



**IRHA**

MUTUAL RESPECT

EQUALITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMPLIANCE

TRANSPARENCY

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**ETHICAL**

**CHARTER**

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## Glossary

1. GePluie: Rainwater Management
2. IWRM: Integrated Water Resources Management
3. IRHA: International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance
4. SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
5. NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

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# Preamble

IRHA's Ethical Charter is born from the organisation's own foundational values—principles that have guided its work since the very beginning. These values were formalised into a charter that now serves as a permanent and essential compass for all our activities, reflecting the belief that IRHA's mission cannot be separated from strong ethical behaviour at both individual and organisational levels.

The purpose of this Ethical Charter is to ensure that everyone involved with IRHA—whether staff, consultants, Alliance Members or partners can fully understand, embody, and champion the ethical standards that uphold our integrity.

We are grateful for your dedication to maintaining and promoting these values in everything you do.

## Our Commitments

### For people

IRHA is committed to using rainwater to create the conditions for and secure a reliable supply of clean water, thereby helping to meet the basic needs of populations, namely access to drinking water, hygiene and food security.

### For women

In many of the regions where we operate, women and children shoulder the daily responsibility of collecting 30–50 liters of water for their households—a burden that undermines their health, safety and long-term opportunities. The time lost to this unpaid chore fuels school dropout, limits income generation and exposes them to physical risks and violence. Yet, despite being the primary users of water, women remain widely excluded from decisions on water management and community infrastructure. IRHA's strategy therefore places gender equity at the core of water access solutions, prioritising systems that reduce this burden while strengthening women's leadership and participation in water governance.

Therefore, IRHA recognizes that women's rights are closely linked to water rights and is committed to promoting women's rights by strengthening the capacities of women's groups in the maintenance, restoration and management of natural resources, ensuring their access to land, means of production and therefore entrepreneurship, and guaranteeing them a space for discussion, exchange and freedom to build their projects.

### ... and nature

The IRHA is committed to water and soil conservation and to the restoration of ecosystems through reforestation and regenerative initiatives, combined with integrated water resource management (IWRM) measures, the reintroduction of agroforestry and community capacity building.

### ... mindful of the need to rethink our systems.

The IRHA is committed to more efficient and sustainable rainwater management in cities through awareness-raising and information campaigns on a common culture of water management, shared by decision-makers, technicians, urban planners, developers, landscape architects and water management professionals.

This commitment also takes the form of educational workshops in schools to stimulate children's curiosity about the topic of rainwater in cities.

### Long-term solutions

The mandate received at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 committed the then newly created IRHA to promoting rainwater as a precious resource so that its management as such would contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals aimed at reducing poverty worldwide. Consequently, the IRHA is by definition an environmentally and socially responsible organisation.

## Seeking sustainable and equitable solutions

IRHA pays close attention to implementing solutions that are adapted to the reality on the ground and the surrounding ecosystem, and that also take into account the capacities, know-how and resources available to the beneficiary population. The aim is to enable them to easily take ownership of, replicate and sustain the infrastructure put in place.

In addition, IRHA attaches great importance to monitoring/evaluating the performance of its projects with its local partners. To ensure this, results-based project management, monitoring of indicators and achievement of objectives provide a better understanding of the impact of IRHA's interventions on the basis of quantifiable results.

By implementing sustainable and equitable solutions, IRHA ensures that its projects develop local expertise while using local materials to ensure the sustainability of the solution put in place.

### A. Action based on demand in response to the needs of vulnerable populations

When implementing its projects, IRHA ensures that it develops contextualised solutions based on a detailed understanding of local needs so that the support provided is as appropriate as possible to the realities on the ground and the population.

Assistance to beneficiaries cannot be imposed, and to ensure the sustainability of the project and the infrastructure put in place, IRHA ensures that local communities, authorities and partner associations are fully involved in the design and implementation of projects.

By implementing demand-driven solutions that are responsive to the needs and capabilities of the beneficiary population, IRHA ensures that its intervention is necessary, useful and sustainable.

## Responsible action

### A. Working with respect and understanding

IRHA ensures that all its activities are carried out with mutual respect and respect for human rights, whether on its premises, in its fieldwork, its awareness campaigns or its fundraising activities. IRHA is also committed to respecting diversity in terms of gender, origin, beliefs, religion, convictions and political affiliations.

### B. Respect for communities and their customs

The behaviour of IRHA members and staff must be exemplary, especially when travelling on business to countries where projects are being implemented.

The IRHA is committed to treating the communities in which it operates with respect and dignity, to respecting the cultures, customs and traditions of all peoples, and to prohibiting behaviour that is unacceptable in a particular cultural context.

It is important for IRHA to understand the relationship, use and impact of communities on their environment in order to develop a project that is tailored to the needs of the communities and involves them in the project. IRHA is convinced that it is by working proactively with communities dependent on rainwater resources and by reaching compromises between its various conservation and poverty reduction objectives that its projects will be most effective.

