

WWF-Norway Fraud Report, 2017

In 2017 the WWF Network continued the work with prevention of fraud and corruption, ensuring both that leaders emphasise zero tolerance, and also in confirming a continued awareness among all staff. This work is firmly rooted in the longstanding Code of Conduct of the WWF Network.

Fraud and corruption is a serious topic in WWF. The negative consequences are extensive and usually affect the people WWF cooperate with and their natural resources. Economic crime of this type also entails misuse of resources set aside for conservation work. WWF-Norway is committed to transparency, and in line with our Code of Ethics, this annual report details the cases involving either WWF-Norway directly, or funds that WWF-Norway has provided, either from the Norwegian government or funds raised from the public.

Improved identification and management of risks, of which fraud and corruption is significant, received increased attention in 2016, which was continued in 2017, with enhanced procedures and follow up put in place in the Africa offices around key risks, one of the major regions we support.

In the cases below, the investigations identified areas for improvement in WWF's and/or partners internal controls and accounting procedures, and these have been or are currently being implemented. Since WWF operate with natural resource management issues in countries where corruption is often commonplace, WWF will continue to develop its anti-corruption systems and practices.

The 2017 report details the cases that were dealt with during the year.

Cases concluded in 2017 – fraud detected

In Zambia, allegations were made about the incorrect distribution of solar lanterns using Norad and WWF-Norway funds. The investigation established that 112 solar lanterns, at a cost of CHF 3 285, were not properly accounted for in the documentation of their distribution, and a further 88 solar lanterns, at a cost of CHF 2 581, were not distributed according to the agreed criteria. NOK 51 000 was reimbursed, as well as two members of staff being dismissed and shortcomings in procedures identified and rectified.

In Uganda, a whistleblower alleged that certain WWF administration staff in the WWF Uganda Country Office were abusing a discount card from a supermarket, used to purchase office supplies, for their own personal gain. An investigation was undertaken and found that four members of staff had abused the card over a period of several years, and that the loss to the WWF office was CHF 375 (approx. NOK 3 150), though given that this was a loss in terms of points on a discount card, it is not directly attributable to any specific donor funds being stolen or abused. The amount was recovered from the four staff and they were dismissed from WWF employment.

Cases concluded in 2017 – fraud/corruption not detected

The procurement audit in the Tanzania Country Office that was ongoing at the end of 2016 was concluded in early 2017, with no evidence found of fraud or corruption, though some areas for improvements were identified for internal controls and procedures.

In China, a whistleblower alleged various incidents of fraud and corruption in the WWF China Office. Some of these allegations had been previously investigated and no evidence of fraud and corruption uncovered. The same proved to be true with the new allegations, which were focused around an apparent misunderstanding of the WWF office structures in China and related procedures.



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Investigations ongoing at end 2017 – conclusions pending

In late 2017 allegations were made by a whistleblower that a staff member in the WWF DRC Country Office was abusing their position in relation to their work with CSO partners, for personal gain. WWF is undertaking an investigation into these allegations, hoping to finalise the investigation in January 2018.