

Policy Information

Approved by: (sign/date)	Approved – Pending Signature (Board of Trustees)	Policy Number:	2025-1201-07
		Risk Appetite:	Low
		Policy Family:	Human Resources and Organizational Development
Policy Owner: (sign/date)	(Head of HROD)	Version:	1.0
		Effective Date:	December 1, 2025
		Next Review Date:	December 1, 2027

1. PURPOSE

This Policy aims to uphold International Rice Research Institute’s (IRRI) integrity and reputation by guiding staff and associated parties in identifying, disclosing, and managing actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. It ensures that decisions and actions are made in IRRI’s best interest, free from undue influence, and aligned with ethical and professional standards.

2. SCOPE

The scope of this policy applies to all IRRI staff, officers, Board members, and associated parties including contractors, consultants, suppliers, hosted and seconded staff, trainees, volunteers, interns, scholars, students, visiting scientists, and other individuals working on IRRI’s behalf.

It is applicable to all IRRI operations and administrations, including but not limited to research, finance, procurement, recruitment, partnerships, and external engagements.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

IRRI upholds the highest ethical standards and expects staff to act with integrity in all professional duties. A conflict of interest arises when personal interests, actual, potential, or perceived interfere with IRRI’s mission or obligations. Staff must avoid situations where private relationships or interests may compromise their responsibilities and act solely in IRRI’s best interest.

While personal and professional interests may occasionally intersect, transparency and disclosure are essential to maintaining trust. Conflicts are not inherently problematic if appropriately disclosed and managed. This Policy equips staff and management to recognize conflicts and apply effective mitigation strategies.

3.1 TYPES OF CONFLICTS

A conflict of interest can occur when a staff, official, a Board member, or associated party’s personal or professional interests or relationships intersect with those of IRRI’s. Conflict types include the following:

1. **Board Membership:** Any personal, financial, or professional interests that could compromise impartiality in IRRI decisions.

2. **Research Integrity:** Personal interests or external affiliations that compromise scientific objectivity.
3. **Gifts and Favors:** Offering or accepting gifts that may influence professional judgment; all gifts given must be pre-approved, and gifts received reported (please see the Code of Conduct for more information).
4. **Outside Activities:** External engagements that conflict with IRRI duties require prior approval and must not use IRRI resources.
5. **Financial Self-Dealing:** Using non-public information for personal gain or holding financial interests in entities dealing with IRRI.
6. **Procurement and Contracting:** Staff must disclose outside interests in procurement, recruitment, or consultancy decisions.
7. **Nepotism:** Favoritism based on personal relationships; staff must disclose and recuse themselves from related decisions.
8. **Employment of Family Members:** To prevent conflicts of interest and maintain fairness in recruitment and management decisions, IRRI upholds strict guidelines regarding the employment of family members. Family members up to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity (blood or marriage) are not permitted to work at IRRI¹. This includes the following relationships: mother, father, daughter, son, brother, sister, cousin, nephew, niece, uncle, and aunt.

The only exception is for spouses (husband and wife), provided that:

- They do not report to the same individual, directly or indirectly; and
- They are assigned to separate units or divisions, ensuring no supervisory or conflict-of-interest relationship exists.

All potential family relationships must be disclosed during recruitment and throughout employment. IRRI reserves the right to review and determine the appropriate course of action if a family relationship arises or is identified after employment has commenced.

9. **Romantic Relationships:** Relationships in reporting lines are considered conflicts and must be disclosed and managed based upon position of authority and supervisory relationship.
10. **Political Activities:** Staff must avoid political involvement that compromises IRRI's neutrality or professional responsibilities. This includes the sharing of internal IRRI information which has not been pre-authorized.
11. **Public Communications:** Unapproved statements or publications may misrepresent IRRI; discretion and alignment with authority are required prior to any forum or event.
12. **Speaking Engagements:** Staff must seek approval and may not accept compensation for official speaking roles but may accept on IRRI's behalf.

¹ Existing family relations must be disclosed to HROD.

