The Spotlight Initiative in Central Asia and Afghanistan

Civil Society Regional Reference Group

Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is intended to guide the work of all members of the Spotlight Initiative Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG) in Central Asia and Afghanistan, as they undertake their roles as described in the Terms of Reference. The Code of Conduct shall be signed by all members of the CS-RRG.

1. Act with Integrity, Professionalism, Accountability, and Mutual Respect
2. **Integrity:** The CS-RRG members will act without consideration of personal gain and will only make decisions that are in the best interests of the Spotlight Initiative in Central Asia and Afghanistan.
3. **Professionalism:** The appointments to the CS-RRG are made on the basis of their professional experience and expertise on eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG), harmful practices (HP) and on gender equality and women’s rights. Members are expected to be innovative thinkers, conscientious and efficient in the advice and support they provide to the programme.
4. **Accountability:** CS-RRG members participate in the Spotlight Initiative as members of the civil society in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Members will take ownership of their responsibilities and honour their commitments as outlined by the Terms of Reference. The CS-RRG shall participate in the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee, the Governing Body of the Spotlight Initiative which is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on the Initiative.
5. **Mutual respect:** CS-RRG members shall work together collaboratively, treat each other with respect and show respect for diverse points of view. Members shall treat one another with dignity and respect and will support all group decisions.
6. Promote Gender Equality

The purpose of the Spotlight Initiative is to promote gender equality through the elimination of VAWG. It is therefore imperative for the proper functioning and success of the Spotlight Initiative, and for the maintenance of its integrity and good reputation, that members uphold principles of gender equality and women’s rights both professionally and privately. This means, but is not limited to, respecting human diversity in all its forms, advocating for gender equality, combatting all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices, and recognizing and upholding the rights of others in all circumstances.

1. Conflict of Interest

Members assume their roles on the CS-NRG in their individual capacity, and not as representatives of their organisations or as individual contractors. All decisions and actions undertaken by the CS-RRG shall therefore be guided solely by the best interests of the Spotlight Initiative’s regional programme, and its goals and objectives.

If a member pursues or advocates for a course of action which outcome creates personal benefit for him/herself, family, friends, relations, or the member’s organization, at the expense of the Spotlight Initiative and the programme’s integrity, this will constitute a conflict of interest. A member who has a conflict of interest shall without undue delay declare the conflict of interest to the CS-RRG Secretariat[[1]](#footnote-1) and remove themselves from any further discussions or decisions that may result in personal gain and/or the gain of their organization, family, friends or other relations.

If a member’s organisation is contracted as an implementing partner or individual consultant/contractor for the Spotlight Initiative, that member shall recuse themselves from carrying out any monitoring activities on its organisation’s activities. The member shall also be recused from making any recommendations related to their organisation’s participation as an implementing partner.

1. Actively Participate in and Contribute to CS-RRG’s Activities

Membership in the CS-RRG cannot be delegated or re-assigned by the member. All members are expected to personally participate in all CS-RRG meetings and undertake related duties as agreed to in the annual workplans. While members may at times be unable to partake in CS-RRG activities, this should be on an exceptional basis, rather than recurrently. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Repeated absences or failure to contribute to CS-RRG activities may prompt a review of the individual’s membership by the other CS-RRG members. For the purposes of the CS-RRG, repeated absences shall be understood to mean two (2) consecutive absences from the four (4) obligatory annual meetings. Members of the CS-RRG may attend the annual meetings virtually.

1. Act Autonomously in Representation of Civil Society in **Central Asia and Afghanistan**

The purpose of the CS-RRG is to ensure the meaningful representation and engagement of civil society throughout the Spotlight Initiative programme cycle and to ensure sustainability beyond the programme. While the UN facilitates the logistical establishment and functioning of the CS-RRG, the CS-RRG is an autonomous structure that operates in collaboration with the Government, the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and Recipient UN Agencies (RUNOs), and not under their instructions.

As a member of the wider civil society community in Central Asia and Afghanistan, the CS-RRG shall seek the continuous and inclusive engagement with CSOs throughout the Spotlight Initiative programme cycle. The CS-RRG shall engage and consult with local and grassroots organizations in region to ensure that they are responding to the needs of the most marginalized women and girls in the region and to uphold the principle of *leaving no one behind*.

The CS-RRG shall widely and regularly disseminate information about the Spotlight Initiative with CSOs in a transparent manner and shall advise the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) and the RUNOs on how to secure meaningful CSO participation in the programme, and in particular of grassroots and local organisations.

1. Confidentiality

The members of the CS-RRG may, in their roles, witness or be entrusted with confidential and/or personal information related to the beneficiaries of the Spotlight Initiative. The members of the CS-RRG shall not disclose any such confidential and/or personal information to third parties whatsoever, during and beyond the time they serve as members of the CS-RRG.

**I hereby agree, as a member of the Spotlight Initiative CS-RRG in Central Asia and Afghanistan**, **to abide by this Code of Conduct.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The secretariat function will be performed by the Spotlight UN team in Kazakhstan. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Excusable absences must be certified by a medical doctor in case of illness. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)