

ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY
OF THE
VALLÉE D'OSTERLOG ENDEMIC
GARDEN FOUNDATION

VALLÉE D'OSTERLOG ENDEMIC GARDEN FOUNDATION



The Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (VOEGF) was established as a body corporate under the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation Act No. 19 of 31 July 2007. The Act was proclaimed to come into operation on the 4th September 2007 under Proclamation No 17 of 2007 and the Garden has officially been opened to the general public and tourist on 11 June 2014.

The Garden is managed by the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation and it is among one of the very last nature sanctuaries of biodiversity in Mauritius which is situated at Le Val nestled in between Mountain Lagrave and Mountain Laselle of the Créoles Mountain Range.

The Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden has a rich area of pristine forest and it stretches over 275 hectares. Several critically endangered endemic and indigenous plant species are present in the valley such as the *Eugenia bojeri* (Bois clou), *Pandanus iceryi* (Vacoas), *Sideroxylon grandiflorum* (Tambalacoque), *Diospyros boutoniana* (Ebene marbré à grosse feuilles) and *Olax psittacorum* (Bois Perroquet). Rare fauna species such as *Hypsipetes olivaceus* (Mauritius Black Bulbul), *Zosteropus mauritianus* (Mauritius Grey White Eye), *Taphozous mauritianus* (Grey tomb bat) have also been sighted at Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden.

As at to date, some 18 hectares of native/endemic forest is under restoration where invasive plant species have been removed and the following basis amenities have been set up:

- ✓ An Office Block with a Visitors Centre
- ✓ Toilet blocks
- ✓ A Nursery
- ✓ 6 Gazebos and 1 Kiosk
- ✓ A Rain Water Harvesting System
- ✓ Parking area for visitors
- ✓ A nature track of 2km long
- ✓ A Pink Pigeon Display Facility
- ✓ A modern shadehouse
- ✓ An Open Cabin Bus for visitors
- ✓ A Biking Trail of 7km long
- ✓ A wheel track road of 1.5km long
- ✓ A Security Post
- ✓ A Ticket Office
- ✓ A Mess room
- ✓ A Tortoise Pen
- ✓ A Mirador
- ✓ A Viewpoint
- ✓ An Awareness Centre

VISION, MISSION & GOALS

VISION

- ✓ To be the reference Endemic Garden of Mauritius.

MISSION

- ✓ To contribute to biodiversity conservation at global level and knowledge dissemination and research of the endemic flora and fauna of Mauritius.

GOALS

- ✓ To conserve and maintain the rarest endemic and native species of Mauritius.
- ✓ To make the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden a great place to visit.
- ✓ To increase knowledge, understanding and propagation of the country's fauna & flora.
- ✓ Sharing of knowledge through collaborative partnership with the global community and in line with International Conventions.

OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FOUNDATION

The Foundation has the following statutory objects and functions:

- (a) to manage, administer, conserve, maintain and develop the Garden;
- (b) to manage, conserve and maintain any historical monument or object, building or structure in the Garden;
- (c) to care for, conserve and preserve the flora and fauna in the Garden;
- (d) to encourage visits to the Garden by members of the public by promoting the unique value of the Garden and, in so doing, to enable them to acquire greater knowledge about the endemic flora and fauna within the State of Mauritius;
- (e) to ensure the protection of the environment and flora and fauna in the Garden;
- (f) to control and remove all species which can be harmful to the Garden;
- (g) to disseminate knowledge with respect to endemic flora and fauna through publications and other means;
- (h) to procure specimens of endemic flora and fauna for the purposes of the Act;
- (i) to obtain scientific data, assemble collections, produce audio and video materials and engage in scientific research on endemic flora and fauna;
- (j) to set up, maintain and develop a nursery and such other facilities as it considers appropriate for the multiplication and propagation of endemic flora and fauna;
- (k) to establish linkages with similar bodies and with research and extension institutions engaged in matters pertaining to horticulture, biology and related activities

Anti-Corruption Policy

1.0 Introduction

The Vallée d’Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (VOEGF) recognises that risks of corruption are present and may occur within or in relation to the organisation. The VOEGF is committed to maintain the highest level of integrity through the adoption of and adherence to corruption prevention strategies.

