

# **Code of Conduct**

**for SOMO research**

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# Introduction

## ***Principles***

SOMO establishes its principles and working methods in various policy documents:

Principles for the administrative organisation, the work processes and the quality policy are laid down in the Quality Manual.

SOMO's research methods are described in its Research Manual.

The 'Sustainable Operations' policy memorandum seeks to promote sustainability in the organisation's operations.

This Code of Conduct ensures the carefulness applied by SOMO when carrying out research.

## ***Purpose and occasion***

With this Code of Conduct, SOMO seeks to make explicit the standards and values that serve as principles for the research it commissions and conducts.

NGOs are also increasingly being asked to provide clarity and transparency regarding their operations. This applies to areas such as purchasing of goods and services, salary policy and information provision. Insight into these areas increases confidence in NGOs from funders, parties commissioning research, partner organisations and the public.

SOMO has always applied stringent rules and guidelines for its research, procedures and interactions with other parties and stakeholders. These rules and guidelines are elaborated in greater detail and made public in this Code of Conduct for SOMO research.

## ***Structure of the document***

The Code of Conduct consists of two parts.

- A. *Principles for research carried out by or on behalf of SOMO. These principles have a general tenor and are intended to provide information to funders, parties commissioning research, partner organisations and the public. To this end, these principles are also located on SOMO's website.*
- B. *The complaints procedure that can be used if an interested party wishes to object to the structure, outcome or method of research carried out by or on behalf of SOMO.*

# A Principles

SOMO applies the following principles in conducting research.

## 1. *Effectiveness*

Research carried out by or on behalf of SOMO must be in line with the objectives of SOMO. This means that the research must have social relevance and must be reflective of the position and the interests of workers, consumers and the environment, in the developed world and in developing countries.

When contracting out research, SOMO works to build up local research capacity and to strengthen local trade union and NGO networks.

## 2. *Independence*

SOMO does not accept commissions from individual private companies with a profit motive. The working methods, results and conclusions of research activities are determined and formulated exclusively by SOMO. SOMO does not allow third parties to influence the realisation of research or the formulation of research conclusions.

## 3. *Reliability*

SOMO makes maximum efforts to ensure the reliability of the research results. To this end, the information sources for the research are examined critically by SOMO and where necessary checked by consulting other sources.

If information from secondary sources is used, these sources are always stated.

When contracting out research, the standards applied by SOMO are made known to the organisation carrying out the research, and where necessary, instruction, training and supervision are provided to ensure a that the reliability of the research meets SOMO's standards.

## 4. *Protection of sources*

Cooperation in SOMO research must not result in danger or disadvantage to the respondents involved. Where necessary, SOMO guarantees the anonymity of the persons cooperating in research. Without their permission, personal data of respondents are not provided to third parties.

## 5. *Quality*

SOMO maintains a system of planning, monitoring and evaluation, within which the quality of the research process and the research results are monitored.

In the context of quality assurance, the following rules are applied in the area of expertise and process monitoring: project allocation in accordance with the expertise of the researcher; monthly discussion of the research progress; at least one internal or external expert supervisory researcher; periodic project evaluation; set organisational processes for the implementation and handling of assignments; integrated software support for planning, monitoring and project progress; independent external assessment of the process support.

## **6. *Transparency***

SOMO provides insight into the methods of research applied, the sources consulted, the objectives of the research, the internal SOMO operations, the commissioning parties and the sources of funding for research assignments.

Information on the working methods of SOMO and the nature and scale of the research activities can be obtained through SOMO's website ([www.somo.nl](http://www.somo.nl)) or can be requested from SOMO. The results of research initiated by SOMO are available to the public.

## **7. *Cooperation***

SOMO strives to enhance cooperation with like-minded research organisations and other organisations because coordinated efforts can have a magnifying effect. Where possible, SOMO coordinates and supports the realisation of research projects with other, like-minded organisations.

## **8. *Right of reply***

If the research relates to a specific company or organisation, this organisation in principle receives a draft version of the research findings to be published, with the opportunity to respond to these. If a report contains specific allegations, the organisation in question is given the opportunity to respond to these accusations, to identify factual inaccuracies and to provide additional information.

## **9. *Accountability***

SOMO bears full responsibility for the research results published under its own name. Publications based on SOMO research that are published by a commissioning organisation are the responsibility of the commissioning party. SOMO remains responsible vis-à-vis the commissioning party for the results of the research.

SOMO can always be held accountable for the methods and results of research carried out by it or on its behalf. SOMO is open to ideas and suggestions for improvement of its working methods and presentation. Any complaints will be handled in a careful manner. In this context, SOMO has a complaints procedure that can be found on the SOMO website or requested from SOMO.

## **B Complaints procedure**

### **1. General**

All SOMO employees are individually responsible for compliance with the guidelines applicable within SOMO to the performance of research. All studies and publications are checked by colleagues within SOMO.

Nevertheless, imperfections may occur, about which a complaint can be submitted. The following procedure applies in this context.

### **2. Commencement of the complaints procedure**

Complaints must be submitted in writing or by email to the management of SOMO, Sarphatistraat 30, 1018 GL Amsterdam. A confirmation of receipt of the complaint will be sent within two weeks, along with a notification of the method by which the complaint will be handled.

The complainant should receive a response from the responsible project leader within four weeks of submitting the complaint. If more time is needed for a careful handling of the complaint, the complainant will be notified to this effect within these four weeks.

### **3. Appeal possibilities**

If the complainant is not satisfied with how the complaint has been handled, he or she can appeal to the board of SOMO, Sarphatistraat 30, 1018 GL Amsterdam. Within two weeks of receipt of the appeal against the handling of the complaint, a confirmation of receipt will be sent, indicating the handling of the appeal.

The complainant should receive a response within six weeks. If more time is needed for a careful handling of the complaint on appeal, the complainant on appeal will be notified to this effect within six weeks.

### **4. Handling of the complaint**

The board of SOMO will ensure that the responsible project leader answers the complaint carefully. In principle, complaints are handled in a written procedure. Additional oral explanation is only deemed desirable in exceptional cases.

### **5. Handling of the appeal**

The board of SOMO will ensure that the complaint on appeal is answered carefully. In principle, complaints on appeal are handled in a written procedure. Additional oral explanation is only deemed desirable in exceptional cases.

**6. *Disputes concerning the reliability of data***

If the complaint or appeal relates to reliability of the information used, an independent verification commission may be engaged during the handling of the complaint or appeal. The complainant will be notified of the conclusions of the verification commission in the context of the complaint procedure.

**7. *Correction possibility***

If a complaint procedure results in a correction of published research results, the distribution of the corrected results must be in proportion to the original distribution of the disputed information.