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Global Think-Tank

CESD Employee Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

This Employee Handbook is a summary of policies, procedures, and practices related to human resource management at the Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD).

Chairman of CESD is accountable for leading an effective staff team and is thereby accountable for the development and implementation of the policies outlined in this manual. Managers are responsible for human resource management within their own staff teams and should reference this manual to ensure organizational consistency in the application of these practices.

Chairman is responsible for maintaining the procedures and systems, which support human resource management for the organization, and is available to answer any questions or provide clarification on any content of this manual.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

CESD strives to provide a working environment that boosts personal and professional growth for all employees. Maintaining such an environment refers to the responsibility of each staff personnel. Due to their role, managers and supervisors have an additional responsibility to lead in a manner which promotes an environment of respect for each person.

It is the responsibility of each staff personnel to:

- Foster cooperation and communication among each other
- Fairly treat each other with dignity and respect
- Promote harmony and teamwork in all relationships

- Strive for mutual understanding of standards for performance expectations, and constantly communicate to reinforce that understanding
- Encourage and consider the opinions of other employees or members, and encourage their participation in decisions that affect their work and their careers
- Encourage growth and development of employees by helping them achieve their personal goals at CESD and beyond
- Seek to avoid workplace conflict, and if it occurs, respond fairly and quickly to provide the means to resolve it
- Administer all policies equitably and fairly, recognizing that jobs are different, but each is important; that individual performance should be recognized and measured against predetermined standards; and that each employee has the right to fair treatment
- Recognize that employees in their personal lives may experience crisis and show compassion and understanding

WHO WE ARE

The Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD) was established to promote research and analysis into domestic economic and social issues to positively influence the public policy decision-making processes. CESD is a leading Azerbaijani think tank specializing in economic and social policy issues working with and establishing a bridge between the government and the various representatives of civil society. At the same time, the Center positions itself in the center of civil society, having tight relationships with media, 24 communities spread around Azerbaijan, NGOs providing services at the grass-root level, international think-tanks, financial institutions, and donors, including all the other think tanks functioning in Azerbaijan.

MISSION

CESD aims to:

- (i) organize and promote theoretical and practical research on problems concerning economic and social development
- (ii) provide policy advice to the Government of Azerbaijan
- (iii) contribute to national capacity-building and raise public awareness of socio-economic issues
- (iv) foster cooperation between the public, private, NGO sector, and educational institutions in addressing and resolving economic problems
- (v) assist sustainable development, gender development, reduce poverty, achieve Millennium Development Goals and economic and social reforms.

SCOPE

Priority research areas include:

- Macroeconomic Policy
- Gender Development
- Competitiveness of Azerbaijani Economy and Economic Growth
- Social Sphere
- Public Sector Reform
- Financial System, Taxation and Fiscal Policy
- Energy, Telecommunications and Transport
- EU Integration, Regional Cooperation and Foreign Economic Relations

EMPLOYMENT AT CESD

Employment Equity

CESD provides an equal opportunity to both employer and employee without regard to race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and/or mental handicap or financial ability. While remaining alert and sensitive to the issue of fair and equitable treatment for all, CESD has a special concern with the participation and advancement of members of four designated groups that have traditionally been disadvantaged in employment: women, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities.

Recruitment and Selection

All employment opportunities at CESD are published for a minimum 10 working day period. Calls are posted on CESD's website and the websites of affiliated organizations. Additionally, they are posted on employment website agencies. Applicants are invited to submit their application along with their resume, demonstrating that they meet the minimum criteria for the position. After the closing date, all applications are reviewed, and candidates selected for the interviews are contacted. In case the interview is positive, the participant will be contacted. Depending on the feedback provided, a position may be offered to the applicant.

Nepotism

No candidate should be hired for a position where they may report to or supervise a member of their family. Family member in this context is defined as: parent(s), step-parent(s), foster parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), spouse, step-child(ren) or ward of the staff member, father-in-law or mother-in-law. Personal relationships with other employees or members of CESD's Board of Directors or Committees of CESD should be disclosed before accepting any offer from the employer. Failure to disclose this information would be considered contradictory to the Code of Ethics policy.

