

ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT

“WE ARE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION”



seiam.org

Social and Environmental
Increasing Analysis Movement

SEIAM





Ethical Code of Conduct

Organization

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Disclaimer:

This Ethical Code of Conduct reflects the mission, values, and ethical standards of SEIAM. The organization, its staff, and collaborators have made every effort to ensure accuracy and relevance. The content is intended for internal use, training, policy guidance, and public reference regarding SEIAM's ethical commitments.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

ADV. MD. MASUM BILLAH

Since its inception in 2000, the Social and Environmental Increasing Analysis Movement (SEIAM) has worked tirelessly to empower communities, protect human rights, and promote sustainable development in Khulna and beyond. Our vision has always been guided by a simple yet profound principle: every individual has the power to create positive change when knowledge, compassion, and opportunity converge.

This Ethical Code of Conduct is more than a set of rules; it is a reflection of our values, our responsibilities, and our commitment to those we serve. It captures the essence of SEIAM's guiding principles: integrity, transparency, respect, equality, and environmental stewardship. By adhering to this Code, every member, staff, volunteer, and partner becomes a guardian of trust, ensuring that our actions align with our mission and the hopes of our communities.

In a world of rapid change and complex challenges, ethical conduct is the foundation upon which sustainable and equitable development is built. This document is intended to guide, inspire, and remind us that ethical decisions, both large and small, shape the credibility, impact, and legacy of our organization.

We encourage every reader to embrace these principles wholeheartedly, to reflect on them in daily work, and to actively contribute to an organizational culture where integrity, respect, and social responsibility thrive. Through this shared commitment, SEIAM can continue to serve as a beacon of hope, justice, and positive transformation for generations to come.

How to Use This Code

The Ethical Code of Conduct of SEIAM is intended to be a living guide, not a mere reference document. Its purpose is to provide clarity, guidance, and inspiration to every individual associated with the organization, whether you are a member of the General Body, a leader on the Executive Committee, a staff member, a volunteer, or a partner working alongside us in the community.

This Code is designed to be read thoughtfully, reflected upon regularly, and applied consistently in all organizational activities. It outlines the principles that guide our decisions, behavior, and relationships, emphasizing integrity, accountability, respect, inclusion, and environmental responsibility.

Each chapter focuses on a key aspect of ethical conduct, from governance and leadership to safeguarding, financial management, and environmental stewardship. Readers are encouraged to:

- Understand the underlying values and principles behind each guideline, not just the rules themselves.
- Reflect on how these principles influence daily decisions, both in the office and in the field.
- Apply ethical judgment proactively, seeking advice or clarification when challenges arise.
- Speak up and report any behavior or practices that contradict the Code, using the designated reporting mechanisms.

By using this Code actively, SEIAM members and partners help create a culture of trust, responsibility, and excellence. It serves as both a compass and a commitment a reminder that our work is most effective when guided by ethical values, for the benefit of the communities we serve and for the generations to come.

This Code is intended to be reviewed periodically, updated as necessary, and integrated into training, orientation, and program implementation. It is a shared responsibility of all to uphold and embody these principles every day.



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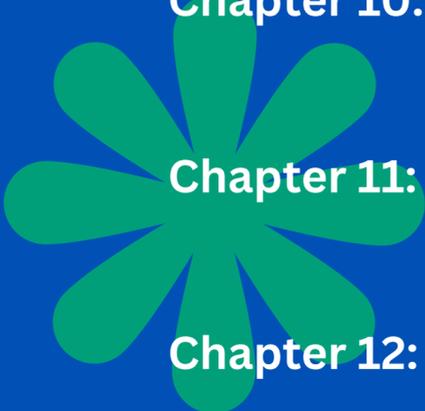
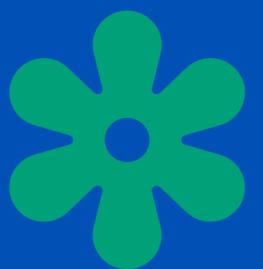
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Chapter 1: Preamble