This Anti-Corruption Policy (ACP) sets out the full commitment of the VOEGF for the deterrence and detection of corruption and for adherence to a culture of integrity.

2.0 Statement of Intent

The VOEGF shall not tolerate corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from within or in relation to the Foundation. It expects the highest standards of conduct from staff, management, board members and those who have dealings with the organisation including stakeholders and the general public. It is committed to ensuring that the risks of corruption and the potential losses that might result are minimised.

3.0 Policy Statement

The VOEGF is committed to promoting and adhering to the highest standards of probity, transparency and accountability in the operations and management of the organisation. Through this Policy, the VOEGF engages itself to fully and unequivocally adopt a zero-tolerance stance towards corruption and malpractices and shall ensure compliance with the anti-corruption legislation.

4.0 Anti-Corruption Commitment

By signing the Anti-Corruption Commitment, the VOEGF has committed itself to use all available means and resources at its disposal to combat corruption in all its forms at all times including the application of appropriate prevention and detection control measures.

For the purpose of ensuring sound implementation of this Policy, the VOEGF shall ensure that:

- employees have sufficient knowledge concerning the ACP and that it is applied to all undertakings.
- adequate controls to counteract corruption are known and used within the organisation.
- clear procedures and systems for reporting suspected cases of corruption are present in the organisation.
- the organisation’s ACP has been disseminated to all stakeholders.

The main objective of this ACP is to strengthen and sustain an integrity culture within the organisation. Among others, this will be achieved through:

- the setting-up of effective processes characterised by broad participation and transparency;
- regular evaluation of corruption risks, systems and procedures;
- ensuring that projects have clearly formulated goals, expected results as well as are subject to monitoring and follow-ups; and
- learning from experiences and continually improving organisational performance and the corporate image.

5.0 Scope and Applicability

This Policy covers measures and practices of the VOEGF on preventing and combating corrupt, fraudulent, collusive or coercive practices in its activities and operations. This Policy applies to Board members, management, employees as well as, consultants, suppliers, contractors, outside agencies doing business, and or any other parties having a business relationship with the organisation. This Policy ensures that each stakeholder performs his duties and responsibilities with integrity and professionalism.

6.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, an act of corruption is defined as per Section 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act as amended.

"act of corruption" -

(a) means an act which constitutes a corruption offence; and

(b) includes -

- (i) any conduct whereby, in return for a gratification, a person does or neglects from doing an act in contravention of his public duties;
- (ii) the offer, promise, soliciting or receipt of a gratification as an inducement or reward to a person to do or not to do any act, with a corrupt intention;
- (iii) the abuse of a public or private office for private gain;
- (iv) an agreement between 2 or more persons to act or refrain from acting in violation of a person's duties in the private or public sector for profit or gain;
- (v) any conduct whereby a person accepts or obtains, or agrees to accept or attempts to obtain, from any person, for himself or for any other person, any gratification for inducing a public official, by corrupt or illegal means, or by the exercise of personal influence, to do or abstain from doing an act in the exercise of his duties to show favour or disfavour to any person.

All the sections of the law penalizing corruption offences are described in sections 4 to 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002 as amended. These include, amongst others, bribery by public

official, bribery of public official, taking gratification to screen an offender from punishment, public official using his office for gratification, traffic d'influence and conflict of interests.

The attention of public officers is also brought to the Declarations of Assets Act 2018 where concerned public officers should make timely declaration of assets and liabilities.

7.0 Responsibilities for implementing the Policy

The Anti-Corruption Committee - The responsibility to develop and coordinate the implementation of the Policy shall rest upon the Anti-Corruption Committee (ACC) established for the purpose. The ACC shall set priorities, provide advice on ethical issues and communicate the Policy to management and staff. The Committee shall comprise members from both operational and support departments of the institution, the Integrity Officer and where possible the Internal Auditor or Internal Control Officer.

Chairperson of the ACC: The Director will chair the all meetings of the Committee.

