

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The objective of the Conflict of Interest Policy is to protect the interests of this tax-exempt organization when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an executive or director of the Organization or that might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to complement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Definitions

Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with delegated powers from the Deliberative Board, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a.** An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement,
- b.** A compensation arrangement with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c.** A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement,
- d.** A legal commitment or financial interest, including by virtue of a board appointment, employment position, or volunteer arrangement, to act in the interests of another entity or individual.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. In the following topic, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Procedures

Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with delegated powers from the Deliberative Board considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. Disclosures must be reported to the individuals' immediate supervisor using the template in Annex I.

Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Deliberative Board or other governance councils meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- a.** An interested person may make a presentation at the Deliberative Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, the interested person shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the conflict of interest.
- b.** The chairperson of the board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c.** After exercising due diligence, per the Bylaws, the board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d.** If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

- a.** If the Deliberative Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe an interested person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- b.** If, after hearing the member's response and making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Deliberative Board or committee determines that the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the Deliberative Board and all committees with board-delegated powers shall contain:

- a.** The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the disclosed interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b.** The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Compensation

- a.** A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b.** A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c.** No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer, and member of a committee with board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms that such person:

- a.** Has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy,
- b.** Has read and understands the policy,
- c.** Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d.** Understands the Organization is charitable and, in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a.** Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b.** Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Organization's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or in an excess benefit transaction.

Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in **Annual Statements**, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Deliberative Board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

Annex I

Declaration of Interest Template

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY BOARD MEMBER OR COLLABORATORS OF FÓRUM ANIMAL

NAME: [FULL NAME]		
Potential conflict	Name of the person or organization	Beginning of the relationship

I confirm that the above statement expresses the truth regarding the period from: [Day/Month/Year] to [Day/Month/Year].

Signature:

Please deliver this statement to the President and Vice President by [Day/Month/Year]