Social and Environmental Increasing Analysis Movement (SEIAM) is a non-political, non-profit, voluntary, and charitable organization established in 2000 and operating primarily in Khulna District, Bangladesh. Since its inception, SEIAM has worked for people-centered, rights-based, and environmentally responsible development, particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

SEIAM's work spans public health, tobacco control, environmental sustainability, good governance, human rights, inclusive development, education, youth empowerment, disaster risk reduction, cultural heritage, research, and innovation. These diverse engagements require the highest standards of ethical behavior, integrity, transparency, and accountability.

This **Ethical Code of Conduct** is adopted as a foundational document to guide the conduct of all individuals associated with SEIAM, including:

- Members of the General Body
- Executive Committee members
- Advisory Board members
- Management and staff
- Volunteers, interns, and consultants
- Partners and representatives acting on behalf of SEIAM

This Code is not merely a set of rules but a declaration of SEIAM's moral responsibility toward communities, partners, donors, the environment, and future generations.

Chapter 2: Ethical Vision, Mission, and Commitment

2.1 Ethical Vision

SEIAM envisions a society that is healthy, just, inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and gender equal-where all people live with dignity, rights, and opportunities, guided by ethical human values.

2.2 Ethical Mission

SEIAM commits to empowering disadvantaged and marginalized populations through ethical practice, participatory development, and rights-based approaches that ensure transparency, accountability, social justice, and good governance.

2.3 Ethical Goal

SEIAM's ethical goal is to enable individuals and communities to advance toward sustainable development on their own initiative, grounded in human values such as honesty, respect, equality, and social responsibility.

2.4 Ethical Commitment of SEIAM

SEIAM formally commits to:

- Upholding human dignity in all programs and actions
- Acting without discrimination based on race, religion, caste, gender, disability, or social status
- Maintaining political neutrality and independence
- Preventing corruption, abuse of power, and conflicts of interest
- Ensuring environmental responsibility in all interventions
- Protecting vulnerable populations, including children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups

This commitment is binding on all persons acting in the name of SEIAM.

Chapter 3:

Core Ethical Principles

The following principles form the ethical foundation of SEIAM. These principles are widely recognized in global non-profit governance practice; however, they are customized here to reflect SEIAM's context and values.

3.1 Integrity and Honesty

All members of SEIAM shall act with integrity, honesty, and good faith in decision-making, communication, financial management, and representation of the organization.

- False reporting, misrepresentation, or concealment of information is strictly prohibited.
- Personal benefit must never be derived from organizational resources or authority.

3.2 Accountability and Transparency

SEIAM is accountable to:

- The communities it serves
- Its members and governing bodies
- Donors and partners
- Regulatory authorities of Bangladesh

All programs, finances, and decisions shall be managed transparently, with accurate documentation and openness to internal and external review.

3.3 Respect for Human Rights and Dignity

SEIAM recognizes human rights as universal, indivisible, and inalienable.

- All actions must respect the dignity, safety, privacy, and consent of individuals.
- Exploitation, harassment, intimidation, or degrading treatment is prohibited.
- Special care shall be taken when working with children and vulnerable populations.

3.4 Participation and Empowerment

SEIAM believes that sustainable development is not imposed but achieved through participation.

- Communities must be meaningfully involved in planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Knowledge, skills, and leadership within communities shall be respected and strengthened.

3.5 Equality and Non-Discrimination

SEIAM shall ensure equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment, volunteering, service delivery, and governance.

Discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, caste, disability, political opinion, or socioeconomic status is strictly forbidden.

3.6 Political Neutrality and Independence

As a non-political organization, SEIAM shall:

- Not support or oppose any political party or candidate
- Not allow organizational resources to be used for partisan purposes
- Maintain independence from undue political, corporate, or personal influence

Advocacy work shall be issue-based, evidence-informed, and aligned with human rights and public interest.