Orientation

All newly hired employees to CESD shall receive an orientation session which will ensure the insight of general policies, procedures, and operations. This will also provide employees an opportunity to learn the performance expectations management has for the position. They will be given a copy of this Employee Handbook and will be expected to learn its contents. They will also follow some policies such as the Code of Ethics and asked to sign their adherence to the same.

Employee Classifications

Each position at CESD shall be classified as either Administrative or Management, as determined by the Executive Director. This decision will be based on the duties assigned and qualifications required for each position offered.

Employee Duties

Attached to an offer of employment, there is a description of the job and the associated responsibilities, along with any additional task possibly required. The document will be used to evaluate performance during the probation period and after. If an employee is unsure of its contents, he/she should not hesitate to ask for clarification.

From time to time, there might be a necessity to amend an employee's job description. These amendments will be discussed with the employee in advance, however, the final decision on implementation will be made by management.

Personnel Files

CESD collects personal information for inclusion in personnel files. This information is available to the employee and Chairman of the organization. This data is kept in a secure location and is not shared with members of the Board or with funders. Information contained in an employee's personnel file includes the following: resume, letter of offer, performance reviews, amendments to job descriptions, disciplinary notices, tax forms, copies of enrolment forms for benefits, and approved leave requests.

Annual Salary

Salaries shall be determined by Chairman, based on budget considerations and commensurate with the experience of the successful candidate. The organization shall pay employees monthly, less the usual and necessary statutory and other deductions payable per the employer's standard payroll practices. These payroll practices may be changed from time to time at the employer's sole discretion. Currently, payday occurs on the 10th of every month.

Professionalism

While representing CESD, staff should dress and behave appropriately. Employees should choose to dress in a manner that presents a professional image to the public and is respectful to others. Excessive use of profanity is neither professional nor respectful to co-workers and will not be tolerated.

Discipline

Discipline at CESD shall be progressive, depending on the nature of the problem. Its purpose is to identify unsatisfactory performance and/or unacceptable behavior. The stages may be:

- I. Verbal reprimand
- II. Written reprimand
- III. Dismissal

Some circumstances may be serious enough so all three steps are not followed. Some examples of these types of situations are theft, assault, or willful neglect of duty. In all cases, documentation should be included in the employee's personnel file.

Working Hours

The regular office hours for CESD are 9 AM to 6 PM. Monday through Friday inclusive (excluding holidays). During core hours, it is expected that most staff will be available. All employees are expected to work 8 hours per day, exclusive of an unpaid eating break of at least thirty (30) minutes. Employees may also be expected to work such other hours as may be requested or required, from time to

time. Employees hired on a part-time basis will have schedules determined on a case-by-case basis.

Employees are required to notify their supervisor of planned days away from the office in advance. Unplanned absences from the office should be reported to the employee's supervisor as soon as could reasonably be expected. At the discretion of the Chairman, depending on circumstances, employees may be allowed to work from home for specific periods. As a courtesy, the Administrative Assistant should also be notified of absences.

Statutory Holidays

The Republic of Azerbaijan has 12 public holidays for which the staff is paid. They are: New Year's Day, Martyr's Day, Women's Day, Novruz holiday, Ramazan holiday, Victory Day, Republic Day, National Salvation Day, Armed Forces Day, Gurban Bayrami holiday, Azerbaijani Victory Day, and Flag Day.

In the spirit of family, the Chairman reserves the right to close the office for the Spring Festival to enable employees to spend time with their families. This will be reviewed annually and will depend on operational requirements. These non-statutory days will have no impact on employee vacation or lieu time.

DEPARTURE

Termination for Cause

An Employment Contract may be terminated by the employer at any time for cause, without notice or payment in lieu of notice or severance pay whatsoever, except payment of outstanding wages, overtime, and vacation pay to the date of termination. Cause includes, but is not limited to, any act of dishonesty, conflict of

interest, breach of confidentiality, harassment, insubordination, or careless, negligent, or documented poor work performance.

