

ProVeg Grants Programme

Safe Space Policy

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Policy Purpose

The ProVeg Grants Programme (“PVGP”) is committed to providing a safe and professional working environment free from all forms of inappropriate conduct, including discrimination, bullying, intimidation, non-sexual harassment, sexual and other forms of harassment including racial harassment and species harassment, other inappropriate conduct, and retaliation (summarized as “Discrimination and Harassment” throughout this policy).

Discrimination and Harassment can have significant negative effects on the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of individuals experiencing or witnessing these harmful behaviours. Discrimination and Harassment can also harm team morale, overall culture, productivity, long-term sustainability, and ultimately, our ability to carry out our mission to empower advocates to help to create a world where everyone chooses delicious and healthy food that is good for all humans, animals, and our planet.

The PVGP has therefore developed this policy to help make obvious the organisation’s commitment to not only complying with all Discrimination and Harassment laws in the countries in which we operate, but to exceed the law in many regards as a way to foster an organisational culture in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to everyone who is involved in the ProVeg Grants Programme. This includes ProVeg employees and contractors, ProVeg Grantees and their workplaces, and any other stakeholder who is involved in our Grants Programme. For the purposes of this policy, we will use the term “Stakeholders” to refer to all of these individuals collectively.

Designated People

The PVGP has selected two people to act as “Designated People.” Designated People have completed specialised training and are qualified to receive and investigate Discrimination and Harassment complaints. Designated People also have access to external expert support as needed.

The names and contact information for the Designated People are:

- Martin Pseno martin.pseno@proveg.org
- Nina Stummvoll nina.stummvoll@proveg.org

Communal Responsibilities

Every Stakeholder is responsible for contributing to a positive work environment and maintaining a professional and respectful workplace.

And, as part of that communal responsibility, we ask that any Stakeholder who becomes aware of Discrimination or Harassment in the PVGP workplace or the workplace of a grantee –even if they are not directly involved–report it to one of the two specially-trained “designated people” that we have noted above.

Since we can only act on inappropriate conduct that we are aware of, we must emphasise how important it is that you never hesitate to inform one of the two Designated People of any possible Discriminatory or Harassing behaviours. They will help to determine if the questionable conduct is considered to be inappropriate and will help to determine next steps to take, if any. We truly need to work together and hold one another accountable for creating a safe space for everyone.

Definitions

In order to ensure that we all understand the meaning of the different words that we are using in this policy, we have included definitions. While it can be challenging to define words, we have also included examples in hopes that this might provide greater clarity. If any of these definitions are unclear, however, please talk to one of our Designated Persons, who will be happy to help to explain it to you further.

Workplace

The workplace is defined as any place, physical or virtual, where PVGP-related or PVGP grantee activities occur, including meetings, conferences, training sessions, travel, social functions, and electronic communication. Given the nature of our work, we acknowledge that most of our communications are virtual, and as such, virtual communications includes but are not limited to Google Workspace, Slack, Zoom, email, text, social media, phone calls, and any other PVGP-related communication tools.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the differential treatment of or hostility toward an individual on the basis of certain individually identifying characteristics such as race, colour, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship, religion, sex, gender or gender expression, sexual orientation, class, caste, marital status, age, ability, or any other factor that is legislatively protected in the country in which the individual works.

ProVeg extends its definition of discrimination to include the differential treatment of or hostility toward anyone based on any characteristics such as socioeconomic status, body size, political affiliation, or other belief or identity-based expression, regardless of legislative protection in their countries.

Bullying, Intimidation, and Non-Sexual Harassment

Bullying, intimidation, and non-sexual harassment refer to unwelcome conduct—including physical, verbal, and nonverbal behaviors—that upsets, demeans, humiliates, intimidates, or threatens an individual or group. Harassment may occur as one incident or many, and if these behaviours become habitual they may be described as bullying.

Harassment has the purpose and/or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance, adversely affecting an individual's employment opportunities, and may also impact an individual's dignity and self-respect. When the conduct is pervasive or severe, it can create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Gaslighting
- Verbal aggression or yelling
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping
- Humiliation in front of colleagues, such as subjecting one to practical jokes or ridicule
- Offensive jokes or comments that undermine the individual's role

- The display or distribution of material showing hostility or aversion toward an individual or group in the Workplace, printed or electronic
- The threat, attempt, or use of physical force against a Stakeholder in the Workplace that causes or could cause physical injury
- The threat of legal actions
- The threat, attempt, or use of blackmail, hindering one's career opportunities, or harming one's reputation
- Unreasonable amount of contact or otherwise unwelcome contact via email, messaging, social media, calls, or otherwise

Harassment can occur between two or more people regardless of whether or not one is in a position of power.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, and nonverbal behaviors of a sexual or intimate nature. Sexual harassment may include both overt and subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different genders, or those who don't identify with a specific gender.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome physical contact, including touching, patting, pinching, grabbing, stroking, kissing, hugging, or brushing against another's body
- Whistling, leering, using terms of endearment, or other sexually-suggestive gestures
- Stories, teasing, jokes, or innuendo with a sexual tone
- Sexually explicit messages or the display of sexually explicit material, printed or electronic
- Sexual-related questions or questions about one's relationship status
- Comments about one's body, sexual activity, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies
- Unwanted flirtations or sexual advances
- Pressure for sexual activity and/or a relationship and/or a friendship or the use of threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours and/or any type of intimate relationship
- Insults based on one's sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, or gender expression
- Gender policing
- Repeatedly and willfully misgendering someone

- Physical violence, including sexual assault
- Repeatedly asking another person on a date

