

CONFLICT OF INTEREST PREVENTION POLICY



WOPEN

Shaping Practices Influencing
Policies Impacting Lives

WOPEN 2023

www.wopen.org



Women Peace Builders Network (WOPEN)

Motto: *“Love, Tolerance, Peace and Security”.*

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Conflict Of Interest Prevention Policy

I. Executive Summary

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Women Peace Builders Network (hereafter referred to as ‘WOPEN’) is a Cameroonian based Network and a sister organisation. The Network is Independent, private and non-profit making. WOPEN respects a strict political, racial and religious impartiality and operates following principles of neutrality, non-discrimination and transparency. The association’s core values centre around: responsibility, Impact, enterprising-spirit and inspiration. WOPEN is committed to shape practices and influence policies in humanitarian and developmental settings in order to positively impact the lives of people and their communities. WOPEN aims is to enable better and more effective decision making for its members by generating and promoting knowledge, tools and practices for humanitarian development especially stakeholders. The commitment of WOPEN is guided by the following four core values:

- 1) **Responsibility:** We contribute to the efficient and responsible delivery of aids with the means and the resources entrusted to us.
- 2) **Impact:** We are committed to promoting better aid practices and policies to support the communities and the people with whom we engage.
- 3) **Enterprising-Spirit:** We are enterprising and engage in our work with a spirit that creates value and overcomes challenges.
- 4) **Inspiration:** We strive to inspire all those around us through our vision, values, approaches, choices practice, actions and advocacy.



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A. Policy Statement

WOPEN is committed to respecting the highest standards in terms of efficiency, responsibility and transparency in its activities. To this end, WOPEN’s Conflict of Interest Prevention Policy:

- ✓ Encourages prevention;
- ✓ Promotes detection;
- ✓ Sets out a clear investigation procedure; and
- ✓ Sets out a mechanism of sanctions.

The purpose of this policy is aimed at guiding WOPEN members, staff and partners, and must also be considered together with:

- WOPEN’s Code of Conduct
- WOPEN’s Child Protection Policy
- WOPEN’s Gender Policy
- WOPEN’s Conflict of Interest Prevention Policy
- WOPEN’s Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy
- WOPEN’s Anti-Corruption Policy
- WOPEN’s Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy
- WOPEN’s Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy
- WOPEN’s Procedures, Manuals and Handbooks;

II. Interpretation and Scope.

Article 1 – Scope of Application

1. This policy applies to all WOPEN staff and governance members.
2. The provisions of this policy may also be applied to any person employed by an entity that carries out missions for WOPEN

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3. In particular, this policy applies to consultants, suppliers, sub-grantees and implementing partners depending on specific clauses and conditions of the grant agreement.

Article 2 – Definitions

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Conflict of Interest:

A “conflict of interest” stems from a situation in which staff of WOPEN and/or the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy has a personal interest likely to influence or appear to influence the impartial and objective exercise of their professional role. The personal interest of members and staff of WOPEN and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy covers any benefit for themselves or for their relatives or organisations with which they have or have had business or political relations. It also includes any financial or civil obligation to which the member or staff of WOPEN and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy is subject.

- **Consultant:** Under the term of this policy, a “consultant” is a third party, individual or group, with or without legal personality, who directly or indirectly provides any type of consulting services to WOPEN, whether for a fee or not.
- **Supplier:** Under the term of this policy, a “supplier” is a third party, individual or group, with or without legal personality, who directly or indirectly provides any type of goods and/or services to WOPEN, for a fee or not.
- **Governance:** Under the terms of this policy, the term “governance” refers to any Member elected by decision making bodies to participate in WOPEN’s managerial and administrative governance bodies. In particular, WOPEN’s Committee Administrators are Governance members.
- **Implementing partner:** Under the terms of this policy, an “implementing partner” is a partner to whom the implementation of one or more projects or activities has been



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delegated, and to whom a budget has been allocated for this purpose. In particular, this refers to international NGOs and/or national NGOs and/or public institutions.