The ACC shall be responsible for coordinating and implementing the ACP. It shall develop a time-bound programme with clear and precise deliverables and related budget and execute it once approved by management. The organisation shall designate an officer to act as Secretary to the Committee.

The Committee shall meet on a regular basis, preferably every month or as decided by the Chairperson of the ACC. The Chair shall decide upon the setting up of sub-committees to assist the ACC in the implementation of any initiatives decided by the ACC. Such sub-committees may be tasked with specific assignments such as the conduct of Corruption Risk Assessment exercises in specific areas in the organisation and in the implementation of anti-corruption initiatives approved by the ACC.

Role of Management - It is the responsibility of directors and managers to promote the ACP within their areas of operation. Managers are expected to actively deter, prevent and detect corruption by maintaining effective control systems and ensuring that their staff are familiar with the Policy.

Role of Employees – Each employee shall read, be familiar with and strictly comply with the Policy. The organisation shall ensure that each employee is provided with either a hard or soft copy of this Policy.

Role of Internal Audit – The Internal Audit has the responsibility to ensure the effectiveness and adequacy of the Internal Control System in place. It should ensure that system is subject to regular audit to provide assurance that they are effective in countering corruption opportunities.

Role of Integrity Officer – An Integrity officer, designated by the organisation, is expected to act as secretary of the ACC, coordinate with the ICAC in the implementation of integrity and ethics programme and training and facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption policies and procedures.

Role of the Ex-Officio member – The Ex-Officio member is an ICAC officer appointed by the ICAC with a view to guide and advise the Committee on issues tabled at the level of the Committee. The Ex-Officio member is a representative from the ICAC who will act as a facilitator to the organisation and provide relevant support and guidance in the implementation of the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework (PSACF).

8.0 Risk Assessment

The organisation is conscious that the risks of corruption may occur in every sphere of its activities and that these are dynamic and may evolve. In its endeavour to proactively address risks of corruption, the VOEFG shall ensure that a proper risk management process is in place. Risk assessment should focus on a thorough analysis of the functional activities in close collaboration with officers involved in the process with a view to identifying potential or actual corruption risk areas. With respect to risks identified necessary corruption prevention and control measures including policies and procedures should be developed to address the risks. The responsibility to plan, coordinate and monitor the risk management process rests with the ACC and management.

9.0 Handling and reporting corruption

Reporting suspected cases of corruption - Notwithstanding Section 44(1) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002 which provides that where an officer of a public body suspects that an act of corruption has been committed within or in relation to that public body, he **shall** forthwith make a written report to the ICAC. In this connection, the VOEFG shall put in place measures that shall facilitate the reporting of suspected cases.

S 45 of the PoCA as amended provides that where in the exercise of his functions, the chief executive of a public body is of the opinion that an act of corruption may have occurred, he may refer to the ICAC for investigation. The VOEFG may set up a committee to assist the head of the organisation in determining whether there is reasonable doubt for suspicion of corruption prior to referral of the case to the ICAC for investigation.

Confidentiality - Information pertaining to complaints shall not be disclosed to any unauthorised party.

10.0 Protection of whistleblowers

There will be no reprisal by management against the “public official” who in good faith reports an act of corruption or malpractice or suspected illegal and dishonest activity that s/he has witnessed.

11.0 False Disclosures

It is important to point out that disciplinary actions may be taken against any person who knowingly has made false allegations.

12.0 Sanctions

The VOEGF is committed to ensuring that this Policy is duly implemented in the organisation.

Disciplinary measures in accordance with established procedures will be taken against any staff who is found guilty of a breach of the provisions contained in this Policy.

13.0 Training and Communications

The VOEGF recognises that the success of this Policy depends on effective training, communications and the awareness of directors, managers and employees throughout the organisation. Management should ensure that the ACP is clearly disseminated to all staff and that its content is understood.

14.0 Review of Policy

This Policy may be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary or in the event of any changes in the laws and regulations that are relevant to the VOEGF. The Chairperson of the ACC shall recommend the review to the Board as applicable.

15.0 Approval

This Policy has been approved by the Board of the Foundation on 03 March 2022.