



World Food Programme

Ethics Office: 2016 Annual Report
Summary



World Food Programme



Picture: WFP/Jonathan Thompson

"As WFP, we have high standards for our work and for our personal conduct. Our ability to continue to help the most vulnerable is dependent on not only doing things right, but also in doing them the right way."

David Beasley

WFP Executive Director

"This summary of the Ethics Office Annual Report is about what we have achieved together in 2016.

Over the last three years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of requests for advice by WFP employees — as individuals, also as managers and leaders, with many requests being preventive and proactive in nature. This reflected positively, not only on the trust of WFP employees in the Ethics Office, also on the integrity of WFP employees. WFP employees clearly want to do the right thing.

The Ethics Office continued to spearhead awareness, education and outreach activities in various forms and in partnership with many offices for the purpose of enabling WFP employees to understand the values, standards and principles of WFP and how to live them, while promoting a "speak-up" culture — critical to effective operations and results at WFP.

Helping each one of us to feel comfortable coming forward with good faith concerns remains a priority of the Ethics Office. Related, the Ethics Office continues to administer the Whistleblower Protection Policy. In furtherance of an organizational culture of ethics, transparency and accountability, the Ethics Office provided guidance to management on the incorporation of ethical standards in policies, as well as organizational practices and processes.

And, I am pleased to highlight that for the third consecutive year, the Annual Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme — a tool to identify and address conflicts of interest — reached 100% compliance.

Understanding and acting in accordance with our ethical obligations at WFP is inherent to fulfilling our mission and, as always, the Ethics Office is committed to nurturing a culture of ethics and integrity within WFP so that we can fulfil our mission the right way.

I invite you to read this summary and I thank you for working with the highest ethical standards every day."

Bonnie E. Green

Director, Ethics Office

Introduction

Now and every day, we should continue to serve in a manner that reflects the highest ethical standards. The way we work with each other in this regard is a responsibility each of us shares.

The Ethics Office assists the Executive Director in nurturing a culture of ethics and accountability to enable all WFP employees to perform their functions with the highest standards of integrity as required by the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, the WFP Code of Conduct and other related administrative issuances.

The Ethics Office meets this role through its mandated activities:



- Advice and Guidance
- Standard Setting and Policy Support
- Protection Against Retaliation— Whistleblower Protection
- Education, Outreach and Training
- Annual Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme (ADP)

Through membership in the Ethics Panel of the UN (EPUN) and the Ethics Network for Multilateral Organizations (ENMO), and coordination with the other Rome-based Agencies, the Ethics Office fosters **UN Coherence** and shares best-practices.

As part of **Reporting and Administration**, the Ethics Office compiles an annual report, upon which this summary is based.

Highlights

Standard Setting and Policies Support

“The WFP Code of Conduct is the backbone of WFP’s activities; it is a tool that helps to effectively guide our performance, and to be consistent with the humanitarian mission of our Organization.”

Antonella D’Aprile
Country Director, Nicaragua

To foster a culture of ethics, transparency and accountability within WFP, the Ethics Office continued to provide guidance to management on the incorporation of ethical standards in organizational practices and process.

The Ethics Office was consulted on a wide range of topics by various Divisions and Departments, and provided input on approximately **70 policies in various forms and on diverse topics**, including anti-fraud and anti-corruption, personal data protection and privacy, PACE and underperformance mechanisms, climate change and the environment.

Total consultations and input provided by the Ethics Office over 2016 represents an increase in both scope and quantity. This constitutes a positive reflection of WFP’s appreciation for the integration of ethical considerations in its governance and operations.

