



**ACGC**

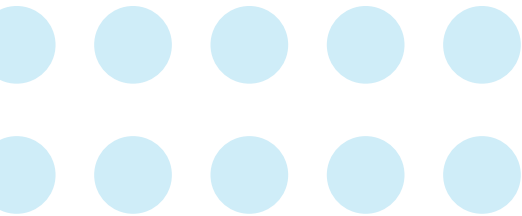
ALBERTA COUNCIL FOR  
GLOBAL COOPERATION

Procedures and Policy

# **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Policy name: Conflict of Interest

Policy type: Operational – Board and Staff



## POLICY STATEMENT

### Policy Statement Scope

This policy applies to all members of the ACGC Board of Directors and Committee Members. This policy must be explained to all such affected persons .

### Objective

*ACGC must meet high ethical standards in order to merit the trust of its partners and clients, as well as donors, governments and the public. The integrity of ACGC depends on ethical behavior and in particular, on fair, well-informed decision-making.*

The ability to make good decisions is sometimes affected by other interests - personal or professional - of individual Board and committee members. Although one cannot eliminate conflicts of interest, as they are a regular part of organizational and personal life, the objective of this policy is to permit ACGC to manage potential conflicts of interest successfully, when they do occur, in regards to Board and committee members.

## DEFINITIONS

**A conflict of interest:** arises when a person able to influence a decision, whether by official vote or moral and/or intellectual persuasion, is liable to gain:

- *some personal advantage* (e.g. to achieve financial profit or avoid loss) from the outcome of the decision in which they are involved, and/or
- *some advantage for an organization* with which the individual is directly involved (either voluntary or paid)
- *an advantage in the interests of the individual's immediate family*

A conflict of interest also arises when as individual Board or committee members outside duties, interests or obligations may or do differ fundamentally from his/her obligations as a member of the Board, a committee or working group of ACGC.

## PROCEDURES **General Principles**

### Assumptions

1. No Board or committee member shall use his or her position, or the knowledge gained therefrom, in such a manner that a conflict between the interest of ACGC or any of its affiliates and his or her interests arises, but is not disclosed.
2. When functioning as an ACGC Board or committee member, each person has a duty to place the interest of ACGC foremost in any dealings with ACGC and has a continuing responsibility to comply with the requirements of this policy.
3. Board and committee members are not eligible for employment or service contracts with ACGC or its affiliates during their tenure. If a Board or committee member wishes to apply for a permanent position at ACGC, he/she must immediately withdraw from active participation on the Board or committee. If the Board or committee member is the successful candidate, he/she must resign from the Board or committee upon accepting the position.
  - 3.a) ACGC will consider a member of a Board or committee members' immediate family for employment if the applicant possesses all of the qualifications for employment for the position.
4. Any Board or committee member who becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest with respect to any matter coming before the Board, committee or working group shall make this potential conflict known immediately in any discussion relating to the matter.
5. Given that ACGC is an umbrella organization, it may be necessary in certain circumstances for the Chairperson of the Board, committee or working group to secure the confidentiality of those present in a decision making process which is likely to affect someone or an organization known to those making the decision.
6. Decisions taken by the Board, committees or working groups, regarding the management of a conflict of interest, must not only be fair, they must be seen to be fair.

### Procedure

When an actual perceived or potential conflict is identified by any person, the following action must be taken:

1. The Board or committee member identifies the actual, perceived or potential conflict;
2. The Board or committee member must fully disclose the conflict to the Chairperson and, where appropriate, to all Board or committee members;
3. The Chairperson shall develop an appropriate response, including where necessary, disqualification from voting and discussion and any necessary remedial action. For example, if a vote may have been affected by a previously undeclared conflict of interest, it may be necessary to hold that vote again.
4. Where a potential conflict of interest is identified, the following options may be considered and combined as appropriate:
  - a) The Board or committee member with the conflict should not be involved in any aspect of the decision making process.
  - b) He or she may be present and/or participate in discussions but refrain from voting.
  - c) He or she will absent him or herself from any discussions in connection with the matter in question.
  - d) He or she may participate in initial discussions and then be asked to leave for further discussions before the vote.
  - e) He or she may vote or be present for the vote, but the vote will be done by confidential ballot
  - f) He or she may participate fully.

The Board, committee or working group must agree in majority on the option or combination of options to be taken in any given conflict of interest situation.

5. Any Board or committee member may ask for a decision to be taken by secret ballot when dealing with a matter where there is a conflict of interest.
6. The official minutes of the meeting must record the potential conflict of interest and how it was avoided and/or dealt with.
7. When there is a failure to agree on whether a conflict of interest exists and/or how it is to be managed, the Chairperson (or if the potential conflict of interest involves him or her, the vice-chairperson) may seek legal counsel.

## PROCEDURES **Common Sense Provision**

The application of any part of this policy shall rely heavily on the common sense of the group as a whole. Conflict of interest circumstances vary and the judgment and flexibility of the Board, committee or working group must be preserved.

### Examples

Some examples of situations that may indicate a conflict of interest are:

- Where a Board or committee member is in a position to influence the creation of employment or a service contract and then becomes a candidate for such a position or contract.
- Where a member of the Board or committee influences the selection of a supplier of goods and/or services and the member has an ownership interest in that supplier.
- Where a Board or committee member uses ACGC's name and resources for personal benefit.
- Where a Board or committee member could influence the giving of a grant, funds or project approval which would benefit themselves or an organization they are associated with as staff or volunteers.

### **Responsibility for Prevention**

*ACGC supports an organizational culture in which people freely take responsibility for both "self-declaring" possible conflicts of interest, and respectfully raising possible conflicts faced by others in the organization. This culture makes it possible to avoid many such situations from arising in the first place.*

*To prevent conflict of interest situations the ACGC Board, committee members, and staff have the responsibility to implement practical preventive measures, such as:*

- *Providing education about what to do when gifts and hospitality are offered;*
- *Providing meeting agendas in advance to enable participants to foresee possible conflicts;*
- *Ensuring that people are clearly told when information must be protected from improper use;*
- *Declining involvement in an action [such as supporting a questionable outside activity].*

**Approval Date:** Dec. 2017 **Date of Amendment:** Aug. 2017

**Reaffirmation Date:** Jan. 2020, 20 Dec. 2021 **Date for Review:** Fall 2023