3.7 Environmental Responsibility

In line with its mission, SEIAM commits to environmentally responsible practices.

- Programs shall minimize environmental harm and promote sustainability.
- Natural resources shall be used responsibly, recognizing the rights of future generations.

3.8 Professionalism and Mutual Respect

All individuals associated with SEIAM shall:

- Maintain professional conduct
- Respect the diversity of opinion
- Resolve conflicts through dialogue, mediation, and ethical processes

Abusive language, harassment, or hostile behavior is unacceptable.

Chapter 4:

Ethics of Governance and Leadership

4.1 Moral Responsibility of Governance

Leadership within SEIAM is not merely an administrative function; it is a moral responsibility entrusted by communities, members, and future generations. Members of the General Body, Executive Committee, and Advisory Board are expected to embody the highest standards of ethical behavior in all decisions and actions. Their conduct must reflect honesty, impartiality, wisdom, and commitment to public interest rather than personal or institutional gain.

Governance decisions shall always be guided by SEIAM's vision of social justice, environmental sustainability, and human dignity. Authority within the organization exists to serve the mission, not to dominate individuals or influence outcomes unfairly.

4.2 Integrity in Decision-Making

Ethical governance requires that decisions are made through informed discussion, collective responsibility, and respect for organizational procedures. Leaders must act in good faith, disclose relevant information, and avoid actions that may undermine trust in the organization. Personal relationships, financial interests, or external pressures must never influence organizational decisions.

When differences of opinion arise, leaders are expected to engage in respectful dialogue and seek solutions that uphold SEIAM's values and long-term credibility.

4.3 Accountability and Stewardship

Those entrusted with leadership positions act as stewards of SEIAM's resources, reputation, and public trust. Financial resources, institutional authority, and partnerships must be managed with care, transparency, and responsibility. Leaders are accountable not only to internal bodies but also to the communities served, development partners, and regulatory authorities.

Failure to act responsibly or ethically in leadership roles is considered a breach of trust and shall be subject to review under organizational procedures.

Chapter 5:

Ethical Conduct of Staff, Volunteers, and Representatives

5.1 Commitment to Service

Staff members, volunteers, interns, and consultants are the living face of SEIAM in communities and public spaces. Their conduct directly shapes how the organization is perceived and trusted. Every individual associated with SEIAM is expected to approach their work with sincerity, compassion, professionalism, and respect for others.

Service to the community shall always be guided by empathy, patience, and a genuine desire to empower rather than control.

5.2 Professional Behavior and Mutual Respect

A healthy organizational culture is built on mutual respect and cooperation. All staff and volunteers shall treat colleagues, beneficiaries, and partners with dignity, regardless of position, background, gender, or belief. Harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse, or any form of degrading behavior is incompatible with SEIAM's ethical standards.

Differences in opinion or working style should be addressed through constructive communication and dialogue, not conflict or hostility.

5.3 Use of Organizational Resources

Resources entrusted to SEIAM are meant solely for organizational purposes and public benefit. Staff and volunteers must use equipment, funds, information, and time responsibly. Misuse of resources, negligence, or unauthorized personal use undermines the organization's integrity and is ethically unacceptable.

5.4 Representation of SEIAM

When acting on behalf of SEIAM, individuals must communicate honestly and accurately about programs, achievements, and limitations. Exaggeration, false claims, or misrepresentation of facts, partners, or beneficiaries violates ethical responsibility and public trust.

Chapter 6:

Safeguarding, Child Protection, and Care for Vulnerable Groups

6.1 Ethical Duty of Protection

SEIAM works closely with vulnerable populations, including children, persons with disabilities, marginalized communities, and individuals facing social or economic hardship. This engagement creates a heightened ethical duty to protect individuals from harm, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

Every person associated with SEIAM shares responsibility for creating safe, respectful, and protective environments in all programs and activities.