3.2 AFFILIATION RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICTS

Personal, familial, or professional relationships may create actual or perceived conflicts if they influence a staff member's decisions in areas such as hiring, the sharing of sensitive or confidential information, procurement, or partnerships. To maintain transparency and integrity, IRRI requires staff to disclose such relationships and recuse themselves from related decisions. Examples of affiliated relationships include:

1. **Immediate Family:** Spouse or legal partner, parent, child, sibling (biological or adopted), in-laws (father/mother/brother/sister/son/daughter), grandparent, grandchild
2. **Romantic Relationships:** Domestic partner, romantic partner (even if not legally recognized)
3. **Close Associates:** Friends, long-term colleagues, mentors, or mentees
4. **Professional Associates:** Business partners, co-investigators, collaborators, or co-authors
5. **Former IRRI Staff:** Especially if now affiliated with a vendor, partner, or competitor
6. **Associated Parties:** Contractors, consultants, suppliers, hosted/seconded staff, trainees, interns, volunteers, scholars, students, visiting scientists, and other visitors
7. **Supervisory Relationships:** Subordinates or supervisors with whom there is a personal relationship
8. **External Affiliations:** Board memberships, advisory roles, or ownership in external organizations

3.3 GIFT, ENTERTAINMENT, AND HOSPITALITY RESTRICTIONS

IRRI staff and associated parties must not solicit, offer, or accept gifts, entertainment, or hospitality that could be perceived as influencing their professional judgment or compromising IRRI's integrity. Exceptions may be made for items of nominal value given as expressions of courtesy, provided they are disclosed and do not create a conflict of interest. All such instances must be reported to the Office of Ethics (irri-ethics@cgiar.org).

3.4 OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZATION

Staff members engaging in outside professional, academic, or business activities must seek prior authorization from their supervisor, the Human Resources and Organizational Department and the Office of Ethics. These activities must not conflict with IRRI's interests or create a perception of bias. IRRI reserves the right to impose mitigation measures or prohibit activities deemed incompatible with staff responsibilities.

3.5 DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION PROTOCOLS

All staff and associated parties must disclose actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest prior to assuming duties and update these disclosures whenever material changes occur (see the [Declaration of Conflict of Interest](#) form). Disclosures must be submitted to the Human Resources and Organizational Department by copying the Office of Ethics and will be maintained in a secure register. Staff must refrain from acting on matters where a conflict exists until appropriate mitigation measures are determined.

3.6 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All IRRI staff members and associated parties (where applicable) are required to be familiar with this policy, complete training on it, and know their responsibilities regarding activities that may constitute an

actual, perceived, or potential Conflict of Interest. Refresher training on this policy should occur at least every two years.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of Board of Trustees, Management, and staff member in preventing and responding to conflicts of interest:

1. **IRRI's Board of Trustees:** Act in IRRI's best interest, model ethical behavior, and support policy implementation.
2. **Director General:** Ensure effective implementation of the policy.
3. **Internal Audit:** Conduct audits, reviews, and investigations.
4. **Ethics and Business Conduct:** Monitor non-compliance and review the policy annually.
5. **Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD):** Advise and train staff on conflict disclosure and management. Ensure completion of Conflict-of-Interest declarations. Provide guidance throughout the employment lifecycle. Report on outcomes to the DG and Internal Audit. Ensure conflict-free recruitment processes.
6. **Portfolio Development & Management Office (PDMO):** Ensure subrecipient awards meet donor requirements. Review and endorse partnership agreements. Check subaward grants for conflicts.
7. **Line Managers/Supervisors:** Comply with the policy and manage staff disclosures. Recommend appropriate actions and coordinate with HROD. Review and document conflict strategies.
8. **Country Office Representatives/CSSMs:** Ensure policy compliance and approve conflict assessments.
9. **Project Leaders:** Ensure team members complete Conflict of Interest declarations during partner/consultant selection.
10. **All IRRI Staff and Associated Parties:** Comply with the policy and act in IRRI's best interest. Complete and update Conflict of Interest declarations ([form](#)). Disclose relevant conflicts and participate in training. Associated Parties must report conflicts to their IRRI contact.
11. **Global and Country Office Procurement Committees:** Make fair, unbiased procurement decisions. Disclose and manage conflicts. Record and file conflict statements. Pause or redirect procurement if integrity is at risk.
12. **Supply Chain Services/CO Procurement Offices:** Ensure supplier accreditation is free from conflicts.

5. MITIGATION MEASURES

Upon review of disclosed conflicts, IRRI may implement mitigation measures such as recusal from decision-making, reassignment of duties, divestment of interests, or administrative barriers.

6. FAILURE TO DISCLOSE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All staff members and associated parties are required to read and understand this policy. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest shall lead to disciplinary action.

7. RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Please see IRRI's main intranet webpage on [Policies, Supplements, Procedures, and Guidelines](#) for more information or [IRRI's website](#) for openly accessible documents.

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Effective date	Approved by	Summary of changes
1.0	D Month 2025	Director General, Dr. Yvonne Pinto	New Policy; Amends the Code of Conduct section on Conflict of Interest