United Network Studio

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1. A Culture of High Ethical Standards

At UNS, we are committed to conducting business with utmost responsibility and ethics. As a leading global Architectural firm, we recognize the impact our work can have on society and the environment. We strive to ensure that our operations, as well as those of our contractors and clients, align with our values and principles:
- Innovative: we drive unconventional thinking in design to generate innovative solutions. We believe in the power of design to influence and bring about change, reflecting this belief in every project and interaction with our clients.
- Business-Savvy: Our approach is rooted in the belief of adding value through design, maintaining a self-critical approach as an organization. We engage with our clients and partners through a business-savvy lens, ensuring that every project is not just creatively robust but also commercially viable.
- Interconnected: Being 'Interconnected' is about more than our global presence; it's about collaborating with clients, partners, and industry experts. We believe in the power of collective expertise and shared knowledge to create superior architectural outcomes.
- Human-Centered: our external focus on being 'Human-centered' is about enabling end-users to foster stronger future communities. We strive for a just workplace in all our recruitment practices, ensuring that every project we undertake contributes positively to the communities it serves.
- Commitment to People and Planet: Our commitment extends beyond design; we are dedicated to creating environments that are ethically and sustainably responsible. Contributing to a greener, healthier, and smarter built environment is at the heart of our work, taking a human and planet-centric approach in every project.

This External Code of Conduct serves to address key regulatory and other important requirements that affect UNS' interactions with external parties. It outlines our expectations and guidelines in respect to ethics, privacy and data protection, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and other relevant areas.
UNS operates in accordance with the Reglement op de dekens of the BNA (Netherlands Association of Architects), which provides further guidelines and standards for the architectural profession, ensuring professional conduct and compliance with legal and ethical responsibilities.
We promote a culture of openness and integrity, where all external parties are encouraged to raise any concerns or questions they may have regarding our conduct. At UNS, we are dedicated to consistently upholding ethical standards and supporting those who make ethical choices.
By adhering to this External Code of Conduct, we aim to foster strong relationships, build trust, and contribute to a responsible and ethical business environment.

2. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations

As an external contractor working with UNS, it is essential that you understand and adhere to our commitment to compliance with all applicable laws, statutes, regulations, binding conventions, and codes. This includes strict adherence to customs, export control, and anti-boycott regulations, as well as economic and financial sanctions and trade embargoes imposed and/or enforced by entities such as the United States government (including the Treasury Department, the Department of Commerce, or the U.S. Department of State), international bodies like the United Nations (including the Security Council), the European Union, Member States of the European Union, the United Kingdom's and Australia's Treasury Departments.
In our adherence to compliance, we apply a business-savy mindset, understanding that legal regulations are healthy margins within which we operate. We expect all external contractors to also operate in accordance with the laws and regulations of the jurisdictions where we conduct business. This includes a steadfast commitment to complying with relevant tax laws, as we unequivocally disapprove of tax evasion and do not knowingly engage in or facilitate such activities.

Contractors must always:

Comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Including but not limited to:

- Rules related to labour;
- Rules related to health and safety;
- Rules related to the protection of the environment;
- Rules related to anti-corruption;
- Rules related to taxes.
- Rules related to privacy and data security
  - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - European Union
  - California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) - United States
  - Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) – Canada
  - Privacy Act 1988 – Australia
  - Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) – Netherlands
  - Bundesdatenschutzgesetz (BDSG) – Germany
  - Data Protection Act 2018 - United Kingdom
  - Saudi Arabian Data Protection Law - Saudi Arabia
  - Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) - Australia

Prohibition of bribery and corruption

As valued contractors collaborating with UNS, your commitment to ethical business practices is of utmost importance. It is crucial that you strictly refrain from engaging in any form of bribery or corrupt practices, whether directly or indirectly through intermediaries. This includes actions such as offering, providing, or knowingly accepting bribes. Additionally, it is essential that you avoid improper payments, including facilitation payments, even if they are considered customary in certain local business environments. Our policies align with the principles set forth in the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[1].

Contractors must never:
Engage in bribery;
Engage in corruption;
Engage in unethical business practices.

Gifts and hospitality

We recognize the importance of nurturing positive working relationships. On occasion, there may be opportunities for gift exchanges or hospitality gestures. However, it is paramount that we approach these practices with mindfulness and integrity.
Our human-centered approach emphasizes transparency in gifts and hospitality to ensure trust and integrity. This practice supports an environment where personal and professional growth are based on merit, reinforcing our commitment to ethical conduct and mutual respect.

Contractors must always:
Exercise caution to avoid excessive or inappropriate gifts, entertainment, or hospitality;
Confirm that any offered or received gifts or hospitality align with legitimate business purposes.