### C. Environmental protection

As an association involved in environmental protection and climate change resilience, IRHA has a duty to minimise its carbon footprint. To this end, IRHA is committed to implementing carbon offset initiatives.

As such, the IRHA is committed to assessing its carbon impact in order to implement offsetting initiatives in the projects it carries out in the field.

The first phase of this action is to assess the IRHA's carbon footprint.

In a second phase, IRHA will take the necessary measures to implement compensation initiatives in the projects it carries out in the field, which will take the form of various

actions depending on the programme and project in question (as mentioned in point C. Environmental protection).

IRHA staff are also committed to promoting sustainable mobility (carpooling, public transport, cycling, etc.) for their journeys between home and work. In addition, IRHA is committed to limiting the printing of paper documents and recycling ink cartridges.

Finally, the IRHA has chosen to locate its premises in the Maison de l'Environnement in Geneva (MIE2), a building equipped with environmentally friendly technologies and systems that are sensitive to temperature variations.

## Relations between employees and with our partners

### A. Respect, equality and non-discrimination

The IRHA treats all people with respect and dignity, without distinction (origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status, political opinions, etc.). All employment decisions are based on skills and merit.

Staff respect diversity, combat all forms of discrimination and take local laws, cultures and customs into account when working abroad.

### B. Harassment, exploitation and abuse

All forms of harassment—psychological, verbal, physical or sexual—are prohibited. Any close contact must be consensual.

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Sexual relations with beneficiaries or members of local communities;
- Any sexual act involving a person under the age of 18 (without exception);
- The exchange of goods, services, employment or money for sexual acts or favours;
- Any emotional or psychological abuse or exploitation of vulnerable persons;
- Any abuse of power in professional relationships.

Managers must prevent such behaviour and intervene whenever necessary.

### C. Corruption, fraud and conflicts of interest

Staff shall act with integrity, transparency and honesty.

It is prohibited to offer or accept undue advantages (money, valuables, contracts, etc.). Symbolic gifts of low value may be accepted if they are declared.

Any situation involving a conflict of interest (financial, personal, family or intimate) must be reported.

### D. Health, safety and responsible conduct

Employees comply with health and safety rules and avoid any behaviour that could endanger their integrity or that of others.

### E. Use of resources and digital integrity

IRHA resources and equipment must be used responsibly.

The following are prohibited:

- Any illegal activity using IRHA tools;
- Any extremist, abusive, intimidating or pornographic content;
- Any material depicting violence against children or vulnerable persons.

### F. Respect for the environment

Staff shall endeavour to reduce their carbon footprint, limit the use of natural resources, avoid harmful substances and choose partners that respect the environment and human rights.

### G. Protection against reprisals

Anyone who reports inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour in good faith is protected. Retaliation is prohibited and punishable by sanctions.

### H. Compliance with the law

Staff must be familiar with and comply with the laws applicable to their activities (labour, taxation, NGO regulations).

## Responsibilities towards our partners

### A. Responsibilities towards local partners

Created to become a universal platform for rainwater managers, one of the IRHA's overall objectives is to create

a unified movement by offering rainwater management stakeholders a forum for discussion where everyone can find something to benefit from, enabling them to work together. For this reason, it has taken the form of an alliance, bringing together member organisations, academic and scientific institutes, representatives of authorities and individuals who want to contribute to the expansion of rainwater harvesting practices. In this way, the IRHA works to establish a strong global network that contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The IRHA's work is carried out through local partners, which are generally local NGOs. The watchwords for them and for the IRHA are the same: partnership and collegiality.

As a representative and unifying body for individuals and organisations involved in Rainwater management, the IRHA promotes the common interests of all its members, regardless of gender, race, religion, political affiliation or any other discriminatory criteria.

The first obligation that the IRHA imposes on itself in its partnerships (both for itself and for its partners) is the clear observance of ethical and transparent work that complies in every respect with the commitments set out in this Ethical Charter.

### **B. Responsibility towards funders**

Without funding, no project can be implemented. For this reason, funders are an integral part of every action. In their relations with IRHA, they are referred to as "Financial Partners".

The choice of Financial Partners is of great importance to the IRHA. With all due respect to each of the funders around the world, the IRHA excludes funding from obscure sources, or from companies and manufacturers that heavily pollute the environment or produce services or materials that endanger the health of others or peace (e.g. cigarette and arms manufacturers)..

The IRHA respects the moral values of its financial partners and reflects this in its actions.

IRHA respects the wishes of its financial partners to remain anonymous or to make their names and actions known, depending on their recommendations. IRHA always respects its moral and financial responsibility

towards its financial partners and ensures transparency in all its actions.

Just as the IRHA submits to strict financial controls, it expects its partners to submit to the same requirements.