Termination Without Cause

An Employment Contract may be terminated by the employer at any time and for any reason on a without cause basis, upon the provision of notice or payment of notice instead, and severance pay if applicable. In addition to notice, the employee shall be entitled to an additional 1 weeks' notice or payment in lieu of notice for every year of completed service (severance pay) with the employer to a maximum of 16 weeks' notice. The notice as described in this paragraph is inclusive of all statutory and common law entitlements to notice or payment in lieu of notice. Upon satisfaction of the requirements under this paragraph, the employer shall have satisfied all obligations to the employee. The notice requirement contained in this clause constitutes a material inducement to the employer to enter this agreement.

Resignation

Employees are obliged to give the employer 2 weeks' notice of resignation. The employer may waive the resignation notice period in whole or in part at any time by providing payment of regular wages for the period so waived.

Layoff

Operation requirements are subject to change based on workload and the funding levels received on an annual basis. All efforts will be made to keep staff in a position similar, in scope and salary, to that they have become accustomed to. If the organization is unable to do this, then employees will receive 1 weeks' notice

for each year of service. For employees, who have a minimum of six years of service, this amount will be augmented by 1 week of severance pay (or equivalent notice) for each year of service.

Employer Property

Upon termination of employment for any reason, all items of any kind created or used according to the employee's service or furnished by the employer, including but not limited to computers, reports, files, diskettes, manuals, literature, confidential information, or other materials shall remain and be considered the exclusive property of the employer at all times, and shall be surrendered to Chairman, in good condition, promptly and without being requested to do so.

TIME AWAY FROM WORK

Vacation Time and Vacation Pay

Vacation will accumulate to a maximum of 14 days per calendar year. This type of leave should be taken in 1/2 day increments.

Sick Leave

Employees will be entitled to 12 days of sick leave per calendar year accumulated based on 1 day per month. A maximum of 12 days of sick leave may be carried forward to the next calendar year so that an employee shall have no more than 24 sick days in any one calendar year. Any additional sick leave accumulated will be forfeit. Moreover, regardless of the amount of sick leave accumulated, sick leave will not be paid out upon resignation, retirement, or termination of employment

for any reason. Furthermore, since Sick Leave has no cash value, employees may not use more than they have accumulated, without the express written permission of the Chairman. Employees working less than full time will have their rate of accumulation adjusted accordingly.

Sick leave can be used for personal illness, personal medical appointments, and visits to specialists.

The employer reserves the right to request information concerning limitations, restrictions, and prognosis in such manner as it deems necessary in the circumstances for any request for paid or unpaid sick leave. The employer also reserves the right to request a doctor's note for absences of 3 days or longer.

Compassionate Leave

CESD will grant up to 3 working days per event on the occasion of a death in the staff member's family. Family is defined as: parent(s), step-parent(s), foster parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), spouse (including common law a/o same-sex partner), step-child(ren) or ward of the staff member, father-in-law or mother-in-law (including parent of same-sex partner).

Additional compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of the Chairman for reasons not covered elsewhere in this manual. These requests should be discussed in person with the ED and followed by written submission.

Unpaid Leave

Employees may take unpaid leave with the written consent of the Chairman. During periods of unpaid leave, medical, dental, life, and AD&D coverage shall continue to be paid by the employer, vacation shall continue to accrue, and seniority shall be maintained. Contributions to the group RRSP will occur strictly on

a matching basis. If the employee contributes. CESD shall match it; otherwise, no contributions shall be made by the organization. Every attempt will be made to return employees to a position of equal responsibility on return from leave status, however, no guarantees exist that the exact position left will be available on return.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the discretion of the Chairman, employees may be able to attend conferences, courses, seminars, and meetings, identified through annual work plans and performance reviews, which may be beneficial to the employee's professional development. If these opportunities are directly related to the employee's position or are suggested by the Chairman, then CESD will cover the cost of registration, course materials, and some travel expenses.

If CESD has agreed to pay for a course the fees will be paid on evidence of successful completion. If CESD sponsors a course (or courses) and the employee departs CESD within a year of completion, the course fees will become repayable in full.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Confidential Information

From time to time, employees of CESD may come into contact with confidential information, including but not limited to information about CESD's members, suppliers, finances, and business plans. Employees are required to keep any such matters that may be disclosed to them or learned by them confidential.