Commitment to fair competition and anti-trust laws

At UNS we recognize our interconnected role in the global architectural community and we are committed to a unified stance against anti-competitive practices. This approach ensures that we collectively uphold market integrity and promote healthy competition, which benefits the entire industry.
We like our contracting parties to also place great emphasis on upholding the principles of open and fair competition. Anti-competitive behaviours hinder and restrict market competition and it is our steadfast commitment to refrain from contracting with parties that engage in any discussions with competitors that involve pricing or any other form of anti-competitive conduct.

Contractors must always:

Engage in fair and honest competitive business practices; and

Comply with antitrust and competition legislation.

Contractors must never discuss, collude, or agree to:

Fix or control prices, terms or conditions;

Restrict competition or dealings;

Share confidential information with current or potential competitors, or any other relevant party;

Divide or allocate clients, markets or territories; or

Choose not to submit a bid, withdraw a bid or submit an artificial bid to influence the outcome of a bidding process.

Protection of intellectual property rights

To work alongside with UNS, it is crucial that you understand and adhere to our commitment to respecting intellectual property rights. We recognize the significance of protecting and acknowledging the creations, innovations, and ideas of others. It is our responsibility to uphold the rights of intellectual property owners and ensure that our collaborations align with applicable laws and regulations, fostering an environment that encourages innovative thinking and creativity while respecting the intellectual property rights of others.

Contractors must always:

Respect the intellectual property rights of others;

Ensure that their products and services do not infringe on any third-party rights.

3. Labour Practices

Compliance with labour laws and regulations

As a firm, we commit to complying with all applicable labour laws and regulations in the countries and regions where we operate. Likewise,

Contractors must always:
Comply with all applicable labour laws and regulations;
Comply with the legal and statutory working hours limit;
Comply with the legal and statutory minimum wage;
Comply with the legal and statutory benefits.

Prohibition of forced labour, child labour, and human trafficking

At UNS, we adhere to ethical business practices and treat individuals with respect across all the markets we serve. The concept of modern slavery encompasses forced labour, servitude, slavery and human trafficking. It is important to note that various countries have regulations in place to prohibit such practices.

Contractors must always:
Ensure that their supply chain is free of any form of modern slavery by requiring that their own contractors do the same.
Ensure not to engage in activities that encourage human rights abuses, modern slavery, human trafficking, child labour, bonded labour or forced labour, regardless of local legislation and customs;
Allow their employees the choice to leave their employment freely upon reasonable notice;
Provide their employees with training to help them recognise situations where a risk of modern slavery exists; and

Non-discrimination and equal employment opportunities

We value diversity and equal opportunity in our workplace and are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all employees can thrive.

Contractors must always:
Provide equal employment opportunities to all employees;
Maintain a work environment free of discrimination, harassment, or violence;
Ensure that diversity and inclusivity in the workplace are supported and encouraged;
Take measures to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

Contractors must never:
Discriminate based on race;
Discriminate based on religion;
Discriminate based on gender;
Discriminate based on sexual orientation;
Discriminate based on national origin;
Discriminate based on age.

Respect for workers' rights and freedom of association

We respect the rights of our employees to join or not join any labour organization of their choice.

Contractors must always:
Respect the rights of their employees to join or form labour unions;
Respect the right of their employees to strike.

Contractors must never:
Interfere with the right of their employees to collective bargaining.
Sanction or penalise their employees for the exercise of their workers’ rights.

Fair compensation and benefits

We offer competitive compensation packages that are aligned with industry standards and the cost of living in the locations where we operate.

Contractors must always:
Ensure that their employees receive all legally mandated benefits.

Health and safety standards

We hold deep concern for our employees, communities, and those impacted by our actions. Ensuring a safe and healthy work environment is our top priority, whether it's within our offices, on-site locations or during business travels. We actively advocate for the significance of health, safety, and overall wellbeing, aiming for zero harm within our workplace and throughout all our endeavours.

Contractors must always:
Ensure compliance with the applicable workplace health and safety laws and regulations is treated as the minimum standard everywhere they conduct business;
Protect anyone who takes part in their operations and/or meets their work sites and offices;
Ensure hazard recognition, risk assessment and elimination of hazards used on work sites and offices;
Ensure an incident-free work environment.

4. Environmental Sustainability

Commitment to sustainable design and building practices

As an architecture studio, it is imperative that our contractors align with our commitment to designing environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient buildings. We have a strict requirement for sustainable design principles to be incorporated into all projects, encompassing the utilization of renewable energy sources, green roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, and energy-efficient building materials.

Contractors must always:
Support and prioritize sustainable design and building practices;
Minimize the environmental impact of their products and services;
Strive to implement energy-efficient solutions and technologies;
Comply with applicable environmental regulations and standards.

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption

As an organization, we acknowledge the critical importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the challenges of climate change. In light of this, we have made a firm commitment to mitigating our own carbon footprint by implementing measures to decrease energy consumption, advocating for sustainable transportation alternatives, and offsetting any remaining emissions.
When collaborating with UNS, we expect our contractors to actively contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. It is essential that contractors prioritize energy efficiency and take concrete steps to minimize their environmental impact.