6.2 Respect, Consent, and Dignity

All interactions with beneficiaries must be grounded in respect and informed consent. Personal dignity, privacy, and cultural sensitivity shall be upheld at all times. No individual shall be photographed, interviewed, or involved in activities without their understanding and voluntary agreement, or the consent of guardians where legally required.

6.3 Zero Tolerance for Abuse and Exploitation

SEIAM maintains a zero-tolerance stance toward any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse. Exploitation of power imbalances for personal, financial, or emotional gain is strictly prohibited. Any suspicion or knowledge of abuse must be treated seriously and reported through established internal mechanisms.

6.4 Shared Responsibility and Vigilance

Safeguarding is not the duty of a single office or individual. It is a shared ethical responsibility that requires awareness, sensitivity, and courage to act. Silence or inaction in the face of harm contradicts SEIAM's values and ethical commitments.

Chapter 7:

Financial Integrity and Anti-Corruption Ethics

7.1 Stewardship of Resources

Financial resources entrusted to SEIAM are not merely numbers on a ledger—they are commitments to the communities, partners, and donors who place their trust in the organization. Every staff member, volunteer, and leader has a moral and professional duty to manage these resources responsibly, transparently, and for the purpose for which they were intended. Misuse, misappropriation, or negligence is a breach of trust and violates the core values of the organization.

7.2 Transparency and Accountability

All financial processes must be open to scrutiny and conducted according to recognized accounting standards and organizational policies. Records should accurately reflect receipts, expenditures, and allocations. Decisions regarding funding, procurement, or resource allocation must be documented and justified in alignment with SEIAM’s mission. Accountability is not only an internal responsibility but also an ethical obligation to communities, donors, and regulatory bodies.

7.3 Anti-Corruption and Ethical Responsibility

Corruption, bribery, or undue influence in any form is incompatible with SEIAM’s values. Staff, volunteers, and partners are expected to avoid situations that may compromise integrity. Offers of personal gain or gifts that could influence judgment must be refused and reported. Ethical responsibility requires vigilance, courage, and the willingness to report questionable practices through appropriate channels without fear of retaliation.

7.4 Ethical Use of Funds

Funds must always be directed toward activities that fulfill SEIAM’s vision, mission, and goals. Any diversion of funds, favoritism in resource distribution, or personal enrichment from organizational activities undermines public trust and violates ethical standards. Maintaining financial integrity is a continuous duty that reflects the organization’s respect for human dignity, justice, and community well-being.

Chapter 8:

Conflict of Interest and Ethical Independence

8.1 Recognizing Conflicts

Conflict of interest occurs when personal, familial, or external relationships compromise impartiality, judgment, or decision-making within SEIAM. Recognizing these conflicts is the first step toward ethical action. All staff, volunteers, and board members are expected to disclose any potential or actual conflicts that could affect decisions or programs.

8.2 Maintaining Independence

SEIAM operates with integrity by maintaining independence from undue influence, whether political, commercial, or personal. All decisions and actions must be guided solely by the mission, values, and needs of the communities served. Ethical independence requires courage to resist pressures that compromise fairness, justice, or organizational purpose.

8.3 Managing Conflicts

Once identified, conflicts must be addressed openly, with transparency and adherence to organizational policies. Recusal from decision-making or the reassignment of responsibilities may be necessary to maintain ethical integrity. Open dialogue, documentation, and guidance from leadership or the Advisory Board help ensure that conflicts do not undermine trust or the organization's ethical commitments.

8.4 Ethical Judgment and Collective Responsibility

Ethical judgment is a shared responsibility. Individuals must exercise awareness, honesty, and foresight to prevent conflicts from affecting organizational outcomes. Collective responsibility ensures that SEIAM maintains credibility, impartiality, and the confidence of partners, donors, and communities.