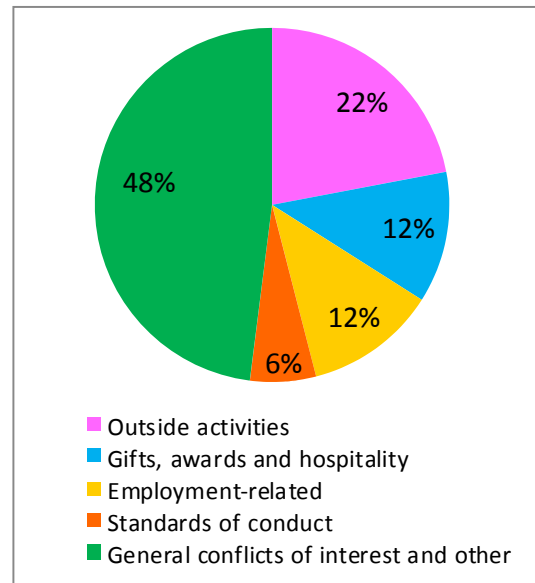
Advice and Guidance

Advising and guiding WFP employees with respect to matters, as individuals and as managers—no matter the contract type or level—is critical to helping WFP employees make ethical decisions and take appropriate actions.

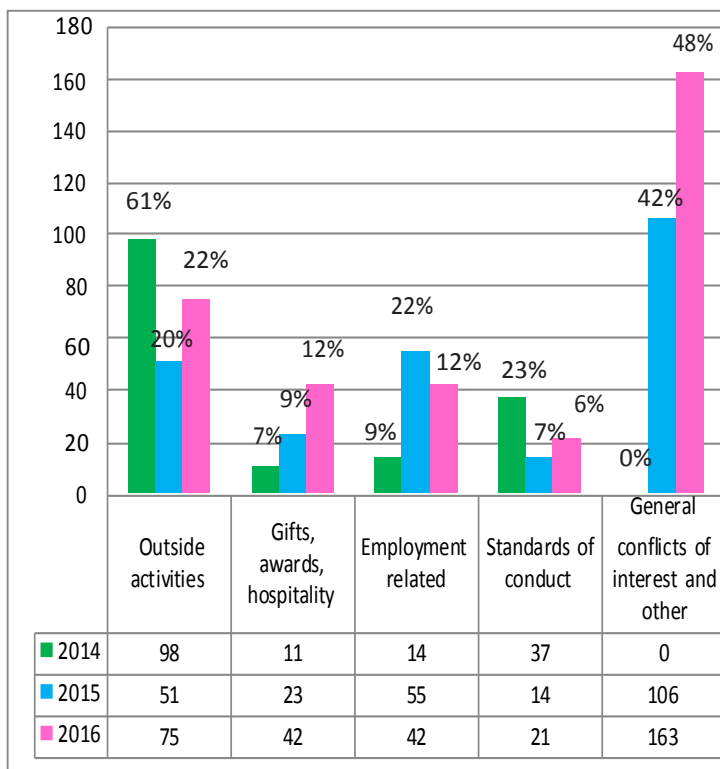
In 2016, the Ethics Office recorded **343 requests for advice and guidance**, excluding requests related to the ADP, protection against retaliation and other ad hoc advice. This was a **36% increase from 2015** (252 requests), a **114% increase from 2014** (160 requests) and a **236% increase from 2013** (102 requests).

Since 2014, there has been a substantial yearly increase in the number of request for advice and guidance, which is likely the result of increased visibility of the Ethics Office, and the participation of the Director on the Executive Management Group, and increased awareness, communications, and training throughout WFP, as well as diligence otherwise in internal controls.

2016 Advice and Guidance by Type



Advice and Guidance — Data Comparison 2014-2016



The 2015-2016 comparison of data (actual numbers) showed:

- ⇒ Increase in “gifts, awards and hospitality” related requests, with the highest number of requests received in December 2016, likely the result of December as a traditional gift giving time of year, in addition to the annual gift policy awareness campaign.
- ⇒ Increase in requests for reviews of outside activities, likely a direct result of the additional reviews related to outside activities (24) originating from the annual ADP exercise.
- ⇒ Increase of requests under the “General conflicts of interest and other” category, likely a result of the increased visibility of the Ethics Office, directly, and through education and outreach initiatives.
- ⇒ The Ethics Office received a range of queries on ethical conduct and expectations of conduct.

