

Dr.Shambhunath Singh Research Foundation (SRF) –Varanasi (U.P)

Policy of Conflict of Interest

INTRODUCTION

Conflict of Interest Defined:

A conflict of interest is defined as an actual or perceived interest by a Associate (staff member/Board member) in an action that results in, or has the appearance of resulting in, personal, organizational, or professional gain. A conflict of interest occurs when an Associate (employee/Board member, all type of SRF associates) has a direct or fiducially interest in another relationship.

A conflict of interest occurs when the duties and responsibilities of a Dr.Shambhunath Sigh Research Foundation (SRF) Associate are not based upon the best interests of SRF, but rather are based on other interests that may benefit:

- A SRF Associate (Employee /Board member etc)
- An immediate relative of the SRF Associate
- Any other individuals not entitled to benefit from SRF activities.

The definition of conflict of interest includes any bias or the appearance of bias in a decision making process that would reflect a dual role played by a member of the foundation or group. For instance, might involve a person who is an employee and a Board member, or a person who is an employee and who hires family members as consultants. Here If there is a important need of this situation of hiring a consultant/Qualified staff then following transparency manner, through proper channel ,approval and declaration at all level consultant/qualifies staff can be hired.

When a conflict of interest arises

A conflict of interest exists when a SRF employee or immediate relative:

- Has a business relationship with a company, other Organisation or person with whom SRF does business
- Has a business relationship with a SRF beneficiary, SRF community, SRF employee, SRF foster parent, or SRF office
- Is employed by a SRF supplier
- Is employed by another SRF employee's business or household
- Has a significant ownership interest (stock or partnership) in any enterprise which is a supplier to SRF
 - Accepting in any form whatsoever, any remuneration, compensation or gift from current or potential associates of SRF . Likewise, no employee shall provide or give gifts or favors to others where these might appear designed to influence improperly others in their relations with SRF;
- Acts as a consultant, director, employee, manager, or representative of another organisation. If such actions...

Or interfere with the obligation to SRF because of demands of time and interest

- Through employment
- Identifies SRF with an activity or cause without prior approval ...a conflict of interest exists.
- A conflict of interest may also exist if there is a personal relationship between two SRF employees.

WHAT TO DO IF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST IS SUSPECTED

SRF employees need to inform the SRF Board Member/Director /Program Director whenever:

- Another employee is suspected of being involved in a conflict-of-interest situation.
- They are about to enter themselves into a business relationship that has the potential for conflict of interest

The SRF Board Member/Director /Program Director needs to:

- Investigate the conflict situation through interviews with:
 - The SRF employee(s) involved
 - Suppliers
 - Other persons involved

Note: If necessary, outside professionals will be hired to investigate conflict-of-interest situations.

- Document the results of the investigation in writing
- Decide if a potential conflict of interest exists
- Document the reasons for the decision

Note: The Board Member/Director /Program Director can appoint a committee of SRF employees to decide conflict cases. All the decisions must be approved in writing.

Important: *You can be disciplined or fired if you do not report a potential conflict of interest situation that you are aware of. Reporting on conflict situations will not affect your opportunities for:*

- *Advancement*
- *Performance appraisals*

WHAT TO DO IF A CONFLICT EXISTS/HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICT SITUATIONS

What to do if a conflict exists If a potential conflict of interest is discovered; the SRF Associate needs to determine if the conflict is detrimental to SRF. You should request that the employee disclose the amount and extent of their business interests. Depending on the nature and magnitude of the conflict, the SRF ASSOCIATES chooses to:

- Suspend SRF's business relationship with the parties involved while awaiting the outcome of further inquiry
- Alert other SRF Offices in the area or country of the conflict so they can take appropriate measures
- Form an inquiry committee composed of peers and the employee's immediate superior

How to resolve conflict situations

If your investigation shows that the potential conflict situation is not harmful to SRF, no further action is necessary.

If the conflict is determined to be harmful to SRF, the SRF Board Member/Director /Program Director may choose to:

- Request that the employee resign all conflicting activities or interests.
- Reassign the employee to another department or job
- Stop all business dealings with the supplier involved in the conflict
- Request other SRF Offices to stop business dealings with the supplier

Important:

All potential conflict of interest situations need to be addressed, regardless of whether an employee's Judgment has been impaired. However, existence of or perception of a conflict-of-interest situation does not necessarily mean that involved employees have violated SRF's policies.

Associate Responsibilities:

It is in the interest of the foundation, individual staff, and Board members to strengthen trust and confidence in each other, to expedite resolution of problems, to mitigate the effect and to minimize Organization's and individual stress that can be caused by a conflict of interest. Employees are to avoid any conflict of interest, even the appearance of a conflict of interest. SRF serves the community as a whole rather than only serving a special interest group. The appearance of a conflict of interest can cause embarrassment to the organisation and jeopardize the credibility of SRF. Any conflict of interest, potential conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest is to be reported to your supervisor immediately. Associates are to maintain independence and objectivity with clients, the community, and organisation. Associates are called to maintain a sense of fairness, civility, ethics and personal integrity even though law, regulation, or custom does not require them.