Furthermore, any such confidential information, obtained through employment with CESD, must not be used by an employee for personal gain or to further an outside enterprise.

Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property, such as trademarks, copyrights, and patents, and any work created by an employee in the course of employment at CESD shall be the property of CESD and the employee is deemed to have waived all rights in favor of CESD. Work, for the purpose of this policy, refers to writing, creative, or media work. All source material used in a presentation or written documents must be acknowledged.

IT Information Storage and Security

Any storage devices (CDs, USBs, Floppy Discs) used by employees at CESD, located at CESD's address, acknowledge that these devices and their contents are the property of CESD. Furthermore, it should be understood by employees, that company equipment should be used for company business only during working hours. Downloading of personal materials on company equipment can be harmful to said equipment and should not be done.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

CESD, along with its employees, must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the workplace is safe. The organization complies with all requirements for creating a healthy and safe workplace.

Employees who have health and safety concerns or identify potential hazards should contact the Chairman.

Alcohol consumption or illegal drug use is not permitted during work hours on the premises. From time to time, with the Chairman's permission, alcohol may be used to celebrate an occasion/event.

AIR QUALITY

Indoor air quality can lead to many health issues. CESD recognizes this and attempts to minimize the risks associated with indoor air quality and its effects on its employees. Issues related to air quality should be reported to the Manager, Finance and Administration.

Smoke Free Environment

Smoking in the offices of CESD is not permitted at any time. An "enclosed workplace" is defined as the inside of any place, building or structure, or conveyance or a part of any of them that a) is covered by a roof or b) employees work in or frequent during their employment whether or not they are acting in the course of their employment at the time, and c) is not primarily a private dwelling.

Scents

CESD is aware that some persons may have allergies or sensitivities to perfumes, lotions, colognes and/or chemical smells. As a result, we discourage the overuse of these products.

Pets

The office of CESD is a place of business, and as such, pets are not allowed in the office during working hours. Staff and visitors with seeing-eye dogs are the exceptions.

Renovations

As odors from building materials and noise levels for tools can cause discomfort to employees, renovations will be scheduled to have a minimum impact on employees. This may include renovating during non-working hours (evenings & weekends) and ensuring direct ventilation to control fumes. Carpets should be installed and cloth furniture unwrapped late in the day so emissions may occur during non-working hours.

HARRASSMENT

CESD wants to provide a harassment-free environment for its employees and volunteers. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between members and staff. CESD will neither tolerate nor condone behavior that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

There are several forms of harassment, but all can be defined as any unwelcome action by any person, whether verbal or physical, on a single or repeated basis, which humiliates insults, or degrades. “Unwelcome”, for this policy, refers to any action that the harasser knows or ought to reasonably know is not desired by the victim of the harassment.

Specifically, racial harassment is defined as any unwelcome comments, racist statements, slurs, jokes, graffiti or literature, or pictures and posters which may intentionally or unintentionally offend another person.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual nature such as remarks about appearance or personal life, offensive written or visual actions like graffiti or degrading pictures, physical contact of any kind, or sexual demands.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence can be defined as a threat or an act of aggression resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain, or injury to a worker, which arises during work. Further to the definition of violence is the definition of abuse. Abuse can be verbal, psychological, or sexual. Verbal abuse is the use of unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening, or degrading comments. Psychological abuse is an act that provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem. Finally, sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or sexually explicit statement.

CESD has a zero-tolerance limit concerning harassment and violence. Employees or volunteers engaging in either harassing or violent activities will be subject to discipline, which may include termination of employment, removal from Boards or committees, and possibly criminal charges.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any working environment. To resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, CESD recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution.

- Speak to the person you are having the dispute with. Many times disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications.
- If speaking to the individual does not work, speak to the Chairman. The ED will arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute, to determine a resolution.
- If the ED is unable to resolve a workplace dispute, the parties may be referred to mediation by an outside third party. The resolution of the mediator is binding on both parties of the dispute.