2016 Ethics Office’s Activities in Numbers



343

Request for advice and guidance



236%

Increase of requests for advice and guidance from 2013

Education, Outreach and Training

The Ethics Office continued to focus on awareness, education, and training initiatives to help WFP employees understand their responsibilities while working for WFP and to promote a strong ethical and “speak up” culture.

Ethical Leadership Dialogue

The Ethics Office expanded the e-mail based dialogue on ethical leadership to include chiefs, in addition to all managers at levels D-1 and above. The purpose of the dialogue was to promote ethical considerations and create an open communication on ethical topics.

Annual Auction of Gifts

The Ethics Office organized an internal and online auction of gifts received or not refused for courtesy/practical reasons, duly reported and turned over to the Ethics Office during the year, to raise awareness on WFP’s policy and practices on gifts.

Both auctions were well received and considered successful tools for raising awareness on WFP policies and practices with respect to gifts. The **proceeds were donated to WFP operations in Haiti**.

A total of **20 gifts were logged by the Ethics Office**.

HQ s Induction Briefings

In collaboration with Human Resources, Security, Resource Management, the Executive Board Secretariat Division, and the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the Ethics Office created an HQ Induction, to be rolled out in 2017.

Training Sessions

Approximately **350 WFP employees were trained** by the Ethics Office directly **through nine face-to-face trainings sessions**, including in Panama, Haiti and Jordan.

Mandatory Online Training

The Ethics Office launched the **first mandatory ethics e-learning** to reinforce a common understanding of WFP’s expectations of conduct among WFP employees and ensure ethical considerations underpin decisions and behaviour.

Two additional modules are to be finalized and released in 2017 and 2018.

A focus on Respectful Workplace Advisors (RWAs) trainings

Respectful Workplace Advisors (RWAs)

RWAs are WFP employees, nominated by their colleagues and voluntarily trained to perform some functions of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services at the field level.

Since 2012, RWAs have been designated as “Ethics Ambassadors”, assisting the Ethics Office and WFP in raising awareness on ethics and standards of conduct, in accordance with the mandate of the Ethics Office.

One basic and two advanced trainings were organized for RWAs at HQ, in collaboration with the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services. **More than 30 country offices** were represented, with a total of **69 RWAs participating in one basic** (18) and **two advanced trainings** (51).

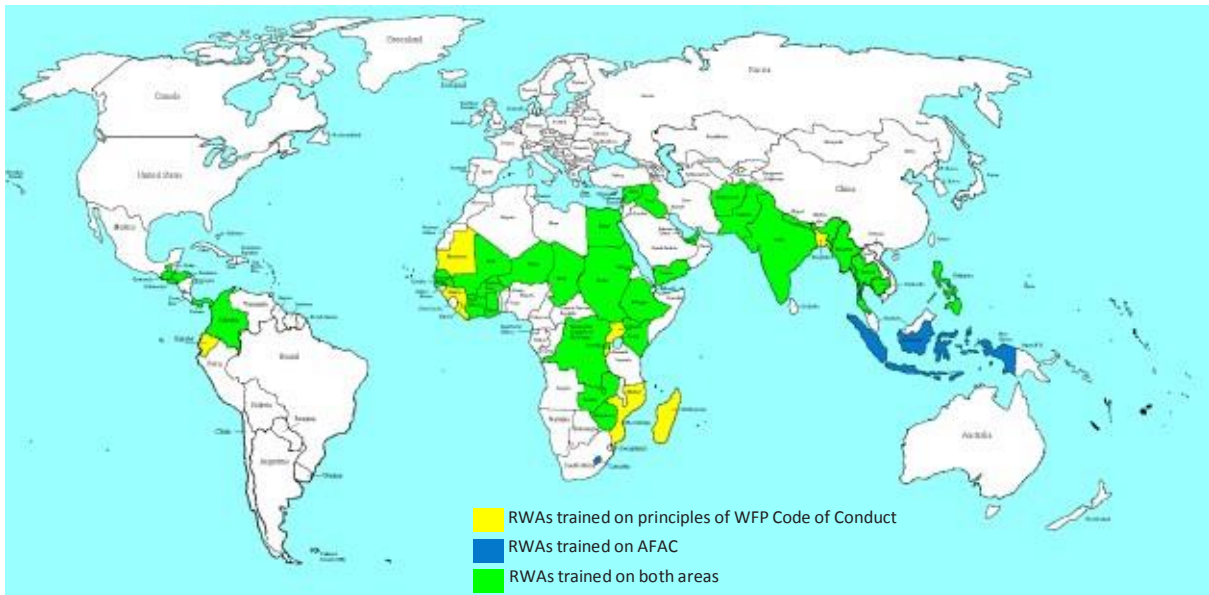
“Having been selected by your peers, your role [as RWAs] is critical for building bridges within the organization.”

