



VIDEA Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy and Agreement

Background:

VIDEA is a non-profit organization guided by a Board of Directors, with the assistance of a dedicated core of staff and over 200 volunteers who take up volunteer leadership and organisational roles with VIDEA project committees throughout BC and Southern Africa. VIDEA's main office is in Victoria, with VIDEA chapters in Kelowna and Nelson.

VIDEA is one of Canada's oldest global education centres. We facilitate communication, cooperation and strategic networking among Canadian groups working for global justice, peace and sustainable development, linking local and international issues with community initiatives. VIDEA strives to create opportunities to link indigenous peoples in the areas in which we work, with projects that support the creative sharing of knowledge and experience.

Staff, Directors and volunteers of VIDEA are expected to promote and abide by our mission and values, and to conduct themselves with integrity. As an organization, VIDEA believes in creating a workplace based on mutual trust and respect of each individual. In outlining VIDEA's expectations and policies with regard to confidentiality and conflict of interest, VIDEA does not suggest that the conduct of any individual working for/with VIDEA will be monitored intrusively, or that an environment is envisaged that limits or intrudes on personal dignity and autonomy. Rather, it is understood that individuals will be expected to honour and abide by these policies, and to use their best judgment in raising any issues that are unclear or that might be of concern.

VIDEA has set forth two key policies which will be used to govern the behaviour of individuals and organizations working for/with VIDEA and which will be used as a guide for working through any issues that may arise.

By signing here you agree that you have read, understood and agreed to comply with the following policies:

- *VIDEA Conflict of Interest Policy* (dated)*
- *VIDEA Confidentiality Policy* (*)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____



VIDEA - Confidentiality Policy

Rationale:

The staff, Directors and volunteers of VIDEA have an obligation to maintain confidentiality about VIDEA affairs and decisions, and to respect the privacy of any information associated with members, individuals and organizations affiliated with VIDEA.

Definition and Responsibilities:

All representatives of VIDEA are responsible for supporting the organization in maintaining the highest standards of privacy protection and confidentiality. For the purposes of this policy, confidential information is understood to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Personnel records and payroll information, including home telephone numbers;
- Situations involving a volunteer, Director or staff member with respect to a grievance, a legal issue, or an investigation under way;
- Member information, beyond information that is already publically available on the member's website and/or publications;
- Donor information and donor lists;
- Personal information about volunteers, staff members and Directors;
- Financial information about VIDEA.

In addition to the above, VIDEA has a responsibility to set clear guidelines regarding any other specific issues that are considered restricted in terms of what can or cannot be discussed with other staff, with volunteers, Directors and with the VIDEA community.

Furthermore, in order to respect and uphold confidentiality, all staff, Directors and volunteers of VIDEA are expected to:

- Be cautious about electronically transmitting, disposing of, or leaving confidential information where others can see it;
- Hold in confidence all sensitive matters that come to their attention;
- Ensure that confidential records are secured with passwords and physical locks wherever possible and appropriate;
- Respect the privacy of the people engaged on behalf of VIDEA;
- Use the information gained in the course working with VIDEA in a responsible manner;
- Refrain from repeating information provided in confidence unless legally required to do so;
- Understand that personal data should only be used for the purposes for which it was provided;

Policy Application:

1. This policy should be explained to all new Board members, staff and volunteers who must agree in writing (by signing the VIDEA Agreement) at the outset of taking a position or volunteering with VIDEA, that they will abide by this policy.



2. The Executive Director (or Board Chair if applicable) has the authority to resolve issues arising from the application of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, the Board Chair is the appropriate authority in all matters relating to the affairs of the Board, and to any issues involving the Executive Director. Any issues involving the Board Chair will be handled by the Board Vice-Chair and the Board. The Executive Director is the authority in all other matters.

VIDEA - Conflict of Interest Policy

Background:

VIDEA recognizes that not all conflict of interest situations can be avoided. Through this Conflict of Interest Policy we seek to both prevent conflicts of interest wherever possible, and to identify and manage those that do occur in a consistent, ethical and responsible manner.

Rationale:

The staff, Directors and volunteers of VIDEA must meet high ethical standards to merit the trust of VIDEA stakeholders including members, partners, donors, and the public.

VIDEA's integrity depends on ethical behaviour throughout the organization, and in particular, on fair, well-informed decision-making.

The ability to make a decision is sometimes affected by other interests (personal or professional) of individuals in the organization. Such conflict of interest situations are a regular part of organizational and personal life and cannot simply be eliminated.

