



EBU Conflict of Interest Policy

Background

One of the key principles that governs decision-making within the EBU is the need for scrupulous behaviour and the declaration of any personal interests that may affect the activities of the EBU. Our primary decision-making bodies are committees, working groups (including meetings of Officers) which comprise staff and volunteers (who play duplicate bridge within our jurisdiction). All are expected at all times to behave in a highly conscientious manner to ensure that they do not compromise themselves or the business of the EBU by allowing conflicts of interest to prejudice their ability to make objective decisions or to allow communication of confidential information outside the confines of the particular group.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the EBU.

Why we have a Policy

EBU Board Members have an obligation to act in the best interests of the EBU as a whole (fiduciary duty), and to avoid situations where there may be a potential or perceived conflict of interest. Staff and volunteers have similar obligations.

Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal or family positions, interests or loyalties conflict with those of the EBU. Such conflicts may create problems in that they can:

- inhibit free discussion;
- result in decisions or actions that are either not objective, are biased or are otherwise not in the interests of the EBU or of the membership as a whole; and
- risk the impression that the EBU has acted improperly.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that decisions are made in a proper, objective and unbiased, fashion and to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

Definition of Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a member has personal interests – including those of family and/or friends, and deriving from financial or other reasons– that could compromise their judgment, decisions or actions.

A conflict of interest still exists whether or not a member would have acted in the same way had the conflict of interest not existed and whether or not that member has behaved unethically or an improper act has occurred.

Direct Conflicts of Interest

Direct Conflicts of Interest include:

- situations where a member is themselves directly involved in the matter under consideration;

- situations where a family relation (including a life partner and their family) or a commercial associate is themselves directly involved in the matter under consideration.

In the circumstances of any Direct Conflict of Interest:

- the member must recuse themselves in relation to that matter
- recusal means:
 - o members should not be present during the discussion nor vote on any proposal in which they have a Direct Conflict of Interest, and the Minutes of the meeting shall record all recusals;
 - o they must neither lobby nor seek to influence the opinions of the other decision-makers whether in or outside any meeting of the decision-makers;
 - o members may ask recused members for their opinions before they are asked to leave the meeting to gain access to their knowledge or relevant experience but such opinion must be given to the meeting as a whole and the fact that this opinion may be biased as a result of the Direct Conflict of Interest made clear.

Indirect Conflicts of Interest

Indirect conflicts of interest include:

- situations where family relations, personal friends, bridge partners or teammates (including life partners and the family of such friends, bridge partners or teammates) are the subject of a group's decision-making;
- any other situation that might compromise an member's judgement, decisions or actions.

Indirect conflicts of interest can also arise from negative associations, for example:

- former friends, bridge partners or teammates especially where the relationship ended acrimoniously;
- former life partners and their friends and family;
- persons with whom a member has been involved in any disciplinary matter, dispute or argument.

Indirect conflicts will not require a member to recuse themselves from the discussion or decision making process in relation to the matter in which they have an Indirect Conflict of Interest but they must ensure that they do not allow such Indirect Conflict of Interest to affect their judgement, decisions or actions. If any member of the body is unable to do so, then they must treat the Indirect Conflict of Interest as a Direct Conflict of Interest and recuse themselves as set out above under Direct Conflicts of Interest.

Alliances and Vote Trading

Any form of alliance or vote trading (for example agreeing to vote in a certain way where a member has no Conflict of Interest in exchange for another member voting in a certain way in respect of another matter in which the member does have a Conflict of Interest) is wholly inappropriate and a serious breach of this Conflict of Interest policy.

Disciplinary Hearings

No member of a Disciplinary Committee may sit to consider a charge who has prior involvement with the case or has any relevant interest in the outcome of the case (EBU Bye-Laws Appendix A para 6.7). If any witness called in a disciplinary hearing has any interest in the outcome, such interest must be disclosed to the Disciplinary Committee by the side that puts forward that witness, before their testimony.

Notification of Conflicts of Interests

All Conflicts of Interest whether Direct or Indirect must be notified to the body in question before any matter is discussed. Where it is practicable administratively to do so, any body may choose to maintain a Register of Conflicts. It will be mandatory for the Selection Committee to maintain a Register of Direct Conflicts of Interest. Where the body in question maintains a Register of Conflicts, members must notify any change to their Conflicts of Interest as soon as is practicable.

Where any Indirect Conflict of Interest relates to a sensitive or confidential matter, the member may elect to raise the matter on a confidential basis with the Chair of the group who will decide whether the member should recuse themselves in respect of that conflict or be permitted to participate in the discussion without disclosure.