Chapter 9:

Gender Equality, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination

9.1 Commitment to Equality

SEIAM believes that sustainable development cannot exist without equality. Gender equality is a fundamental ethical principle that guides program design, community engagement, and internal organizational practice. Women, men, and gender-diverse individuals must have equal opportunities to participate, lead, and benefit from the organization's work.

9.2 Inclusion of Marginalized Groups

Beyond gender, SEIAM is committed to including persons with disabilities, socially marginalized communities, and vulnerable populations in all aspects of its work. Programs, policies, and interventions are designed to remove barriers, create equitable access, and foster active participation. Inclusion is not a favor, it is an ethical imperative and a reflection of the organization's values.

9.3 Non-Discrimination in Practice

Discrimination based on race, religion, caste, socioeconomic status, disability, or other personal characteristics is strictly prohibited. Staff, volunteers, and partners are expected to challenge bias, speak against exclusion, and ensure fairness in decisions, resource allocation, and service delivery.

9.4 Fostering an Ethical Culture of Respect

Achieving true equality and inclusion requires continuous reflection, learning, and vigilance. SEIAM nurtures a culture where every voice is valued, every person is treated with dignity, and diversity is embraced as a source of strength. Ethical behavior in this domain is both individual and collective, shaping the organization's credibility, social impact, and long-term sustainability.

Chapter 10: Data Protection, Confidentiality, and Privacy

10.1 Ethical Responsibility Toward Information

SEIAM handles sensitive information daily, about communities, partners, donors, staff, and volunteers. This information is not merely administrative data; it represents trust, dignity, and personal rights. Every individual associated with SEIAM has a moral and professional duty to protect this information, ensuring that privacy, confidentiality, and integrity are maintained at all times.

10.2 Respecting Privacy and Consent

Beneficiaries, partners, and staff must always be informed about the collection and use of their personal information. Consent should be obtained, records kept securely, and sensitive details shared only with those who require access to perform legitimate organizational duties. Breach of privacy undermines trust, violates ethical responsibility, and may cause harm to individuals and communities.

10.3 Safe Management of Data

All digital, paper, and verbal records must be handled with care. Strong safeguards, secure storage, and appropriate access controls are essential to prevent misuse, accidental disclosure, or manipulation of data. Ethical practice requires vigilance, honesty, and accountability in all aspects of information management.

10.4 Transparency in Communication

While confidentiality must be maintained, SEIAM also commits to transparent communication with stakeholders. Public reports, advocacy statements, and donor communications must present accurate information, reflecting organizational achievements, challenges, and lessons learned without compromising individual privacy or dignity.

Chapter 11: Advocacy, Partnerships, and Ethical Collaboration

11.1 Advocacy with Integrity

SEIAM engages in advocacy to advance social justice, public health, environmental protection, and human rights. Ethical advocacy is based on facts, research, and the genuine interests of communities rather than personal, political, or organizational gain. All advocacy initiatives should aim to empower communities, promote equity, and maintain truthfulness in public statements.

11.2 Ethical Partnerships

Collaboration with partners is essential for SEIAM's impact, but it carries ethical responsibilities. Partnerships must be chosen based on shared values, mutual respect, and commitment to transparency. Conflicts of interest, exploitation, or compromise of ethical standards in collaboration are strictly unacceptable.

11.3 Mutual Accountability

SEIAM believes that collaboration is most effective when all parties are accountable to each other and to the communities served. Agreements, resource sharing, and program implementation should be conducted with integrity, open communication, and a focus on the collective mission rather than individual benefit.

11.4 Respecting Local and Cultural Contexts

Ethical collaboration requires understanding and respecting cultural, social, and legal contexts. SEIAM's partnerships, advocacy, and interventions must align with local values, rights, and traditions while promoting inclusive development and human dignity.

