

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

Conflict of Interest Policy

Adopted November 2006

Preamble

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or responsibilities, and is therefore required to make a decision favouring one of those interests or responsibilities, which could be to the detriment of an agency, organization or company s/he is associated with, in this case The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.

Whenever people are involved in more than one organization, agency or company, there is a potential for conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest can include financial, material, relational or informational benefits.

Who are the Stakeholders?

Anyone having a relationship with PWRDF and who stands to gain or lose in a conflict of interest situation, can be considered a stakeholder: staff, Board members, partners, members (voting and non-voting). This policy applies to the Board of directors of PWRDF.

Avoiding Conflicts

When a member of the Board of Directors has a relationship with another development organization, maintaining a transparent relationship is key to avoiding conflicts of interest. Whenever there is potential for conflict of interest, it is important to make complete and accurate disclosure of the circumstances to each side, and to receive informed consent from each. Where there is no consent, and the conflict cannot be resolved, then one or both relationships must be ended.

Board members are expected to act ethically and with integrity. In carrying out their obligations, they must do their best to avoid ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest.

Possible Scenarios

- Grant conflict (influencing a granting decision while possibly benefiting from it)
- Hiring
- Issuing of contracts (must be a fair and transparent process)
- Travel (must adhere to PWRDF's current travel policy)
- Family/friend connections (when a decision – granting, hiring, contracting etc. – might benefit friend or family member)
- Board member being a staff or board member of another Canadian development agency.
- Advocacy decision (partisan involvement, Board member working for a government department being lobbied).
- Honoraria or other gifts received.

Guidelines

While it is impossible to avoid all conflicts, the following guidelines should assist Board members in steering clear of situations where they have to choose one agency or organization over another.

- PWRDF Board members should not work for any Canadian development organization that has competing interests, without first getting permission from the PWRDF Executive Director and the president [or the Executive Committee].
- PWRDF Board members should declare any actual or potential conflict of interest prior to any discussion and decision-making process. Once the conflict has been declared, the Board should consider the following alternatives for the director who has a potential conflict:
 - a. Leave the room for the discussions and the decisions
 - b. Remain in the room but do not participate
 - c. Remain in the room and participate, declaring the conflict each time he/she takes part
 - d. Remain in the room and participate fully
 - e. Completely disassociate from decisions or discussion for a period of time
- The declaration of actual or potential conflict of interest and the continued involvement or lack of involvement by the participant will be documented in the minutes.
- Board members should not accept gifts, entertainment, travel or services for personal use from partners, companies or organizations if those gifts are being used (or perceived as being used) as leverage for granting or funding purposes or which could impede the objectivity of the Board. Small gifts as tokens of thanks are acceptable.
- PWRDF Board members shall not disclose privileged information about PWRDF to anyone or any agency that might stand to benefit from that information to the detriment of PWRDF.
- PWRDF Board members should not receive material benefits from any person or organization whose policies, values, goals or programs are opposed to the policies, values, goals or programs of PWRDF or which publicly expresses opposition to the policies, values, goals or programs of PWRDF.
- Declaration of conflict identified at the beginning of any meeting, added to the minutes and the person absents themselves from the discussion or vote.

Resolving a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest can be done in the following ways:

- Prohibiting the affected Board member from participating in any PWRDF discussions or decisions involving the conflict of interest.
- Modifying or redefining the duties and responsibilities of the affected Board member.
- Requiring the resignation of the affected individual from the PWRDF Board of Directors or from the agency with which there is a conflict.

[Note: in resolving possible conflict of interest scenarios, PWRDF might want to consider forming a conflict of interest committee or appointing an ad hoc committee as the need arises.]