

# **Code of Conduct for Contractors of the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) in the Context of International Cooperation**

## **– October 2025 version –**

As a public contracting authority, the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) must ensure compliance with legal requirements and adhere to standards relating to human rights, environmental protection and integrity. The same is required of its contractors. With this Code of Conduct, the PTB specifies its requirements for its contractors in the aforementioned areas and makes these requirements legally binding on the contractors.

### **1. Principles**

When performing the services, the contractor must comply with all relevant legal regulations, ordinances and official provisions, including tax law requirements, and consider the local conditions and commercial practices of the country concerned.

Respect for human rights, the protection of children, the prevention of violence, abuse and exploitation of any kind, and non-discrimination must be ensured in the provision of services by the contractor in compliance with international standards and multilateral agreements, in particular international human rights agreements.

The contractor shall also provide its services in compliance with applicable national and international environmental law, minimize greenhouse gas emissions and avoid any action that could increase the vulnerability of the population and/or ecosystems to the effects of climate change.

### **2. Human rights obligations**

#### **2.1. Prohibition of child labour and forced child labour**

The employment of children under the age of 15 is prohibited. If local law stipulates a higher minimum age for work or compulsory schooling up to a higher age, this higher age shall be considered as the minimum age for employment. Irrespective of this, employment must not be harmful to health or development and must not interfere with school or vocational training. In addition, the worst forms of child labour as defined by ILO Convention No. 182 are prohibited for children under the age of 18.

#### **2.2. Prohibition of forced labour, slavery and slave-like practices**

Any form of forced labour, slave labour, slave-like practices, serfdom and other forms of domination or oppression in the workplace, such as extreme economic or sexual exploitation and humiliation, are strictly prohibited. All work must be voluntary and carried out without threat of punishment. Furthermore, there must be no unacceptable treatment of workers, such as psychological hardship, personal harassment and humiliation.

#### **2.3. Occupational safety**

The occupational safety obligations applicable under the law of the place of employment must be observed. The Contractor is responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment. Appropriate occupational safety systems must be established and implemented to take the necessary precautions against accidents and damage to health that may arise in connection with the work. Excessive physical or mental fatigue must be prevented by appropriate protective measures, particularly regarding working hours and rest breaks.

In addition, employees must be regularly informed and trained about applicable health and safety measures.

#### **2.4. Prohibition of sexual harassment**

The contractor shall take appropriate measures to prevent sexual harassment and shall refrain from inciting violence or hatred.

#### **2.5. Prohibition of discrimination**

Any unequal treatment of employees is prohibited unless it is justified by the requirements of the job. This applies, for example, to unequal treatment based on national and ethnic origin, social background, health status, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, political opinion, religion or belief. The personal dignity, privacy and personal rights of everyone must be respected. Equal pay for equal work must be guaranteed.

#### **2.6. Appropriate remuneration**

The contractor's employees shall be paid appropriate remuneration, in any case at least the minimum wage stipulated by applicable law; otherwise, appropriate remuneration shall be determined in accordance with the law of the place of employment. When performing the contract in Germany, the provisions of the law regulating a general minimum wage (Minimum Wage Act) must be observed and the contractor must pay any relevant collectively agreed wages. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that wages are not withheld.

#### **2.7. Respect for natural resources**

Human natural resources must be respected and protected. In particular, harmful soil changes, water pollution, air pollution, harmful noise emissions or excessive water consumption must be avoided if this significantly impairs the natural basis for the preservation and production of food, impairs access to safe drinking water or sanitary facilities, or damages health.

### **3. Environmental obligations**

#### **3.1. Hazardous chemicals**

Contrary to the provisions of the Minamata Convention in its current version, (i) products containing mercury may not be manufactured, (ii) mercury and mercury compounds may not be used, and (iii) mercury waste may not be treated. The production, use, environmentally unsound handling, collection, storage and disposal of persistent organic pollutants contrary to the provisions of the POPs Convention in its current version is prohibited.

#### **3.2. Waste management**

The prohibitions on the export of hazardous waste laid down in the Basel Convention in its current version must be observed. This includes special waste with hazardous properties, such as explosive, flammable, toxic, infectious, corrosive or (eco-)toxic substances. In particular, waste from the manufacture, preparation and use of biocides and plant protection products may be covered.

### **4. Integrity**

#### **4.1. Conflict of interest**

The contractor shall not enter into any conflict of interest in connection with the contract between it and PTB. A conflict of interest may arise from economic interests, political affinities or national ties, family or friendly relationships, and other bonding or interests. The contractor undertakes in particular

(a) not to accept any additional remuneration from third parties in connection with the contract,

(b) during the term of the contract, only accept other contracts where a conflict of interest is foreseeable due to the nature of the contract or its personal or economic connections to a third party with the written consent of PTB,

(c) not conclude any contract-related contracts with natural or legal persons with whom it has personal or economic connections.

#### **4.2. Integrity principles**

The contractor may not offer, grant or accept gifts or advantages for itself or others, either directly or through third parties, in connection with the award and/or performance of the contract; this also applies to facilitation payments.

The contractor may not agree with one or more other companies to restrict competition and may not participate in anti-competitive business practices.

Any form of corruption is prohibited. The contractor is obliged to take appropriate and reasonable measures to prevent and combat corruption.

#### **5. Implementation of requirements**

Within the scope of its own business activities, the contractor must identify risks within the supply chain and take appropriate measures.