



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY





SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc

Communication Policy

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. is a global impact consulting firm that works (often in virtual spaces) to create socio-environmental solutions to build a more sustainable, inclusive world.

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc.'s virtual communication policy is designed to ensure that all team members communicate effectively, professionally and ethically, both internally and externally. The policy outlines the following guidelines:

1. **Use of Technology:** SAEDI team members are expected to use technology effectively to facilitate communication among associates and with clients. This includes the use of email, video conferencing, instant messaging and other appropriate tools.
2. **Professionalism:** All communication must be conducted in a professional manner. Team members are expected to use appropriate language, tone and etiquette when communicating with each other and with clients. Any language or behaviour that could be deemed offensive, disrespectful or discriminatory is strictly prohibited.
3. **Confidentiality:** SAEDI team members are expected to maintain the confidentiality of client information and sensitive company information. This includes not sharing client data or internal discussions with external parties without prior approval.
4. **Timelines:** Team members are expected to respond to emails, messages and other forms of communication in a timely manner and communicate to another member of the team, accordingly, if unable to do so. This means acknowledging messages promptly and responding within a reasonable time frame.
5. **Quality:** All communication should be of high quality, with accurate information and clear messaging. This includes the use of proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and formatting.
6. **Training and Support:** SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. provides ongoing training and support to team members to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to communicate effectively in a virtual environment.

By adhering to these guidelines, SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc.'s team members can effectively communicate internally and externally, promote professionalism and ethical behaviour, and ultimately help create a more sustainable and inclusive world.

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc utilises various online productivity and social platforms such as Slack, Gmail, Outlook, LinkedIn, BlueSky, YouTube and WhatsApp.

SAEDI's official accounts on these platforms are to be used by employees and contractors of SAEDI solely for exchanging ideas and information relevant to our work.

To ensure that all communications remain professional, SAEDI team members are required to maintain a professional tone and content in all their interactions, both virtually and in-person. Any material that could be deemed pornographic, unethical or discriminatory must not be shared by team members in any capacity, including internal or external and on media platforms.

All of our employees and contractors must promote an understanding of diversity and cultivate an environment that values and leverages differences to improve our organization. At SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc., we have a zero-tolerance policy towards discriminatory and inappropriate remarks based on race, religion, ethnic origin, physical attributes, mental or physical disability, colour, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, medical condition, citizenship and/or age in the media and on social media platforms. Such behaviour can result in disciplinary action or immediate termination of engagement/contract.

It is important for SAEDI team members to ensure efficient and effective internal and external communication. To achieve this, team members are asked to follow the guidelines below:

1. **Check email at least twice daily:** This ensures that team members stay updated on any important information or requests that may have been sent through email. It is recommended to check emails at the start of the workday and towards the end of the day.
2. **Before Calling a Meeting or Huddle:** To ensure efficient use of colleagues' time and resources, carefully consider the most appropriate communication method for delivering a message or an update. Before scheduling a meeting, assess whether the information can be effectively conveyed via email, a Slack Message (text or audio) or any other appropriate approach. Meetings should be reserved for discussions that require real-time collaboration, decision making or in-depth engagement.
3. **Share WhatsApp contact information:** Sharing WhatsApp numbers allows team members to communicate quickly and efficiently with each other. This can be especially useful for urgent matters that require immediate attention. Information shared via WhatsApp, must be followed with an email to ensure that the information is available for future reference. We recognise that messages can be many and invasive and therefore team members are not obligated to respond to non-urgent messages outside of their scheduled work hours.
4. **Keep the Slack channel open with notifications on during usual work hours:** Slack is a popular messaging platform used by many organizations. Keeping the Slack channel open with notifications on during work hours ensures that team members are aware of any new messages or updates that are posted. If there is the need to turn off notifications during scheduled work hours, to keep focus on an output, please ensure to check for any messages before you sign out for the day.
5. **Respond in a timely manner to messages:** It is important for team members to respond to messages in a timely manner (not to exceed 3 business days), especially if they are time-sensitive or require urgent attention. This helps to ensure that communication is efficient and effective.
6. **Use of out-of-office messages and statuses on Slack:** In ensuring that information and timelines are not missed, it is recommended that employees and contractors of SAEDI use out-of-office messages and statuses on Slack when out of the office for leave, vacation or travel. These out-of-office messages will include the time away or when you would be back and another member of staff that can be contacted on your behalf during this time.

