

Starting from their commitment to ensuring sustainable economic and social development, encouraging public debate in local authorities, full and uninterrupted exercise of the rights and freedoms of the citizens and encouraging their participation in decision-making on the local level, the local self-government units have adopted the following

## **INTEGRITY POLICY**

### I Purpose and Scope of the Integrity Policy

The purpose of this policy is to promote integrity at the political and administrative level as a basis for encouraging ethical behaviour, resilience to corruption, creation of conditions for social development, participation of citizens in decision-making on local needs and interests, and increased trust of citizens in the LSUs.

The integrity policy covers the bodies of the local self-government unit (members of the Council and the Mayor) and all employees in the municipal administration.

Corrupt behaviour is not tolerated in the Local Self-Government Unit!

Corruption is a serious threat to the rule of law, democracy, human rights and freedoms, equality and social justice, which undermines the development and threatens the stability of democratic institutions, as well as the moral foundations of a society.

Any other form of unethical, criminal or other illegal behaviour is not tolerated in the local government unit.

The local government unit strives to develop a strong organizational structure and a coherent integrity management system.

In that sense, the term *integrity* refers to any legal, professional, independent, impartial, ethical, responsible, transparent and accountable performance of operations whereby official and elected persons protect their reputation and the reputation of the local self-government unit, eliminate risks and remove suspicions of emergence and development of corruption, thereby ensuring citizens' trust in the performance of public functions and in the work of public institutions at the local level.

The term corruption refers to abuse of office, public function, official duty or position for the purpose of gaining benefit, directly or through an intermediary, for oneself or for another.

## II. Components of the Integrity Policy

1. Public interest and prevention of corruption and conflict of interest
2. Professionalism and work ethics
3. Protected reporting
4. Human resource management
5. Efficient, economical and effective operation
6. Transparency, accountability and participation
7. Quality management
8. Equal opportunities for Women and Men

### 2.1. Public Interest and Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest

In the exercise of their powers and duties, the mayor, members of the Council and all employees in the municipal administration respect the principles of legality, equality and publicity, ethical norms and professional standards, without discrimination or favouring anyone and with full respect for the public interest.

In doing so, they take care not to put themselves in a situation of conflict of interest, and in the exercise of their public functions and duties they must not be guided by personal, family, religious, party and ethnic interests, nor by pressures and promises from their superior or any other person.

Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be reported to the integrity officer, in accordance with the guidelines for prevention of conflict of interest.

Officials must not receive gifts, privileges or hospitality. Exceptions to this prohibition are established by law. Gifts, whether received or refused, which could not be returned, and regardless of their value, must be recorded, and a copy of the records of received gifts shall be submitted to the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, in accordance with the law.

### 2.2. Professionalism and Work Ethics

Everyone is obligated to act conscientiously, professionally, responsibly, honestly, efficiently and impartially in the performance of his/her public function and official duty.

Employees in the municipal administration must adhere to the Code for Administrative Servants.

The Mayor and the members of the Council must adhere to the highest ethical standards, in accordance with the law and the Code of Ethics for Local Government Officials, to protect the public interest, honour and reputation of the public function.

Ethical standards are applied in the relations with colleagues, superiors and clients, in the workplace, but also in private life and public relations.

### 2.3. Protected Reporting

Whistleblowers are exemplary colleagues and citizens who play an extremely important role in the protection of public interest, integrity and reputation of LSUs.

The local self-government unit provides conditions for protected internal reporting of reasonable suspicions and knowledge that criminal or other illegal or impermissible act that violates or threatens the public interest has been, is being or is likely to be committed.

The local self-government unit encourages all employees, job candidates, volunteers, engaged persons, persons who have or have had business relationship with the institution, as well as persons who use or have used services in the institution, to report their knowledge or suspicions of criminal, unethical or other illegal or impermissible action in the local self-government unit to the authorized person for receiving reports from whistleblowers.

The local self-government unit handles the reports in accordance with the Rulebook on Protected Internal Reporting in the Public Sector Institutions (reference to be made to the rulebook/procedure of the local self-government unit if adopted). In doing so, the municipal administration is obligated to inform potential whistleblowers about the procedure for protected reporting, the legal provisions for protection of whistleblowers and the possibility of protected reporting to the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, the Ministry of Interior, the competent Public Prosecutor's Office or the Ombudsman.