Racial, Ethnic, Caste, or Religious Harassment

Racial, ethnic, caste, or religious harassment is defined as unwelcome behaviour due to one's race, ethnicity, or religion.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Race-based, ethnic-based, caste-based, or religious-based jokes, banter, ridicule or taunts, racially derogatory remarks, insults, or images
- Using historically offensive symbols
- Microaggressions, defined as indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group
- Unwelcome comments on one's physical appearance, dress, customs, language, speech, name, and other

Disability Harassment

Disability-related harassment is unwanted, exploitative or abusive conduct against disabled people which has the purpose or effect of either: violating the dignity, safety, security or autonomy of the person experiencing it, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Verbal harassment such as teasing, jokes, or slurs based on one's disability
- Intrusive comments or questions about one's disability
- Singling someone out for different treatment based on your disability
- Refusing to offer reasonable accommodation for a person to do their job
- Repeatedly making assumptions about one's capabilities

Other inappropriate conduct is described as disrespectful or disruptive behaviour, such as repeatedly interrupting colleagues during conversations or meetings, disregarding others' opinions, taking credit for others' work, chastising or mocking others, using inflammatory language with the intention to intimidate or make others uncomfortable, and otherwise acting in a manner that harms others or the mission of the organisation.

Retaliation

The PVGP will protect any individual who comes forward with a genuine concern. This protection extends to include not only individuals who come forward with a concern, but also those who might participate in an investigation regarding a concern, or for being otherwise associated with a concern.

Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy.

Retaliation may take the form of Discrimination or Harassment, creating a hostile work environment, ostracising or excluding the individuals involved from regular PVGP matters, making material changes to the individuals' work, or otherwise punishing the individual or individuals via other means.

Retaliation will not be tolerated by any party at any level. Retaliatory acts, if they occur, should be swiftly reported to one of the two Designated People and will be seriously and promptly addressed.

Routes of Resolution

If you feel that you have been the subject of Discrimination or Harassment, there are multiple options for you to consider. These range from dealing with it on your own to seeking out support in dealing with it.

Please find below some suggestions regarding the various routes of resolution.

Self-Action

A Stakeholder may attempt to resolve their concerns by direct communication with the person(s) engaging in the unwelcome conduct. If the Stakeholder feels comfortable doing so, they are encouraged to communicate their disapproval in clear terms to the person(s) whose conduct or comments are or have been offensive.

We do suggest that if you choose this method, that you record all perceived incidents of Discrimination and Harassment as they occur, no matter how small, as such records are helpful for providing context if the unwelcome behaviour is repeated, or if there is a need for further inquiries or investigations. We also suggest that your records include the date, time, details of the conduct, and witnesses, if any.

Support and Intervention

Stakeholders who may be not comfortable with Self-Action are encouraged to seek advice from one of the two Designated People who will assist you by:

- Ensuring that you are safe
- Record the dates, times, and facts of the incident(s)
- Collect any information such as emails or voicemails
- Help you to explore available options for resolution
- Discuss next steps with you
- Work with you throughout the resolution process
- Keep a confidential record of all discussions and ensure that the resolution process is completed as promptly and confidentially as possible

If the problematic person is a Designated Person, you should approach the other Designated Person or any member of the Board of Directors.

Formal Resolution

Sometimes it is necessary to conduct a more formal resolution process which might include an investigation.

In these instances, the investigation will be conducted by one of the two Designated People or by a qualified external party (such as a Discrimination and Harassment specialist, a human resources professional, or a lawyer).

The Designated Person overseeing the investigation will work with you to gather as many details as possible, including the date, time, descriptions of the incident(s), and witnesses, if any. The investigation process will involve interviews and the review of any other materials as may be appropriate.

The Designated Person will then—in consultation with others as may be needed—determine the best way to resolve the matter and implement next steps as necessary. This consultation step is intended to provide a form of checks and balances during the decision-making process as a resolution is sought.

During the course of an investigation, ProVeg may implement interim measures as necessary with the express purpose of protecting all parties.

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Discrimination and Harassment matters will be kept as confidential as reasonably possible. Some information may need to be shared with certain trusted parties during the course of an inquiry or investigation.

Records will be kept for reference as needed if potential legal matters are pursued by the individuals involved or the organisation. Records will be kept in a confidential file under the purview of the two Designated People unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the file will be kept private. Records will not be filed under individual personnel records but rather in a separate file totaling all complaints as a method of identifying patterns of behaviour by alleged offenders.

Discipline

If a Stakeholder is found to be in violation of this policy they will face disciplinary action.

Disciplinary actions will be determined regardless of one's title or position and may include a rescinding or declining a grant, a verbal or written warning, a written reprimand, the withholding of a promotion, demotion, removal from an accelerator or other event, or other consequences.

Similarly, deliberately false accusations are equally serious and will also result in disciplinary action. However, an unproven allegation does not mean that the conduct did not occur or that there was a deliberately false allegation, it may simply mean that there was not enough evidence to determine the veracity of the claim or to proceed further at that time.

Policy Updates

This policy was developed with the intention to foster a safe and respectful workplace. As PVGP grows and learns, this policy may be periodically adapted. If changes are made, Stakeholders will be informed and then asked to read and sign a document confirming their understanding of the policy again. Updates to this policy will be approved by the Board of Directors.

Timeframe to Submit a Complaint

There is no time restriction on when to file a complaint about a Discrimination or Harassment incident, however early reporting and intervention are strongly encouraged so ProVeg Grants Programme can take appropriate action to prevent further incidents.

Conclusion

Since the PVGP takes place in many countries, this policy has attempted to contemplate all legislative matters related to Discrimination and Harassment in all countries where we work.

That said, where we haven't covered a particular legal protection herein, we will, of course, comply with all laws in all countries where we are active.

Acknowledgement and Acceptance

On behalf of the ProVeg Grants Programme Team, we indicate our approval of the above policy.