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**Amazon Waters Alliance**  
**Code of Conduct and Institutional**  
**Responsibilities**

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*These guidelines of conduct and institutional responsibilities apply to the organizations that are part of the Amazon Waters Alliance and collaborators that represent them in face-to-face and virtual environments, within the governance structure of Amazon Waters and externally in their representations.*

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## Amazon Waters Alliance | Code of Conduct and Institutional Responsibilities

These guidelines of conduct and institutional responsibilities apply to the organizations that are part of the Amazon Waters Alliance and collaborators that represent them in face-to-face and virtual environments, within the governance structure of Amazon Waters and externally in their representations.

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## Introduction

The Amazon Waters Alliance celebrates diversity in all its forms, including the diversity of perspectives, which drive science, knowledge, and innovation, and are therefore central to the success of Amazon Waters. We want all participants in Amazon Waters activities to feel valued and comfortable being and expressing who they are. The Alliance also emphasizes truth, transparency, honesty, and cooperation as pillars that hold its members together and give it identity to achieve its goals.

This Code of Conduct and institutional responsibilities is intended to be a guide for all public and private interactions throughout any activity that Amazon Waters leads or is associated. The purpose of these guidelines is to make explicit the type of behavior that is expected of the participants of Amazon Waters, as well as what is considered unacceptable and the sanctions that apply if the provisions of this code are breached. It is the responsibility of the partners of the Alliance to know and spread this code to all the people of the organizations that assume responsibilities and commitments in the governance structure of the Alliance.

These guidelines are applicable to all areas of participation among the partners and Alliance representations, both in face-to-face and virtual environments, such as meetings, discussion forums, mailing lists, social networks, as well as private areas, including e-mail.

The Code of Conduct is written in non-binary gendered language. However, it is not a rule of behavior to use this form of writing.

The behaviors and duties of care referred to in this code are of two types of nature:

- a. **personal:** i.e., they are executed by the representative(s) of the organizations in the development of their commitments assumed in the Alliance.
- b. **Institutional:** i.e., they include the responsibilities or duties of care of the Partner organization within the Amazon Waters Alliance.

It is required to fulfill both to ensure that the rights of other representatives and other organizations are not affected. The Amazon Waters Alliance will prioritize in all cases the safety and integrity of all its members.

This document was approved by the Board of the Amazon Waters Alliance on January 28, 2025 and is effective immediately.



## 1. Expected behavior

The following behaviors are expected from organizations and their employees:

- Comply with the responsibilities of the partners established in the Bylaws and other documents of the Amazon Waters Alliance Governance Model available at [aguasamazonicas.org/intranet/governance](http://aguasamazonicas.org/intranet/governance).
- Comply with the guiding principles of the Alliance, as a way of expressing its commitment to its objectives and cooperating with other members to consolidate the Alliance as a network of innovation, collaboration, respect and trust.
- Lead by example by being thoughtful in your actions and decisions.
- Respect speech and action, especially in disagreement.
- Take responsibility for any errors.
- Intervene peacefully when you observe an attitude that affects any of the participants, and repair it immediately, always protecting and listening to the affected person first, and seeking the following versions of what happened afterwards, considering that episodes of abuse or discrimination happen also because the witnesses let it happen.
- Promote personal responsibility and recognition of the diversity of participation. We all contribute from our knowledge and experiences, and everyone's participation is valuable.
- Promote kindness, recognition, happiness, friendship, solidarity, and truth.
- Act with transparency, clarity and truthfulness in the different areas of governance of Amazon Waters.
- To apply for positions or places in the governance structure of the Alliance being duly qualified and authorized to do so.
- Maintain a constant and timely flow of communication between the Alliance's institutional structure (governance structure) and the Partner organization, allowing them to mutually strengthen each other to achieve the objectives at the basin scale.
- Prioritize the collective interests of the Amazon Waters Alliance over personal and specific interests.

## 2. Unacceptable behavior

The following behaviors are unacceptable from representatives of organizations and individuals participating in the Amazon Waters Alliance in both virtual and face-to-face environments:

### 2.1 Related to verbal or demeaning expressions:

- Derogatory comments in any form, including those related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, mental condition, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, age or socioeconomic status.



- Demeaning, discriminatory or harassing behavior and speech.
- Unwanted comments about a person's lifestyle choices and practices, including those related to food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment.
- Referring to someone with the wrong gender, after it has been indicated: includes persistently describing or using a pronoun that does not correctly reflect a person's gender identity.
- Derogatory comments in any form, including those related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, mental condition, physical appearance, body size, indigenous people, cultural identity, religion, age or socioeconomic status; as well as language, attitudes or practices that relate to the "supremacy" of "scientific/Western" knowledge.
- Advocating or encouraging any of the above behaviors.