By following these guidelines, SAEDI team members can improve communication both internally and externally, which can lead to increased productivity, improved teamwork and better overall results.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a very convenient tool for the workplace. It is extremely effective for sharing information quickly. It does not, however, allow for the long-term storage of information.

Guidelines for effective use of the SAEDI WhatsApp Groups:

- Keep WhatsApp messages (both text and voice) short
- Keep non-work-related messages to a minimum
- Be respectful
- Refrain from the use of social media jargon
- Be respectful of time zones and work hours posted in the Slack profiles of team members when sending messages.

Team members may use WhatsApp to:

1. Alert the team to changes in schedules.
2. Share links to
 - a. Webinars
 - b. Calls for proposals
 - c. Reports
 - d. Data.

To ensure that information that needs to be saved for future use can be saved, links shared on WhatsApp must also be shared in the relevant Slack Channel or via email.

As WhatsApp messages can be overwhelming, team members may want to turn off notifications outside of their working hours.

Slack

Slack is the preferred platform for internal communications and our substantive work. Unique channels are set up in Slack for each project, allowing the team to leave messages, share documents and hold working sessions (Huddle).

Team members are asked to set up their Slack profile to include:

1. Name & photograph
2. Designation within the team
3. Email address
4. Work days/hours
5. Time zone
6. Any other information you feel relevant to the team.

Like WhatsApp, Slack can become overwhelming. Team members can use ***Do Not Disturb*** outside their regular work hours to keep the alerts to a minimum. Moreover, team members can use Slack Statuses for general overall team notifications when in a meeting, at lunch, and away during their usual working hours, etc. This helps members to quickly assess the availability of team members to better improve overall efficiency and keep inferences to a minimum during the workday.

Team Members are asked to become familiar with the many apps and add-ons available on Slack to ensure effective use of the platform and feel free to reach out to colleagues for any additional guidance.

Google Drive

Google Drive offers a storage option for key documents, etc, requiring collaboration across a wider team through Google Docs and Google Sheets, for example. For the creation of any folder for storage.

Note that documents in Google Docs and Google Sheets can sometimes lose the formatting. Therefore, completed documents must be checked for formatting and edited using the EDITOR feature in Microsoft Word.

Dropbox

Team members are encouraged to use Dropbox or other cloud storage like Google Drive to save SAEDI Consulting files and documents they are working on and have finalized. This can help to avoid the complete loss of documents due to computer failure or other malfunctions and allows documents to be accessible from any device.

This can also be useful (as is Google Drive) for sharing files that are too big to email. Please ensure, if sharing the link, that is:

- The correct link to a file not a folder,
- That it is being sent to the right person, and
- Is preferably in PDF format for persons outside of the SAEDI team.

There is already a [SAEDI Research Associates](#) folder on Dropbox which is accessible to team members and has a stock of reference material and data that is accessible ONLY for SAEDI Consulting activities and work.

Creating a shared folder is also possible on Dropbox and can be restricted to who has access with names and email addresses being designated as well as the type of access that is permitted.

Please note that use of Dropbox and Google Drive should be in keeping with the SAEDI Consulting Confidentiality Agreement as well as Data Management Policy. The latter is currently in development and should be launched soon.