The objective of this policy is to permit VIDEA to manage, and resolve fairly, real, perceived or potential conflict of interest situations.

Scope:

This policy applies to VIDEA members of the Board of Directors, as well as VIDEA staff and volunteers.

Definition:

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective exercise of his or her official duties at VIDEA.

- "Private or personal interest" refers to an individual's self-interest, the interests of the individual's immediate family or business partners, or the interests of another organization in which the individual holds a position (voluntary or paid).
- "Objective exercise of duties" refers to an individual's ability to carry out her or his responsibilities in the best interest of VIDEA.



Examples:

- **Self-interested funding, contracting or hiring:** when an affected person uses a position in VIDEA to influence a decision to provide funding or contracts to another organization in which he or she has an interest, or to go outside normal hiring processes to give a job to a friend or family member.
- **Improper influence:** when an affected person solicits or accepts some form of benefit in return for influencing VIDEA activities.
- **Inappropriate outside activity:** when an affected person's activities outside VIDEA are in conflict with the interests of VIDEA.
- **Accepting undue benefits,** such as significant gifts which place an affected person under obligation to the donor.

Responsibilities:

Overall Responsibility:

Members of the VIDEA Board, staff and volunteers are responsible for managing conflict of interest situations in order to ensure that workplace behaviour and decision-making throughout the organization are not influenced by conflicting interests.

Responsibility for Prevention:

VIDEA supports an organizational culture in which people freely take responsibility for both "self-declaring" possible conflicts of interest, and respectfully raising possible conflicts faced by others in the organization. This culture makes it possible to avoid many such situations from arising in the first place. Managers, staff, volunteers and Board members have the responsibility to implement appropriate practical preventive measures, such as:

- Providing meeting agendas in advance to enable participants to foresee possible conflicts;
- Ensuring that people are clearly told when information must be protected from improper use;
- Declining involvement in an action (such as supporting a questionable outside activity).

Responsibility for Managing:

Where prevention is not the solution, conflict of interest situations must be managed. Here are the steps to be taken by those involved in such situations, working together and supporting one another's ethical responsibilities:

1. **Declare it:** Ensure transparency by self-declaration, and by making sure that a record of the declaration is made.
2. **Discuss it:** In a doubtful situation, take a moment for a quick word with the chair of your meeting, or undertake a full dialogue with the group, if the situation warrants it.



3. **Deal with it:** Measures to mitigate or eliminate a conflict of interest will depend on what is appropriate to the severity of the situation. Options may include:
- i. Restricting the involvement of the individual. For example, the individual may withdraw from decision-making.
 - ii. Recruiting a third party to assist. For example, ask a disinterested party to sit on a hiring board.
 - iii. Removing the individual from affected duties.
 - iv. Relinquishing the private interest. In cases of serious conflict, the individual may choose to drop the private interest, such as membership on the Board of another organization.
 - v. Resigning from the official duties. In serious cases where other solutions are not possible, the individual may have to resign from the position creating the conflict.
4. **Document it:** Document course of action and steps taken in Board minutes, correspondence to interested parties, or through other documentation.

Policy Application:

1. This policy should be explained to all new Board members, staff and volunteers who must agree in writing, at the outset of taking a position or volunteering with VIDEA, that they will abide by this policy.
2. At that time, Board members and staff must disclose possible conflict situations to the Executive Director (or Board Chair if applicable) in confidence. Subsequent material changes must be disclosed when they first emerge. Volunteers must inform their coordinator of possible conflict situations.
3. The Executive Director (or Board Chair if applicable) will indicate to each individual whether any further action is necessary to manage the possible conflicts of interest disclosed. Actions might include the following, depending on the severity of the conflict:
 - a. Declaring the conflict to all concerned before discussion or decision-making;
 - b. Withdrawing from final decision-making only;
 - c. Withdrawing from all aspects of discussion and decision-making.
4. The Executive Director (or Board Chair if applicable) has the final authority to resolve disputes in applying the policy.
5. The Executive Director (or Board Chair if applicable) is the authority to deal with real conflicts of interest which are discovered “after the fact”.

For the purposes of this policy, the Board Chair is the appropriate authority in all matters relating to the affairs of the Board, and to any issues involving the Executive Director. Any issues involving the Board Chair will be handled by the Board Vice-Chair and the Board. The Executive Director is the authority in all other matters.