### **2.2 Related to harassment, bullying and violence:**

- Violence and/or threats of violence.
- Posting without consent or threatening to post personally identifiable information of others ("doxing").
- Inappropriate or unauthorized photography or recording.
- Sharing sexual images or content that promotes discrimination and violence.
- Physical contact without consent.
- Unwanted sexual attention. This includes sexualized comments or jokes; inappropriate touching, advances, harassment or any type of unwanted sexual behavior.
- Deliberate bullying, harassment or stalking (online or in person).
- Publication of false or inaccurate content, with the purpose of misleading other participants.
- Advocating or encouraging any of the above behaviors.

### **2.3 Related to participation in the Alliance**

- Conducting or participating in research projects, including the participation of persons who have not expressed their voluntary and informed consent.
- Lying or misrepresenting facts to gain personal and professional advantage or to evade the application of standards, policies and requirements.
- Acting on behalf of a Partner organization before the Alliance without the corresponding accreditations or when these are not up to date.



- Failure to inform the Partner organization and the governance structure of their status as a representative to the Alliance, election or appointment to key positions or any change in their representative status. This behavior also includes an attitude of care for the partner organizations, whereby they must be kept informed about the performance of their representatives.
- attempt to influence or manipulate the direction and nature of the research for improper personal, professional or family gain at the expense of the Amazon Waters Alliance or its associated projects.
- Presenting and assuming positions or positions in the Alliance governance structure, without being qualified to do so (active partner, without sanctions).
- Attribute representation of the Alliance in external spaces.
- Damaging the image of the Alliance in spaces of public participation and interaction by assuming inappropriate and offensive behavior.
- Misappropriation of funds destined for projects or actions promoted by the Alliance and which were the responsibility of the partner organization.
- Others that present similar characteristics and that damage the good name of the network and harm the fulfillment of its creation objectives.

#### **2.4 Other unacceptable conduct:**

- Weaken opportunities for personal and professional fulfillment of other Amazon Waters people or their initiatives.
- Sustained and malicious disruption of events from participation in conferences, lectures and presentations.
- Inaction or failure to act on the part of partner organizations or their representatives who, with knowledge of unacceptable conduct, fail to act to prevent it or condone it.
- Any other conduct that could damage the good name of the Alliance, affect its members or harm third parties.

### **3. Consequences of unacceptable behavior**

The commission of one or more of the cases of undesirable behavior listed in the previous paragraph entails consequences on the participation status of the representatives of the partner organizations and of the organization, when applicable, according to the cases listed under the heading of sanctions. The Alliance and its conduct assessment bodies, after a fair and impartial process, may determine the appropriate measures.

Unacceptable behavior by any participant will not be tolerated in any virtual or face-to-face space of the Amazon Waters Alliance or spaces with which the Alliance relates, whether of an academic, multilateral, and similar nature (other networks, governmental spaces, and the like). This includes team meetings, internal meetings of the Alliance or meetings with other actors, congresses, project development, and other related.



## 4. Procedure for dealing with cases of unacceptable conduct

### 4.1. Beginning of the process

The cases referred to in this Code should be addressed as indicated below:

- a. **On-site action for the immediate cessation of unacceptable conduct.** This assumes two modalities: i. intervention of a member who becomes aware of the fact in the way it occurs to request the cessation of hostile conduct. ii) The Conduct Committee in coordination with the Board and Technical Secretariat, requests the representative of the Partner organization (with knowledge of their organizations) the immediate cessation of undesirable conduct. In both cases, if this is not complied with and the conduct persists, it is considered a case submitted to the Conduct Committee.
- b. **Action initiated by the affected party through a complaint.** Proceed in case of any type of aggression suffered directly and in case of having witnessed or observed any unacceptable behavior. This action can be initiated in person or by sending an e-mail to the Alliance Conduct Committee ([comite.conducta.cca@gmail.com](mailto:comite.conducta.cca@gmail.com)). If you prefer to report anonymously, you may complete the following [form](#).
- c. **Actions by memo.** The Board, at the request of another member or informed by the technical secretariat, may request to submit a case to the Conduct Committee because of the nature of the unacceptable conduct or the seriousness of the situation.

### 4.2. Deadlines

Cases submitted to the Conduct Committee are dealt with in processes that are resolved within 3 months to a final decision from their initiation. Exceptionally and for complex cases, the Committee may issue a communication to the Board requesting an extension of the deadline.

