



CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Introduction

The Board of FERN is committed to high standards of ethical conduct and accordingly places great importance on making clear any existing or potential conflict of interest.

Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide a framework for all Board Members in declaring conflicts of interest.

Policy

The Board places great importance on making clear any existing or potential conflicts of interest. All such conflicts of interest shall be declared by the member concerned and documented in the minutes of meetings. A Board member who believes another Board member has an undeclared conflict of interest should specify in writing the basis of this potential conflict.

Procedure

1. Members shall declare any conflicts of interest either at the start of the Board meeting concerned or when a relevant issue arises. The nature of this conflict of interest should be entered into the meeting minutes.
2. Where a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest is identified and/or registered, the Board member concerned shall leave the room as soon as that item comes up for discussion. The concerned Board member shall not vote on that issue, nor initiate or take part in any Board discussion on that topic (either in the meeting or with other Board members before or after the Board meetings), unless expressly invited to do so by unanimous agreement by all other members present.
4. If a person declares themselves to have existing or potential conflict of interest confidentiality will be respected. If a person alleges that another person has a conflict of interest, whether existing or potential, and if the Board cannot resolve this allegation to the satisfaction of both parties the matter shall be referred to the WACOSS. WACOSS will make a recommendation to the Board as to what action shall be taken.

Examples of conflict of interest could be (but are not limited to):

- When a Board member or his/her immediate family or business interests stands to gain financially from any business dealings, programs or services of the organisation.
- When a Board member is seeking a decision from which he/she could benefit personally/financially or in some other in kind manner.
- When a Board member him or herself offers a professional service to the organisation.
- When a Board member stands to gain personally or professionally from any insider knowledge if that knowledge is used to personal advantage.
- Where a Board member or the ex/officio member of the Board has a role on the governing body of another organisation, where the activities of that other body may be in direct conflict or competition with the activities of FERN.
- When a board member has a personal / business / close relationship with another board member.