- **Stakeholders:** Under the terms of this policy, “stakeholders” are individuals or groups, with or without a legal personality, who directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily, contribute to, participate in or benefit from, in any way, the actions, programmes and activities of WOPEN.
- **WOPEN Staff:** Under the terms of this policy, the term “WOPEN staff” refers to any person employed by WOPEN. The interns and volunteers of WOPEN are considered to fall within this category, for the purposes of this policy.
- **Sub-grantee:** Under the terms of this policy, a “sub-grantee” is an individual or group, with or without a legal personality, who receives a budget to carry out a project or activity.

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Article 3 – Information and Adherence to the Policy

1. This policy is published under the authority of WOPEN. WOPEN members and staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, are required to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy and must therefore be aware of and have understood its provisions and any changes. When they are unsure of how to proceed, they should seek the advice of a competent person, notably their line manager.
2. WOPEN members and staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, who are responsible to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment of any WOPEN staff, must ensure that staff/members are aware of and commits to the full respect of this policy.
3. It is the responsibility of WOPEN staff with managerial responsibilities, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, to ensure that staff under their supervision comply with this policy; and to take or propose appropriate disciplinary

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measures as sanction against any violations of its provisions.

4. This policy shall form part of the working conditions of WOPEN staff and the conditions for the performance of the missions of the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy from the moment they certify that they have read it.

5. WOPEN members and staffs will review the provisions of this policy at regular intervals.

Article 4 – Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Implement mechanisms to prevent and fight conflicts of interest applicable to WOPEN members and staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy.
2. Specify the rules on integrity and conduct relating to the fight against conflicts of interest that WOPEN members and staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must observe.
3. Inform third parties of the conduct that they are entitled to expect from WOPEN members and staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy.

III General Principles

WOPEN adheres to value based criteria, is transparent, and avoids any conflict of interest when developing and implementing networking guidelines and recommendations, collective projects, and decision making options. The Network will engage with other networks where appropriate and in an open and transparent manner.

Rules

- No Network Member representative shall derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of his or her participation with the Network. This shall also include

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the member representative's business or other nonprofit affiliations, family and/or significant other, employer, or close associates who may stand to receive a benefit or gain.

- Each Member of the Network will be responsible to follow and respect the WOPEN policies and by-laws on conflict of interest.
- Each individual shall disclose in written form to the Network Board, represented by the Coordinator, any personal interests, which he or she may have in any matter pending before the Network and shall refrain from participation in any discussion or decision on such matter. Any new member representative shall be given this policy at the time of their membership approval. The Network Board will review the policy regularly. We understand that the purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Network and its decision-making process as well as to enable our Members and stakeholders to have confidence in the integrity, intentions and actions of WOPEN. To that end, we understand that this policy is not meant to supplement good judgment and all constituents should respect its spirit as well as its wording.

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Article 5 – Neutrality

WOPEN members and staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, must fulfil their duties in a neutral and apolitical manner, in accordance with the law, legitimate instructions and ethical rules relating to their roles.

Article 6 – Impartiality

In the context of their professional roles and/or their missions, WOPEN members and staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, must act in accordance with the law and exercise their discretionary power in an impartial manner, taking into consideration only relevant circumstances.

Article 7 – Confidence of stakeholders

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WOPEN members and staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, have a duty to conduct themselves at all times in a way that reflects and upholds WOPEN’s values of integrity, impartiality and efficiency and contributes to strengthen the confidence of all stakeholders.

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Article 8 – Hierarchical responsibility

WOPEN members and staff report to their immediate line manager and/or the head of their functional department, unless otherwise provided for by law.

Article 9 – Confidentiality

Duly considering the stakeholders’ potential right to access information, WOPEN staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, must process all the information and all the documents acquired during or as part of the exercise of their duties with the necessary confidentiality.

Article 10 – Political or Public Activity

1. Subject to respect of fundamental and constitutional rights, WOPEN members and staff must ensure that their personal participation in political activities or their involvement in public or political debates does not alter the confidence of stakeholders, international, national or local authorities, or WOPEN, with regard to their ability to complete their mission fairly and impartially.

2. In the performance of their duties, WOPEN members and staff must not use the resources for partisan purposes.

Article 11 – Protection of Privacy

All the necessary measures must be taken to ensure that the privacy of WOPEN members and staff and of the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, is appropriately respected; as a result, the declarations provided for this policy must remain confidential,



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unless otherwise provided for by law.