### 4.3. Opportunity to present evidence and to present arguments

The Conduct Committee offers all those involved all the guarantees of defense and evidence to support their positions. Spaces are enabled for the receipt of evidence and discharges, which may be represented by email, video calls or face-to-face meetings if appropriate. From the Amazon Waters Alliance, we are committed to paying attention to the behavior of participants who have been reported, adequately considering the rights of those affected and the presumption of innocence of those reported, maintaining confidentiality.

## 5. Infringements and penalties

The Amazon Waters Alliance provides that for the application of sanctions, the following criteria are taken into account to evaluate the sanctions for the cases submitted to it:

- The circumstances and space where the behavior occurs.



- Time. Whether the actions or situations occurred in a single act (a single time), are systematic behaviors or the conduct occurred over a prolonged period of time.
- The degree to which the partners (and their representatives) and the good name of the Alliance are affected. For example, comments made in a moment of obfuscation or deliberate and malicious actions that affect the Alliance will not be valued in the same way.
- The impact of the conduct on the governance structure. Considering that we are a cooperative Alliance in favor of the Amazon, therefore, trust is the basis of our actions, the extent to which the conduct affects this trust structure is assessed.
- The capacity for improvement and rectification. Considering that the representatives of the partners (including organizations) have the right to improve and rectify behaviors, the relevance of applying this criterion to determine sanctions is evaluated.

Failure to comply with the provisions of item 1 of this document (Expected Behavior) and any of the behaviors and duties of care listed in item 2 (Unacceptable Behavior) may result in the following sanctions:

- **Minor infractions:** Correspond to behaviors listed in point 2 that occur only once or that cease immediately due to the intervention of another partner, the Technical Secretariat or Conduct Committee. In these cases a reprimand is applied by means of direct communication with the implicated person, urging him/her not to repeat the conduct and to refrain from repeating similar behaviors.
- **Moderate infractions:** Correspond to systematic conducts that generate a greater impact on other members, partner organizations and the Alliance in general, including the impact on organizations with which we collaborate or third parties. In this case the sanctions and compliance requirements for the Partner organization, its representatives and collaborators will be:
  - Separation of the representative of the partner organization that incurs in infractions to this code, for cases of very personal responsibilities (unacceptable comments, harassment, others) and its impossibility to be part of the governance structure of Amazon Waters for up to 7 years (as representative, elected position and Alliance community).
  - Separation of a collaborator or member of the Amazon Water Alliance community from participating in the spaces or initiatives it accompanies.
  - Request for substitution of the representative to the Alliance, in the case of a representative designated by the partner organization.
  - Commitment of the Partner organization to accompany the process with the person who represents it.



- In the event that the sanctioned person wishes to rejoin the Alliance after the term has elapsed, he/she must agree to comply with the guidelines of this code.
  
- **Serious infractions:** Correspond to behaviors that cause serious damage to other members, third parties, Alliance partners and to the image and good name of the Alliance. Due to their seriousness, they make it impossible to consider the partner's participation again in the Alliance governance structure. The applicable sanctions are:
  - Evaluation of immediate suspension of the partner organization representative, especially if he/she holds a position in the Alliance governance structure, such as the Board, Program Leaders, Advocacy Committee, Communications Committee, Advocacy Committee and other bodies.
  - Definitive separation of the representative from the Alliance governance structure, according to the assessment of the Conduct Committee and functional responsibilities.
  - Inability of the representative to participate again in the Alliance, including the Amazon Water Alliance community.
  - Suspend the collaboration between the partner organization in case of proven inaction in the process, obstruction of the process or inability to honor its commitments.
  
- **Aggravated forms for infractions:** These forms may consist of:
  - Persisting in unacceptable behavior despite warnings.
  - Allying with other representatives or partners to commit the unacceptable conducts provided for in this code.
  - Persist in damaging the image of the Alliance through print media, use of mass media and the like.
  - Damage to the Alliance's assets in the event of funds in its charge.
  - Using false scientific information or intimidating or misleading citizen scientists for personal gain.
  - Others that are serious and shall be determined and substantiated by the Conduct Committee.

The Alliance's right to act in accordance with the criminal laws of its member countries is maintained.



**Complementary aspects:** The Operating agreements document describes the procedure for initiating processes submitted to the Conduct Committee and institutional responsibilities and other aspects not provided for in this code, as long as they allow for the development of fair processes.

***We would like to inform our readers that the original version of this document is in Spanish ([available here](#)) (or can be requested by email to [gleite@wcs.org](mailto:gleite@wcs.org)). In case of discrepancy with other versions in different languages, the Spanish version will take precedence and will be the only one valid for all purposes.***