

WACC POLICY

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Approved by the Board

July 2004

Preamble

In adopting this policy, WACC intends to affirm the following purposes and principles:

1. WACC wishes to further its objectives in a manner that enhances public confidence in its integrity and professionalism.
2. WACC recognises that from time to time a conflict of interest may arise requiring an explicit policy to deal with actual and potential conflict of interest situations.
3. WACC considers its interest - the 'WACC interest' to lie in the furtherance of its objectives in a manner likely to enhance public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of WACC.
4. WACC intends this policy to govern the decisions and actions of its Directors, Officers, employees, advisors and volunteers when acting on behalf of WACC.
5. WACC considers that a conflict of interest arises when someone is involved in a decision or action in which that person actually or potentially has an interest that diverges from the WACC interest in such a way that an impartial observer might reasonably question whether that person's contribution to the decision or action maintains confidence in WACC's integrity and professionalism.

Definitions

This section defines terms (in alphabetical order) not defined in the Preamble above.

Adjudicating Committee: An adjudicating committee is any committee, including the Officers, authorized or recognized by the Board of Directors that is responsible for contributing to decisions about making awards under a programme. The Board itself is not considered to be an adjudicating committee.

Award: An award is a grant of funds made under a specific WACC programme.

Close association with an institution: A person is deemed to have a close association with an institution if he/she is or has been in the past two years an employee, director or officer of the institution, or if he/she has a close association with an individual who is a current or recent employee, director or officer of the institution.

Close association with an individual: A person is deemed to have a close association with an individual if he/she is or has been in the past two years a supervisor, a colleague, a professional collaborator, a relative or a partner of the individual.

Office: An office is a position occupied by a person who is

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- a voting member or chair of a committee authorized or recognized by the Board of Directors, or
- employed by WACC.

Membership on the Board of Directors is not an office.

Programme: A programme is a component of WACC activities governed by specific guidelines and disbursing funds to individuals and institutions in accordance with these guidelines.

Withdrawal: To physically leave the room or disconnect from a teleconference.

Policy

WACC recognizes that some conflict of interest (COI) situations are unavoidable, given the need to involve talent and expertise of its members and others in its activities. Nonetheless, WACC expects all people acting on its behalf to avoid being placed in a situation where there is a conflict of interest and, in so far as these cannot be avoided, to disclose such conflict of interest immediately and to act subsequently in a way that so as to ensure that confidence is maintained in WACC's integrity and professionalism.

Provisions

The following provisions are intended to deal with some representative COI situations that may arise. They are not intended to be exhaustive.

Awards

1. Persons associated with WACC, and institutions with which they are associated are eligible for awards, except the following:
 - WACC employees
 - members of the Conflict of Interest Reference Group (see below), and,
 - with respect to awards subject to the deliberations of an adjudicating committee, members of that particular committee.
2. Any person who holds or hopes or expects to hold an award will withdraw from any deliberation or decision concerning the award or the programme under which the award is made, including, specifically, the administration, modification or termination of the award or the programme.
3. A person who is a member of an adjudicating committee will withdraw from any deliberation or decision concerning an award to an individual or institution, or to an individual from an institution, with whom or which he/she has a close association.

Assessment of individuals

4. No one will participate in any deliberation or decision concerning the assessment of an office holder if he/she has a close association with the office holder other than a close association as a supervisor or colleague.

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5. No one will participate in any deliberation or decision concerning the assessment of candidates for an office if he/she has a close association with any of the candidates other than a close association as a supervisor or colleague.
6. No one will participate in the assessment of the decisions or actions of another person if these decisions or actions affect individuals or institutions with whom he/she has a close association.

Conflicting Commitments

7. No one will undertake employment or voluntary work of a kind or on a scale as to make it impossible, in the view of an impartial observer, to avoid a conflict of interest.

Misuse of information

8. No one will attempt to secure benefit for himself/herself or for institutions or individuals with whom he/she has a close association from information received during the deliberations of a committee including the Board of Directors, nor will he/she disclose such information to institutions or individuals with whom he/she has a close association.

Deliberations regarding membership

9. Anyone participating in deliberations or decisions concerning applications for WACC membership will be guided solely by the recognized rules on admissibility to membership adopted by WACC, and will not act in such a way that an impartial observer might reasonably question whether the person's contribution to the decision properly reflects the WACC interest.

Nominations Committee

10. Anyone who is a member of the Nominations Committee will withdraw from any deliberations concerning him or herself or a person with whom he or she has a close association.

Process

The purposes and principles affirmed in the Preamble to this policy may not be changed except by the Board of Directors.

1. The Officers will deal with or advise the Board of Directors and/or persons acting on behalf of WACC upon any issue raised by the adoption of this policy. If the matter relates to one of the Officers, that person will withdraw from the Officers' meeting when it is dealing with the matter. The General Secretary may call upon the Officers for advice about any matter relating to an actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

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2. The Officers may seek the advice of a Conflict of Interest Reference Group on any matter placed before it. The Officers may also choose to refer to the Conflict of Interest Reference Group any matter relating to an Officer.
3. The Conflict of Interest Reference Group will normally consist of a Chair and two other persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the membership of WACC. The Conflict of Interest Reference Group members may not bear responsibility to perform any duties unless they are called upon by the Officers or the General Secretary for advice.
4. The General Secretary will not be a member of the Conflict of Interest Reference Group but may be called upon by the Chair as a resource person. The General Secretary may call upon the Conflict of Interest Reference Group for advice about a conflict of interest matter relating to one of the Officers.
5. Members of the Conflict of Interest Reference Group will serve a three-year term and neither they nor institutions with which they have a close association will be eligible for any WACC award or office.
6. The Conflict of Interest Reference Group will normally conduct its business by teleconference or electronic correspondence.
7. Any disclosure required by this policy will be made to the President of WACC who, after consultations with the other Officers, and the Conflict of Interest Reference Group if appropriate in the view of the Officers, will inform the person acting on behalf of WACC of the appropriate course of action.
8. The Officers and the Conflict of Interest Reference Group will treat any disclosures made to it as confidential, unless the failure of someone to follow the course of action recommended by the Officers or the Conflict of Interest Reference Group requires that the disclosure be made public.
9. The Officers may, in exceptional circumstances, grant exceptions to the above provisions to persons acting on behalf of WACC.

(This policy was redrafted in January 2009 to reflect the changes in WACC's governance structure. References to Central Committee have been changed to refer to the Board of Directors, and references to the Finance Committee have been changed to refer to the Officers. Some wording changes have been necessary as a consequence.)