The mayor and management structures take measures to guarantee the confidentiality and protection of whistleblowers.

### 2.4. Human Resource Management

Integrity is promoted as part of human resource management in the local self-government unit. Positive examples of personal and professional integrity are constantly promoted and rewarded.

Managers apply ethical leadership and identifying and addressing risks is part of their work tasks. The local self-government unit promotes an open organizational culture where problems, ethical dilemmas, shortcomings are freely discussed, and advice and guidance are provided for their resolution.

### 2.5. Efficient, Economical and Effective Operation

The local self-government unit strives for rational use of local resources, care for property and resources, and protection and improvement of the environment. The budget of the local self-government unit is adopted and implemented through a transparent and participatory

process in all phases of the budget cycle, applying priority-based and gender-responsive budgeting.

The local self-government unit implements a public procurement system that increases the quality and volume of services it delivers to citizens, as well as the trust of the business community in the local self-government unit and its administration, in accordance with the positive legal regulations.

## 2.6. Transparency, Accountability and Participation

The local self-government unit informs the public about its work through its website, the municipal newspaper, press conferences, announcements and other tools.

The local self-government unit provides quick and easy access to public information. Available information is proactively published on its website and regularly updated, in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Free Access to Public Information.

Decisions are made through open and inclusive stakeholder consultation processes and are subject to oversight and control mechanisms.

In promoting the culture of integrity, the local self-government unit cooperates with civil society organizations, the business community and other stakeholders.

## 2.7. Quality Management

Improving the services offered to citizens is a top priority. The local self-government unit establishes a system of operations through which operations and processes are constantly improved, risks and costs are reduced, employee motivation is improved, and the overall results of operations are monitored.

Delivery is promoted and quality of local services is improved through responsible planning, management and implementation of processes and promotion of a culture of excellence in public administration, in accordance with the international standard ISO 9001, the Common Assessment Framework - CAF and other quality standards in the public sector.

## 2.8. Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

The local self-government unit strives to promote gender equality in the Council and in the municipal administration and recognizes the importance of consistent implementation of the obligations and responsibilities of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

The policies implemented by the local self-government unit are gender sensitive and strive to ensure equal visibility, emancipation, responsibility and participation of both women and men in all spheres of social life. The local self-government unit does not tolerate any direct or

indirect discrimination based on gender, nor any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical sexual or any other type of harassment.

### III. Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

#### 3.1. Corruption Risk Management

The local self-government unit establishes an efficient system of internal control and audit in accordance with the principles of the Public Internal Financial Control. Corruption Risk Management is an important part of the systemic risk management within that system.

The Mayor and the management structures of the local self-government unit are responsible for assessing and eliminating risks that contribute to the occurrence of corruption, embezzlement, fraud, conflict of interest, use of influence and connections to obtain preferential treatment or any other form of illegal or unethical behaviour.

The head of the internal audit unit advises the Mayor and all managers in the local self-government unit on risk management.

#### 3.2. Implementation of the Integrity Policy

The care for the implementation of the Integrity Policy in the local self-government unit is individual and collective.

The mayor and management structures are responsible for establishing and implementing the integrity system, as well as for its promotion by personal example and by taking measures for collective acceptance of the integrity policy and adherence to it by the members of the Council and the municipal administration.

The mayor, members of the Council and all employees of the municipal administration are obligated to report any corruption-related criminal offense and any violation of the provisions of the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest of which they have become aware in the course of their work, as well as allegations or suspicions of illegal conduct or violations of the Code. Furthermore, they are obligated to report if asked to act contrary to the Constitution, law, code or other regulation.

Violations of the integrity standards are subject to disciplinary, misdemeanour or criminal proceedings to determine liability in accordance with the law.

#### 3.3. Monitoring and Reporting

The local self-government unit regularly and promptly informs the public about cases of violation of ethics and integrity, measures taken and results, abiding by the principles of fair and appropriate treatment and protection of the privacy and confidentiality.

The mayor appoints an integrity officer, responsible for providing advice and guidance in the field of ethics and integrity.

The local self-government unit cooperates with the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and other institutions involved in the prevention and the fight against corruption.