Contractors must always:
Actively contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
Refrain from using energy-intensive processes without considering alternatives;
Embrace energy-efficient technologies and practices.

Protection of natural resources and biodiversity

We recognize the significance of preserving natural resources and biodiversity, and we are dedicated to reducing our environmental footprint. We prioritize designing buildings that minimize resource consumption and waste generation, and we actively seek to mitigate any adverse environmental effects resulting from our activities.

When collaborating with UNS, we expect our contractors to share our commitment to environmental stewardship. It is imperative that contractors take proactive measures to safeguard natural resources and biodiversity, and actively promote sustainable practices in their operations.

Contractors must always:
Demonstrate a strong commitment to the protection of natural resources and biodiversity;
Implement responsible resource management practices and promote sustainability.

Waste reduction and responsible disposal

Promoting waste reduction and responsible waste management practices is a core objective at UNS. We prioritize minimizing waste generation in our operations and projects and ensuring that any waste produced is disposed of in an environmentally conscious manner. In our workplace, we actively encourage our employees to adopt practices such as recycling, reusing materials, and minimizing the use of single-use items to further reduce waste.
As a contractor working with UNS, we expect you to share our commitment to waste reduction and responsible waste disposal. It is crucial that you take proactive measures to minimize waste generation throughout your operations and projects. Additionally, it is essential to adhere to applicable laws and regulations regarding the disposal of waste materials, including hazardous substances.

Contractors must always:
Implement waste reduction strategies to minimise the generation of waste throughout their operations;
Promote responsible waste disposal practices by adhering to applicable regulations and guidelines.

Sustainable sourcing of materials

We recognize the importance of sourcing building materials from environmentally responsible contractors. We strive to use materials that are sustainable, ethically sourced, and free of harmful chemicals. Contractor must implement a sustainable sourcing program that considers the environmental impact of materials, such as responsibly sourced wood and recycled materials.

Contractors must always:
Prioritise sustainable sourcing of materials by considering their environmental and social impact;
Engage in responsible supply chain practices, including the use of materials with low environmental footprint and ethical sourcing methods.

5. Business Ethics and Integrity

Protection of confidential and proprietary information

We respect the confidentiality of our clients' information and other proprietary information that we may come across in the course of our work. We have strict data security protocols in place to ensure that this information is protected. Contractor must protect confidential and proprietary information, including client information, trade secrets, and intellectual property.

Contractors must always:
Prioritise the protection of confidential information;
Exercise due diligence in maintaining the confidentiality of confidential and proprietary information.

Anti-money laundering and anti-corruption policies

As an architecture studio committed to ethical and sustainable practices, we place a high value on transparency and integrity in all our business dealings. We strictly prohibit any form of bribery, corruption, or money laundering, and we expect all our contractors to comply with these policies as well. We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and fairness, and we take any potential violations of anti-corruption laws very seriously. Contractor must implement anti-money laundering and anti-corruption policies and procedures to prevent financial crimes and unethical behaviour.

Contractors must always:
Refrain from engaging in any form of bribery, corruption or money laundering;
Prioritise ethics, transparency, and integrity in all business dealings;
Implement robust anti-money laundering and anti-corruption policies and procedures to effectively prevent financial crimes and unethical behaviour.

Conflict of interest avoidance

Promoting transparency, objectivity, and maintaining the highest levels of integrity is a priority at UNS. We understand the significance of avoiding conflicts of interest, as they can undermine trust and compromise

the credibility of our business. As an external contractor working with us, it is essential that you adhere to the same principles.
Upholding our core values of commitment to the architectural profession and our clients, we are steadfast in identifying and avoiding any situations that might lead to such conflicts. We expect all contractors to actively identify and avoid any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during their engagement with UNS. It is crucial that your actions and decisions are not influenced by personal interests or relationships that could compromise the objective and fair treatment of our clients, contractors, and stakeholders.

Contractors must always:

Avoid conflicts of interest and ensure that their actions are not influenced by personal interests or relationships;

Require its employees to disclose potential conflicts of interest and refrain from engaging in activities that could create such conflicts.

Protection of customer privacy and data security

As a responsible business, we are committed to protecting the privacy and personal data of our clients and employees. We have implemented robust data security measures and policies to ensure that all personal data is collected, processed, and stored in compliance with applicable data protection laws and regulations. We may (periodically) monitor personal data we process in order to comply with applicable laws and regulations. We do not share or disclose any personal data without a legal basis, and we take all necessary measures to prevent any unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of personal data. We believe that the protection of personal data is essential to building trust and maintaining strong relationships with our clients and employees. Contractor must protect customer privacy and data security by implementing appropriate technical and organizational measures to safeguard personal information.

Contractors must always:

Protect customer privacy and data security by implementing appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard personal information.

Refrain from sharing or disclosing personal data without a legal basis and take necessary measures to prevent unauthorised access, use, or disclosure of such data.