Jim Harvey
Former Chief of Staff, and AED

“I really appreciated the in-depth knowledge shared during the Advanced RWA training; several areas were clarified, resulting in a number of areas I was not aware of. And, I have already shared some of them informally with my colleagues as ‘prevention is better than cure’...”

Anisa Jessani
RWA – Dubai

Trainings Received by RWAs by Country



As a result of “train the trainer” sessions conducted in 2016 by the Ethics Office on foundational aspects of the WFP Code of Conduct during the trainings held at HQ, the **RWAs conducted trainings in 18 country and sub-offices**, reaching **381 employees directly** and **425 through training materials**.

Additionally, the Ethics Office **trained 52 of the total 110 RWAs through “train the trainer” sessions on anti-fraud and anti-corruption (AFAC)**. As a result, RWAs conducted several training sessions in and for **eight country offices and sub-offices**, **training directly 302 employees** with another **more than 400 receiving AFAC training materials**.



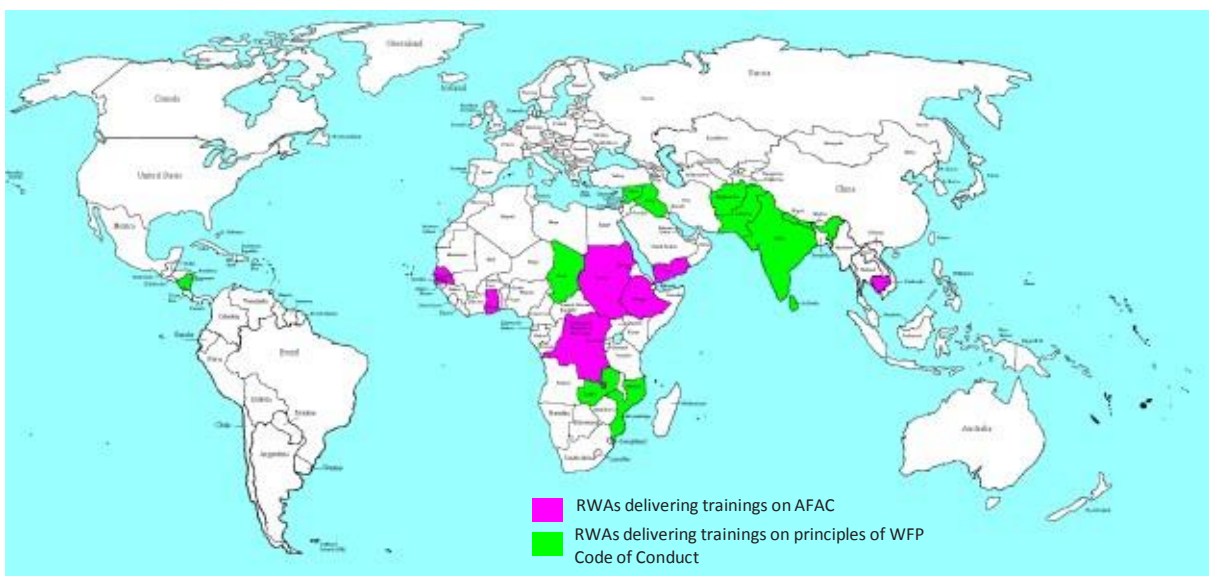
Yaseer Arafath, RWA from Colombo (Sri Lanka), training colleagues on ethics and standards of conduct.

