

IIRR Global Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose and Commitment to Integrity

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in all aspects of its work. As an international non-governmental organization (NGO), IIRR must maintain the trust of its beneficiaries, partners, donors, regulators, and the public. Trustees, officers, employees, consultants, and volunteers (collectively referred to in this policy as “personnel”) are expected to conduct their duties in a manner that avoids actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. This policy aims to preserve IIRR’s credibility and ensure that decisions are made solely in the best interest of the organization and its mission.

Definition of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when a person’s personal, financial, professional, or other interests interfere, or appear to interfere, with their ability to make impartial decisions on behalf of IIRR. A conflict may be actual, potential, or perceived. This includes situations in which a person is positioned to benefit directly or indirectly from decisions they influence. Conflicts may arise through relationships with vendors, service providers, partners, grantees, competitors, or other external entities. They may also arise from family relationships, close personal relationships, or prior affiliations that could compromise impartiality.

Scope of Covered Interests

Conflicts of interest may occur in many forms, including but not limited to:

- **Financial Interests** – Situations in which personnel or their immediate family members have a direct or indirect financial interest in an entity that does business with, seeks to do business with, or competes with IIRR.
- **Outside Employment and Consulting** – Engaging in paid or unpaid work, consulting, or advisory roles with organizations whose interests may conflict with IIRR’s work.
- **Personal Relationships** – Personal or family relationships that could improperly influence or appear to influence professional judgment and decision-making.
- **Gifts, Hospitality, and Benefits** – Receiving gifts, hospitality, favors, or benefits from partners, vendors, grantees, or others that could influence objectivity. Nominal tokens may be acceptable when culturally appropriate, but anything of material value must be declared and may be deemed unacceptable.
- **Access to Confidential Information** – Using confidential or proprietary IIRR information for personal advantage or to benefit another organization or individual.

Disclosure Obligations

All personnel are required to disclose fully, promptly, and in writing any situation, relationship, or commitment that could give rise to an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Disclosures should include all relevant facts, including antecedent affiliations, indirect associations, and any information that may reasonably be construed as adverse to IIRR's interests.

Annual conflict of interest disclosures shall be completed by all trustees and senior staff. Personnel must also update disclosures as new circumstances arise.

Review and Determination of Conflicts

Disclosures shall be submitted to the appropriate body—such as the Executive Director, Human Resources, or the Board of Trustees—depending on the role of the individual involved. The reviewing body will assess whether a conflict exists or may be reasonably construed to exist. Determinations shall be made by majority vote for decisions before the Board. The assessment shall consider both the reality and appearance of conflict to safeguard IIRR's reputation and integrity.

Abstention from Decision-Making

Individuals determined to have an actual or potential conflict of interest must recuse themselves from any related decision-making processes. This includes refraining from voting, from using personal influence, and from being present during discussions or deliberations except to present requested factual information. Board meeting minutes shall document the disclosure, the deliberation, the vote, and any abstention.

Management and Mitigation Measures

IIRR may adopt various measures to manage or mitigate conflicts of interest, including but not limited to: reassigning responsibilities; limiting access to sensitive information; adjusting working relationships; prohibiting participation in particular projects, contracts, or negotiations; and/or requiring divestment of conflicting financial interests.

Management plans shall be documented and monitored for compliance.

Prohibition of Improper Influence and Use of Resources

Personnel shall not use their position at IIRR for personal gain or the gain of others. Likewise prohibited is the misuse of organizational resources, assets, or information. Personnel are strictly prohibited from influencing procurement, hiring, or partnership decisions to benefit themselves, family members, or personal associates.

Gifts and Hospitality Standards

To prevent undue influence, personnel may not solicit or accept gifts or favors that could compromise—or appear to compromise—their objectivity. Modest, customary items may be allowed when culturally appropriate and not intended to influence decision-making, but must be disclosed. Gifts of significant value must be declined or immediately reported.

Post-Employment Conflicts

Former personnel must not exploit insider knowledge or relationships gained at IIRR for inappropriate competitive advantage. Cooling-off periods may apply for senior roles before involvement in contracting or advocacy targeting IIRR.

Whistleblowing and Reporting Concerns

Personnel who become aware of possible conflicts of interest or violations of this policy have a duty to report concerns promptly. Reports may be made to supervisors, Human Resources, or through IIRR's confidential reporting channels. IIRR strictly prohibits retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith.

Compliance, Training, and Enforcement

IIRR will provide orientation and periodic training to ensure understanding and compliance with this policy. Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from the Board, as appropriate. Severe violations may be subject to legal action.

Periodic Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the Board of Trustees to ensure alignment with best practices for international NGOs and evolving regulatory requirements. Revisions may be adopted as necessary to strengthen governance and accountability.

Acknowledgment

All trustees, employees, and relevant stakeholders must read this policy and affirm their understanding and compliance through a signed acknowledgment form upon induction and annually thereafter.