the complainant had raised false complaints with /ulterior / malafide motives, the Finance and Administrative Officer may initiate appropriate disciplinary action against the complainant, while ensuring that others are not deterred from raising concerns in the future. However, generally following universal norms the official attitude would remain sympathetic toward the complainant.

xi) Third Party Harassment: Where sexual harassment occurs as a result of an act or omission by any third party or outsider, RIS shall take all steps necessary and reasonable to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

xii) RIS shall prevent retaliation, victimization, additional harassment and/or humiliation of the complainant and also to alleged harasser or of any witnesses.

#### 4. Guidelines

a) It is expected that every employee will uphold the dignity of co-workers, business partners, vendors, candidates etc. and not indulge in any act that can be construed as an act of sexual harassment.

b) Every employee is expected to report within period of two days any act of sexual harassment that he/she is aware of irrespective of the level of the employee involved.

c) Complainant is expected to make a complaint in reasonable time without a wide lapse from the date of the occurrence of the incident/s for facilitating quick action and for assisting better enquiry.

d) All available material and relevant details concerning the incident(s) should accompany the complaint.

e) If the complainant feels that he/she cannot disclose his/her identity for any particular reason, the complainant can inform any of the members of the Committee/Secretary. In such cases the concerned staff shall ensure that the identity of the complainant is kept confidential.

f) Constitution of Complaints / Redressal Committee

i) It shall be chaired by a woman.

ii) It shall have 50 % women members.

iii) It shall include a 3rd party representative from an NGO or other agency with subject knowledge.

g) RIS shall keep the complaints, investigative records and results of the case confidential.

h) The Finance and Administrative Officer shall ensure that this policy is communicated to all employees.

## 5. Definitions

Complainant	The person reporting an incident of Sexual Harassment of self or another colleague(s).
Victim	The person subjected to Sexual Harassment.
Harasser	The person who is alleged/reported to have committed an act of Sexual Harassment.
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical harassment</li><li>• Verbal harassment</li><li>• Gestural harassment</li></ul>

- Written/Graphic harassment
- Any other physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

## 6. Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy will require the approval of the Director General.