“All participants appreciated the refresher training I conducted in Peshawar Sub Office at WFP Warehouse Peshawar in September 2016. They took part in the session very actively and had several questions.”

Sagheer Ahmad

RWA – Pakistan

Trainings Delivered by RWAs by Country



2016 Awareness Campaigns in focus

- Three-part awareness campaign against sexual violence, sexual harassment, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse was co-led collaboratively by the Ethics Office.

For each of the three campaigns, the Executive Director sent an All staff e-mail and e-mails to Regional Directors and Country Directors.



- “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence” was supported by the Ethics Office through an All Staff e-mail to recall WFP’s zero tolerance stance for any act of sexual exploitation and abuse against the people we serve and for any act of sexual violence against colleagues and sexual harassment in our work environment.

“This is a very good initiative of the Ethics Office, that I applaud. All together, with complementary efforts, we can make a better world for women and with no gender-based violence.”

Vitoria Ginja
Deputy Country Director, Colombia



- **Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Campaign**, centred around the International Anti-Corruption day, was spearheaded by the Ethics Office through an All Staff e-mail and sample communications provided to Regional Directors and Country Directors, and highlighted WFP’s zero tolerance position on fraud and corruption.

Protection Against Retaliation

The Ethics Office continued to administer the Whistleblower Protection Policy. The major objectives of the Whistleblower Protection Policy are to enable an environment of reporting without fear of retaliation and to protect WFP employees from retaliation for reporting misconduct or providing information on wrongdoing in good faith or cooperating with duly authorized audits and investigations.

The Whistleblower Protection Policy applies to all WFP employees, including national and international staff members, consultants, interns, service contract holders, special service agreement holders, volunteers and United Nations volunteers (UNV).

The Ethics Office worked on **five cases of protection against retaliation**:

- Three new cases
 - One case was still under review of the Ethics Office
 - Two *prima facie* cases of retaliation were established:
 - One case was unsubstantiated by the investigation, though the Head of Office instituted protection measures during the *prima facie* review and in advance of the investigation; and
 - One case was substantiated and was still under investigation.
- Two cases continued from 2015
 - One *prima facie* case of retaliation was established and protection measures were implemented; and
 - One case was unsubstantiated.

Annual Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme (ADP)

The ADP is administered annually by the Ethics Office to identify and address personal conflicts of interest and mitigate or eliminate them in the best interest of WFP. The ADP is a mandatory component of WFP's commitment to transparency and public confidence-building and a crucial risk management tool to both employees and WFP.

Facts and Figures

- The ADP was first initiated in 2009; 2016 was the eighth annual ADP exercise.
- **100% compliance rate** for the third consecutive year.
- ADP participants were required to complete the Conflicts of Interest (COI) Questionnaire; the Eligibility Questionnaire; and the Financial Disclosure (FD) Statement.
- The Ethics Office used a secure, integrated online database to collect the information.
- **1487 WFP employees participated in 2016**, an increase of 21.7% over the 2015 ADP population. 33 participants were exempted.
- **1,454 WFP employees completing the COI Questionnaire.** 340 were flagged for possible conflicts of interest, reviewed and cleared. Two COI were identified and addressed. Two cases were still under review.
- **1232 WFP employees** were required to **file the FD Statement.** 24 FD Statements were flagged as possible COI; none were determined to be actual COI. Two COIs were identified and resolved. One was still under review.

ADP Participants

- Employees at D-1 and D-2 levels, all Country Directors, Deputy Country Directors, Heads of Office/Sub-Office, Heads of Area Office.
- All employees whose occupational duties include procurement authority in WINGS to release Purchase Orders of any type. (Those who have authority to release only MPOs are excluded).
- All Oversight (audit and investigation), Investment (Treasury), Procurement and Legal Officers, excluding the Administrative and Employment Law Branch.
- All employees who are members of a vendor management committee or have regular access to confidential procurement information.



