



Panel Member Integrity and Code of Conduct



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In order to fulfil their formal duties, panel members should be expected to uphold certain values and principles. These values and principles will influence their conduct and behaviour and are common to many voluntary and public roles.

These include to:

- Act with honesty and integrity in their work for the MCBF;
- Commit to being open and accountable to fellow Panel Members and FWFL.
- Enhance the MCBF's reputation;
- Avoid situations where personal interests conflict with their duty to the MCBF, unless these have been declared and authorised;
- Actively contribute to the work of the MCBF by regularly attending meetings and preparing and participating in discussions and decision making.

Conflict of Interest Procedure (brief)

The procedure to mitigate conflicts of interest is as follows:

Panel members must disclose outside interests in relation to specific projects or applicants and those of connected persons that might potentially conflict with their role as a Panel member – these should be declared at the point at which the potential conflict becomes apparent and recorded within the Panel meeting minutes recorded on the panel members nominee form and amended at each panel meeting as required.

If a panel member has a conflict of interest which creates a real danger of bias (or could be perceived to do so) they should withdraw from the relevant part of the meeting where the decision in relation to that grant application is to take place.

Code of Practice – Procedure for dealing with Conflicts of Interest (detailed)

Conflicts of interest can, and do arise commonly amongst members of a committee/panel. This in itself should not lead to undue problems, providing that proper systems are in place for their effective management when they arise.

This Code of Practice sets out the duties and responsibilities of all members of the panel where their activities relate to any aspect of the delivery and implementation of this particular funding scheme.

1. Collective Responsibilities

- 1.1 Members of the panel assume a collective responsibility for the effective delivery of the MCBF.
- 1.2 This collective responsibility should override individual interests.
- 1.3 All members of the panel are in a position of trust and should take great care to avoid abusing, or any suspicion of abusing, that position.
- 1.4 A member should not disclose information given to him/her in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which he/she believes is of a confidential nature.



2. Definitions of Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 A conflict of interest arises when a matter is discussed at a meeting in which an individual member has a pecuniary (financial), non-pecuniary or private or personal interest in that matter and where participation in the discussion, or requirement to vote, would give rise to any advantage or disadvantage to the person concerned or the company or organisation which s/he represents.
- 2.2 The following list identifies the main categories of vested interests that must be declared at each meeting prior to any project application being discussed:
- i. Where a member is an employee of a company or organisation with an interest in supplying goods/services to the project/item under discussion;
 - ii. Where a member is a representative of a particular community/voluntary group specifically benefiting from the item under discussion;
 - iii. Where a member, as a individual, directly benefits from the item under discussion
 - iv. Where a member has been nominated to the Panel by the applying organisation
 - v. Where a member is a trustee or member of the controlling committee of the applying organisation
 - vi. Where a member is an employee of the applying organisation
 - vii. Where a member would gain financially or personally from a project being funded
 - viii. Where a relative of a Panel member would gain financially or personally from a project being funded
 - ix. Where a Panel member is an active participant in the applying organisation.
- 2.3 This code requires the disclosure of both direct and indirect pecuniary interest (including those of a spouse with whom you are living) and prohibits a member speaking or voting on the matter. The Code also requires declaration of a pecuniary interest which should be noted in the appropriate minutes of the respective meeting. These requirements must be scrupulously observed at all times.
- 2.4 Interests which are not pecuniary can be just as important. Members of the grants panel should not allow the impression to be created that they are, or maybe using their position to promote a private or personal interest, rather than forwarding the general public interest. Private and personal interests include those family and friends as well as those arising through membership of, or association with, clubs, societies, and other organisations such as Freemasons, trade unions and voluntary bodies.
- 2.5 If a member has a private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a grants panel meeting, it should always be disclosed, unless it is significant, or one which is shared with other members of the public generally as a ratepayer, council tax payer, or inhabitant of the area. (An insignificant interest is one which is so slight that it will not affect a member's voting or judgement in any way).
- 2.6 Where private or personal interest is declared, the other members should decide whether it is clear and substantial. Where an interest is deemed insignificant, then that member may continue to take parting the discussion of the matter and may vote on it. However, if it is clear and substantial interest, then that member should not take further part in the proceedings and would leave the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed.
- 2.7 In deciding whether such an interest is clear and substantial, members should ask themselves whether members of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, would reasonably think that s/he might be influenced by it. If this would be so, it should be regarded as a clear and substantial interest.



3. Individual Responsibilities

- 3.1 Individual members of the grants panel are personally responsible for declaring an interest in any matter under discussion.
- 3.2 What is declared should balance the reasonable right to privacy and the public's reasonable right to know what might influence what an individual says and how that person votes.
- 3.3 If any member has a vested interest (personal or financial) in a project application they must not have any opportunity to speak about that application at any stage within the meeting.
- 3.4 If, for any reason, the panel member with a vested interest considers that the information given on a particular project in the agenda or reports is lacking or erroneous in any way they must contact the Local Agent prior to the meeting and provide them with additional/correct information that can then be reported by the Local Agent to the Panel to help it make a decision.