Email

Email is used for both internal and external communications. Some of the guidelines for using email are as follows:

1. Create your email content before entering the recipient's email address
2. Ensure you CC relevant parties
3. Do not use **Reply All** except where everyone in the sender's list needs to get a response from you.
4. Have a clear subject, and ensure that you stick to the subject.
5. Treat an email like a letter:
 - a. Use clear paragraphs
 - b. Edit for grammar and spelling
 - c. Open and close formally, particularly when dealing with an external stakeholder.
6. Check to ensure that attachments are in place before sending.
7. When the subject changes, start a new email, even if dealing with the same client.
8. Try to respond to an email within one (1) business day, even if only to acknowledge receipt and indicate when you will send a full reply.
9. Ensure that there is a signature at the end of your message that clearly states your name, title and phone number.

Models for setting up email signatures follow below. Please note that the inclusion of pronouns (e.g., She/Her; He/Him; They/Them) is optional (see example 2 below for clarity).

- **For official SAEDI email accounts**

SAEDI's logo (*on the left*)
First Name and Last Name | Job Title
Email address
Website

Example 1



- **Other associated accounts/Contractors**

Full Name in 13-point Bold Black (Pronouns (*optional*) 10-point regular) | Your Title 10-point regular

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. 11-point Bold Regular

Mobile/WhatsApp (*optional*): XXX-XXX-XXXX 10-point regular

Email address | www.saediconsulting.com 10-point regular

Example 2:

First-Name Last-Name (*pronouns/optional*) | Designation

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc.

Mobile/WhatsApp: 1-XXX-XXX-XXXX

Email: firstnamelastname@?mail.com | www.saediconsulting.com 10-point regular

Zoom

Zoom is used for internal and external meetings, trainings and webinars.

- For internal meetings, if you are new to the team, please use your camera during introductions.
- At all times, team members must be well-groomed on camera.
- When representing SAEDI in external meetings, trainings or webinars, please adhere to the following guidelines (also see General Communications Guidelines on Video Recording):
 1. Ensure that you are located in a place with minimum noise and distraction.
 2. Join the meeting 5 minutes before the scheduled start time to check your video and audio.
 3. Always be professionally dressed and well-groomed.
 4. Level the camera to show your full face.
 5. Use the SAEDI backdrop provided - see attached (or use a neutral background)

- provide by Zoom).
6. Display your name and the name of the organisation.
 7. Have a recent photograph that presents you as well-groomed for when your camera is off.
 8. Mute your audio when you are not speaking to reduce background noise.
 9. Use the **Raise Hand** icon when you wish to make an intervention.
 10. Do not eat during a Zoom call.
 11. Do not answer your telephone unless it is urgent, and try to inform the meeting at the beginning if you are expecting a call that must be answered. If so, please place ringtones on silent or vibrate.

Social Media

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. uses social media to share its work and promote advocacy in its focus areas within the gender and environment framework. These currently include Bluesky, LinkedIn, and YouTube. If any staff member finds information that can contribute to SAEDI's social media visibility, they can share it through Slack or WhatsApp, tagging the Communications Team or the Managing Director. Team members can also tag the Junior Research Associate responsible for anything blog-related.

SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. encourages its team members to support, leverage, and boost social media presence by sharing, commenting, tagging their networks, and liking any SAEDI posts. However, before engaging with SAEDI's social media content, staff should keep in mind the following tips:

- Team members are encouraged to share SAEDI's work. If a member's personal or professional social media profile may contradict or challenge SAEDI's views and opinions, they can create another professional account or use a clause in their bios/about section that indicates the views expressed are not the views of SAEDI Consulting (Barbados) Inc. For instance, they can include statements such as "Views expressed are my own" or "Retweet does not equal endorsement."
- Members may use semi-formal language but should keep their comments or additional inputs professional and reflective of the SAEDI brand and focus on the gender nexus, as well as a broader gender and environment focus.

<i>Policy Development Process</i>	
Actions	Dates
Drafted and approved	December 2023
Reviewed and approved	January 2025
Next review	January 2027