### **C. Responsibility towards beneficiaries**

All IRHA's dealings with beneficiaries will be characterised by openness and transparency. IRHA fully recognises the need to be accountable for its activities, both financially and in terms of effectiveness.

IRHA also seeks to report openly on the impact and effectiveness of its projects. To this end, IRHA is committed to implementing monthly financial and activity monitoring based on strict criteria and performance indicators in order to minimise the waste of valuable resources.

## **Disinterested management, anti-fraud and anti-corruption**

### **A. Rigorous management and financial transparency**

The material and financial resources made available to the association through the contributions of its donors are used rationally and economically. The association is committed to controlling its expenditure and optimising the use of the funds at its disposal.

Furthermore, the IRHA is deeply committed to the relationships of trust it develops and maintains with the public. The annual financial statements, audited by an independent supervisory body, and the activity reports are available to anyone interested.

### **B. Zero tolerance for fraud, corruption and collusion**

The IRHA is committed to ensuring that all exchanges (entertainment, invitations, gifts, etc.) are – and are perceived to be – legal, of minor importance and not intended to influence commercial transactions.

The IRHA is therefore committed to ensuring that none of the forms of corruption or fraud listed below occur:

- Fraud: intentional deception by any person entrusted with IRHA resources for personal gain or to harm the IRHA.
- Corruption: inappropriate abuse of power for private gain.
- Offering, giving, accepting, or soliciting anything of value in order to influence the action or in of an agent in the exercise of their public or legal duties.
- Facilitation payments: payments made to secure or expedite routine administrative or governmental procedures.
- Embezzlement, misappropriation, misrepresentation, concealment of important facts in order to gain an unfair advantage, etc.
- Collusion: complicity with others in any of the above practices in order to gain a collective advantage.

### C. Zero tolerance for offences in the receipt and distribution of funds

The IRHA is committed to exercising due diligence in the distribution of funds it receives. It is also committed to being vigilant about the donations it receives in order to prevent donations that would knowingly aid and/or encourage tax evasion, money laundering, terrorism, or any other illegal activity.

## IRHA's reputation

### A. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises when any personal, family or business relationship, or any activity, association or interest outside the IRHA is likely to affect the ability to act in the best interests of the IRHA, or to interfere with the responsibilities entrusted to the IRHA in the course of its activities.

It is important to avoid any kind of conflict of interest. If an IRHA staff member is involved in an actual or potential conflict of interest, it must be reported immediately. The situation will be reviewed, and measures will be taken to ensure that the conflict is not abusive or perceived as such.

### B. Confidentiality and discretion

In the course of its duties and those of its partnerships, exclusive and confidential information may be

communicated to the IRHA. The IRHA is required to respect the confidentiality of this information at all times. Therefore, the IRHA must not disclose, publish or share this information unless expressly authorised to do so or legally obliged to do so.

### C. Social media and public communication

The IRHA respects the rights of its employees to have personal opinions and to join groups. However, when IRHA staff speak in public or through the media as representatives of the IRHA, they must bear in mind that they are shaping the IRHA's image in the eyes of the general public. Therefore, when communicating, IRHA staff must do so with transparency, honesty and accuracy, while complying with the IRHA's code of ethics.

### D. Protection of IRHA property

The ethical charter of the IRHA Secretariat includes the requirement to manage its assets in an economical, rational and equitable manner and to protect them. IRHA members undertake to use IRHA assets and resources responsibly and to account for their use.

IRHA members undertake to use IRHA computer equipment, software, email and social media platforms in a responsible and ethical manner, and in particular to:

- Not engaging in activities that are illegal under local or international law or activities that encourage conduct that would constitute a criminal offence. This includes any material that intimidates or harasses any group based on protected characteristics or encourages extremism.
- Not using IRHA computer equipment to post, download, create, distribute or save in any format inappropriate or abusive material, including, but not limited to, pornography or depictions of abuse of children or vulnerable persons.

### E. Tolerance and respect at forums and public events

All IRHA staff must demonstrate exemplary behaviour at all times when participating in intergovernmental forums or other public events. Therefore, the IRHA must:

- Act in accordance with the ethical rules of the forum and within the framework of its associated activities;

- Establish an open and constructive dialogue between the parties and observers;
- Adhere to the principles of national sovereignty and the primacy of states in negotiations;
- Treat all recognised symbols of all nations with respect;
- Demonstrate unwavering respect and tolerance for the culture and customs of others (such as political or religious beliefs).

#### **F. Respect for intellectual property and image rights**

Aware of the importance of respecting everyone's image rights, the IRHA undertakes to always ensure that all persons concerned have clearly and explicitly consented to the use (publication, commercialisation) of their image.

Furthermore, in accordance with intellectual property law, the IRHA undertakes to mention photographic credits in order to ensure that the author's work is protected.

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