



Conflict of interest policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help board members of **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD** to effectively identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD** and manage risk.

2. Objective

The **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD**, it's board of directors (called the 'board' in this policy) aims to ensure that board members are aware of their obligation to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD**

3. Scope

This policy applies to the board, senior leadership, volunteers, on the ground team working in our programs, as well as every single individual or member that represents or works for **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD**

4. Definition of conflicts of interests

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the charity.

Personal interests include direct interests, as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a shareholder).

It also includes a conflict between a board member's duty to **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD** and another duty that the board member has (for example, to another charity). A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.

These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of the charity.

Therefore these situations must be managed accordingly.

5. Policy

This policy has been developed to address conflicts of interest affecting **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD** .

Conflicts of interest are common, and they do not need to present a problem to the charity as long as they are openly and effectively managed.

It is the policy of **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD**, as well as a responsibility of the board, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts

(where they do arise) do not conflict with the obligations to **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD** .

Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD will manage conflicts of interest by requiring board members to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and disclose any conflicts of interest
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

5.1. Responsibility of the board

The board is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest across the charity
- monitoring compliance with this policy, and
- reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

The charity must ensure that its board members are aware of the ACNC governance standards, particularly governance standard 5, and that they disclose any actual or perceived material conflicts of interests as required by governance standard 5.

5.2. Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into **Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD**'s register of interests, as well as being raised with the board.

Where every other board member shares a conflict, the board should refer to ACNC Governance Standard 5 to ensure that proper disclosure occurs.

The register of interests must be maintained by the General Secretary of the organisation. The register must record information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it).

5.3 Confidentiality of disclosures

The confidentiality of conflict of interest disclosures is critical to maintaining trust and ensuring transparency within the Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD (CEF). All disclosures of conflicts of interest will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, and access to this information will be restricted to those who require it to fulfill their governance responsibilities.

Specifically, only the General Secretary, the Chairperson of the Board, and designated members responsible for managing conflicts of interest will have access to the register of interests. This ensures that sensitive information is protected while allowing the appropriate individuals to effectively manage conflicts.

In cases where heightened confidentiality is required, such as conflicts involving sensitive or high-stakes matters, an alternative disclosure mechanism may be implemented. For instance, the conflicted individual may disclose their interest directly to an independent governance officer or an external advisor appointed by the board. This mechanism ensures that sensitive disclosures are handled appropriately while maintaining the integrity of the organization.

To further protect confidentiality, the board will ensure that all disclosures are documented and stored securely, with access limited to authorized personnel only. Additionally, discussions involving conflicts of interest will be recorded in meeting minutes in a manner that balances transparency with privacy considerations.

By implementing these measures, CEF aims to foster an environment where individuals feel confident disclosing conflicts of interest, knowing their information will be handled responsibly and securely.

6. Action required to manage conflicts of interest

6.1. Conflicts of interest of board members

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the board (excluding the board member who has made the disclosure, as well as any other conflicted board member) must decide whether or not those conflicted board members should:

- vote on the matter (this is a minimum),
- participate in any debate, or
- be present in the room during the debate and the voting.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a board member from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the board considering if it is appropriate for the person conflicted to resign from the board.

6.2. What should be considered when deciding what action to take

In deciding what approach to take, the board will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- the charity's objects and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the charity.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the board (excluding any conflicted board member/s) who are present and voting at the meeting.

The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the register of interests.

7. Compliance with this policy

Collective Empowerment Foundation LTD (CEF) is committed to upholding the principles outlined in this conflict of interest policy. All board members, staff, and representatives of CEF are expected to comply with the policy to ensure the integrity and ethical operation of the organization.

If the board has reasonable grounds to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to disclose an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, it will initiate an investigation into the matter. The board will take a fair and transparent approach to determine whether there has been a breach of the policy.

If a breach is confirmed, the board may take appropriate actions depending on the severity of the violation. These actions could include:

- Issuing a formal warning to the individual.
- Requiring further training on conflicts of interest and governance obligations.
- Removing the individual from their position, where the breach undermines the trust and ethical standards of the organization.
- Referring the matter to relevant regulatory authorities if the breach involves fraudulent or corrupt behavior.

If any individual suspects a conflict of interest has not been disclosed, they are encouraged to report their concerns to the General Secretary or another member of the Board. Reports will be treated with confidentiality and respect, and whistleblowers will be protected from retaliation in accordance with organizational policies and applicable laws.

All actions taken to address breaches of this policy will be documented in the minutes of board meetings and stored securely. Regular reviews and updates of this policy will ensure continued alignment with CEF's values and compliance with relevant governance standards.

By enforcing compliance with this policy, CEF safeguards its reputation, ensures transparency in its operations, and maintains the trust of stakeholders, beneficiaries, and the wider community.

Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the General Secretary, Ben Imbardelli by 0477146591



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