Chapter 12: Environmental Responsibility and Sustainable Practices

12.1 Commitment to the Environment

SEIAM recognizes that the health of communities and the well-being of future generations are inseparable from the state of the natural environment. Environmental responsibility is an ethical imperative, guiding all programs, operations, and community interactions.

12.2 Sustainable Resource Use

The organization commits to using resources responsibly, minimizing waste, and avoiding practices that harm ecosystems. Programs in agriculture, urban development, health, and disaster management are designed to reduce environmental impact and promote sustainable practices among communities.

12.3 Education and Advocacy for Environmental Stewardship

SEIAM encourages communities, staff, and partners to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Education, advocacy, and participatory initiatives aim to foster a culture of environmental stewardship, ensuring that social development goes hand in hand with ecological preservation.

12.4 Ethical Accountability in Environmental Decisions

All decisions impacting the environment are made with foresight, care, and consultation with affected communities. Ethical accountability requires that environmental harm be anticipated, mitigated, and corrected whenever possible, reinforcing the organization's commitment to social justice and sustainability.

Chapter 13:

Implementation, Reporting, and Whistleblowing Mechanisms

13.1 Embedding Ethics in Daily Operations

SEIAM’s Ethical Code of Conduct is not a theoretical document; it is meant to guide everyday decisions and actions. Staff, volunteers, and partners are expected to integrate ethical principles into planning, program implementation, and administrative processes. Ethical reflection and dialogue should be part of the organizational culture at all levels.

13.2 Reporting Unethical Behavior

Individuals who witness or suspect unethical conduct, abuse, or violations of this Code are encouraged to report concerns promptly. Reporting should be made through designated channels while maintaining confidentiality, protecting both the reporter and the affected parties from retaliation.

13.3 Whistleblowing and Protection

SEIAM provides protection for those who report violations in good faith. Retaliation against whistleblowers, including harassment, discrimination, or intimidation, is strictly prohibited. This ensures a safe environment where ethical accountability can thrive.

13.4 Review and Continuous Improvement

The Ethical Code of Conduct is a living document. Policies, procedures, and practices should be reviewed periodically to reflect new challenges, legal requirements, and lessons learned. Continuous ethical improvement strengthens organizational credibility, effectiveness, and public trust.

Chapter 14:

Code of Ethics Declaration and Commitment

We, the undersigned, affirm that the Ethical Code of Conduct of the Social and Environmental Increasing Analysis Movement (SEIAM) represents the moral foundation, guiding principles, and shared responsibilities of our organization.

By endorsing this Code, we acknowledge that SEIAM exists to serve people, protect human dignity, promote social justice, and safeguard the environment for present and future generations. We recognize that ethical conduct is not optional but essential to the credibility, effectiveness, and sustainability of our work.

We commit ourselves to act with honesty, integrity, fairness, and accountability in all roles and responsibilities entrusted to us. We pledge to respect the rights, voices, cultures, and dignity of the communities we serve, without discrimination or prejudice. We affirm our responsibility to protect children, persons with disabilities, and all vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, or exploitation.

We accept that leadership and service within SEIAM are acts of trust and stewardship. We shall use organizational authority, resources, and influence solely for the public good and in alignment with SEIAM's vision, mission, and values. We will avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any situation that may compromise ethical judgment.

We further acknowledge that ethical conduct requires continuous reflection, learning, and accountability. We commit to reporting unethical behavior, cooperating with ethical review processes, and accepting corrective actions when standards are breached. Silence in the face of injustice or misconduct contradicts the principles of this organization and shall not be tolerated.

This declaration signifies our personal and collective responsibility to uphold the Ethical Code of Conduct of SEIAM in letter and spirit. Our signature below confirms our understanding, acceptance, and commitment to live by these ethical standards in all organizational activities, decisions, and relationships.

Declaration

I hereby declare that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Ethical Code of Conduct of the Social and Environmental Increasing Analysis Movement (SEIAM). I commit myself to uphold its principles and values in all actions undertaken on behalf of the organization.



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