

Women Peace and Security Network - Canada

Policy on Conflict of Interest

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help members of the Women Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C) to identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of the Network.

The Steering Committee of the WPSN-C aims to ensure that **all** members of the Network (not only Steering Committee members) are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and have therefore put in place a structure to ensure that conflicts can be effectively managed.

Scope

This policy applies to the all members of WPSN-C.

Definition

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's professional and or personal interests conflict with their responsibility as a member to act in the best interest of the WPSN-C. Such interests can include direct interests as well as those of family, friends, or other organizations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a Board member). This policy addresses actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that may be financial or non-financial.

Examples of the most common issues that the Network could potentially anticipate include:

- i) Competing loyalties or duality of loyalties; where there is confusion between positions or actions or the nature of who/what the member is representing, particularly where a member is a consultant for the Government of Canada.
- ii) Having confidential information gained through Network membership that could create a real or perceived conflict of interest, with the possibility of being disclosed without express authorization from the Network Steering Committee beforehand.

The presence of a conflict of interest is independent of the occurrence of impropriety. Therefore, a conflict of interest can be discovered, disclosed and voluntarily defused before any corruption occurs.

Process

The WPSN-C will manage conflicts of interest by requiring members to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and disclose at their earliest opportunity any actual or potential conflicts of interest (for example paid work with the Government of Canada on issues related to Women, Peace and Security), and
- follow this policy.

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the Steering Committee must decide what approach to take. In making such a decision, the Steering Committee will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the facts amount to a conflict that will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to participate in the Network or in the Steering Committee, in the best interest of the Network;
- alternative options to avoid the conflict, and
- whether the facts create an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the Network or the Steering Committee.

In responding to situations where a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict that is likely to affect the integrity of the Network has been determined, actions may include:

- temporary, voluntary removal of membership for the period of a contract;
- staying in the Network but refraining from activities related to the conflict concerns that require input from civil society, government or other stakeholders;
- ineligibility for membership if a member becomes employed by the Government of Canada

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the Steering Committee members, with the disclosing member recusing himself or herself from any aspect of the decision-making process. The action and result of the voting will be recorded as minutes of the meeting.

Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the Network coordinator.

Dates relevant to this Policy:

Circulated to the WPSN-C members: October, 2016

Adopted by the WPSN-C Steering Committee and the Network as a whole: October 31, 2016

Dates of amendment: none so far.