2016 Ethics Office's Activities in Numbers



Reporting and Administration

The focus on administration and infrastructure enabled the Ethics Office to operate efficiently, and with consistency. The establishment of tracking mechanisms for metrics and enhanced reporting enabled the Ethics Office to measure its activities and verify a marked increase in workload over the last three years.

UN Coherence

[Ethics Panel of the United Nations \(EPUN \)](#)

The Ethics Office continued to participate in the activities of the EPUN, together with the heads of the ethics offices of the UN Secretariat, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNRWA and UNHCR, and promote a coherent and harmonized application of ethical standards. The Ethics Office was involved in deliberations on issues of common interest, including the state of respective financial disclosure programmes, outside activities, conflicts of interest, policies and practices for protection against retaliation, political activities and real-time interactions on other ethical issues.

[Ethics Network for Multilateral Organizations \(EN MO \)](#)

The Director, Ethics Office, participated in the annual meeting of the Ethics Network and presented with the UN Ethics Officer on “Resourcing Ethics Offices: General Approach to Performance Budgeting”. The ENMO is a UN-wide network established pursuant to the framework of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination in support of the Secretary-General’s promotion of system-wide collaboration on ethics-related issues within the UN family, and now maintained independently.

[Rome-based Agencies](#)

The Director, Ethics Office, continued to engage with the Ethics Offices of the other Rome-based Agencies periodically.



Looking Ahead

During its initial years, the Ethics Office focused largely on advice and guidance as related to individual integrity risks, with limited involvement on institutional integrity risks. Since 2014, the Ethics Office has been proactive on outreach to management and management has been, in turn, proactively seeking advice from the Ethics Office. The substantial increase in consultations — in the forms of requests for advice and guidance, and input on WFP's standards and policies — positively reflected on the trust in and credibility of the Ethics Office. Providing input to standards and policies, as well as guidance, practices, processes – in other words, operationalizing ethics and compliance, are all activities which are preventive in nature and can positively impact the ethical culture of WFP.

The Ethics Office considers education and outreach in various forms and through all offices as critical for WFP employees and partners to understand WFP values, standards and principles and, therefore, concentrated resources in this area. The Ethics Office coordinated with other offices on work on PSEA and focused on awareness and communication campaigns. While WFP continued to advance its work on PSEA, WFP would benefit from having a functional leader with dedicated resources.

The Ethics Office continued to review cases for protection of retaliation which, due to the complexity, extensive documentation as related to protection against retaliation, as well as the confidentiality required, were time consuming. Also, the Ethics Office continued to work with the HQ Information Technology and Communications Divisions on an updated application for the ADP and, separately, on a revised policy on conflicts of interest and ADP, to be rolled-out in 2017.

The Ethics Office developed metrics and tracking mechanisms and added the development of standard operating procedures in the Ethics Office, which have continued to enable the Ethics Office to operate efficiently and delegate work with consistency. The tracking mechanisms have served to verify there has been a marked increase in workload over the last three years. This is viewed as a positive outcome of the activities spearheaded and relationships cultivated by the Ethics Office. Related to the increase in work, the Ethics Office has initiated the recruitment of a staff member at the P-4 level with commensurate ethics and compliance skills and knowledge.

Overall, the Ethics Office observed a positive attitude among employees to embrace a strong ethical culture based on the standards, principles and values of WFP and the UN, particularly from live presentations and other trainings conducted by the Ethics Office. However, institutionally the Ethics Office observed some opposing trends with an erosion of the setting and understanding of the expectations of conduct by and in WFP for example in the PACE and vacancy announcements.

As reflected in the 2015 annual report, the Ethics Office committed to developing an overall strategy to be implemented in alignment with the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021). In 2016, the Ethics Office procured a highly respected consultant to assist in the drafting of an Ethics Office strategy to be created in 2017.

The Ethics Office will continue to work holistically throughout all its mandated areas to nurture a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability within WFP.

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