Article 12 – Information Held

1. Considering the general framework of international law regarding access to information held by private individuals, WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy should disclose information only in respect to the rules and requirements applicable to WOPEN.

2. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must take appropriate measures to guarantee the security and confidentiality of the information for which they are responsible or of which they are aware.

3. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must not seek access to information which would be inappropriate for them to have. WOPEN staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, must not make inappropriate use of the information they may obtain in or as part of the exercise of their duties.

4. In the same way, WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must not retain professional information that may or should be legitimately circulated, or circulate information they know, or have reasonable grounds to believe, is inaccurate or misleading.

Article 13 – Professional Resources

In the exercise of their discretionary power, WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must ensure that the staff and the property, facilities, services and financial resources entrusted to them are managed and used in a useful, effective and economic manner. They must not be used for private purposes, unless this is authorised in writing by the Executive Director or his/her delegate.

Article 14 – Responsibility of Line Managers

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1. WOPEN staff in charge of managing or supervising other WOPEN staff must do so in accordance with the policies and objectives of WOPEN. They must respond to the acts and omissions of their staff which violate these policies and objectives, if they have not taken the due diligence measures expected from a person in their position to prevent such acts or omissions.

2. WOPEN staff tasked with managing or supervising other WOPEN staff must take the measures necessary to prevent their staff from engaging in acts related to conflict of interest in relation to their work. These measures may be: to draw attention to and implement the laws and regulations; to ensure adequate training against conflict of interest their staff may face; and to set an example of integrity through their personal conduct.

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Article 15 – Termination of Professional Duties

1. WOPEN staff must not take undue advantage of their role within WOPEN to obtain an employment opportunity outside of WOPEN.
2. WOPEN staff must not allow the prospect of another job to create an actual or potential conflict of interest, or a situation likely to appear as such. They must also inform their supervisor of their acceptance of any job offer.
3. WOPEN staff must not use or disclose confidential information obtained by them in their capacity as an WOPEN staff, unless they have been authorised to do so by WOPEN in writing, and in accordance with the law.

Article 16 – Relations with Former WOPEN Staff

WOPEN staff should not give former WOPEN staff preferential treatment or privileged access to WOPEN.

Article 17 – Prevention of Conflicts of Interest

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4. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must prevent their private interests from conflicting with their duties. It is their responsibility to avoid such conflict, regardless of whether this conflict is actual, potential, or likely to appear as such.
5. Under no circumstances may WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy take unfair advantage of their professional position for their personal interest.

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Article 18 – Reporting

1. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, which believe that they are required to act unlawfully, improperly or unethically, which may be in violation of this policy or otherwise inconsistent with this policy, should report it to their line manager and/or the WOPEN Country Coordinator /Representative.
2. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy who have reported an aforementioned case of misconduct in accordance with this policy, and who believe that the response provided is not satisfactory, may report this in writing to wopen25@gmail.com.
3. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must report to their line manager and/or WOPEN Country Coordinator / Representative and/or through grievance. wopen25@gmail.com and/or through transparency wopen25@gmail.com any evidence, allegation or suspicion of illegal or criminal activity concerning WOPEN of which they are aware in or as part of the exercise of their duties. The investigation of the reported facts is the responsibility of WOPEN.
4. WOPEN must ensure that WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy who report a case as described above based on reasonable suspicions and in good faith does not suffer from any harm as a result.
5. Cases of misuse of complaint mechanisms may be subject to sanctions.



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Article 19 – Action to be taken in Case of a Conflict of Interest

1. Since WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy are generally the only ones who know if they are in position of possible or actual conflict of interest, they are personally required to:
 - ❖ Be attentive to any actual or potential conflict of interest.
 - ❖ Take measures to avoid such a conflict of interest.
 - ❖ Inform their line manager of any conflict of interest as soon as they are aware of this, in accordance with Articles 8 or 18 of this policy; comply with any final decision that requires them to resolve the situation, in particular by removing themselves from the situation, or renouncing the benefit from which the conflict stems.
2. When requested, WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must declare whether or not they have a conflict of interest.

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Article 20 – Declaration of Interests

In accordance with this policy, WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy who occupy a position and/or exercise a mission in which their personal or private interests are likely to be affected by their:

- ❖ **Transparency:** Any element relating to fraud.
- ❖ **Grievance:** Any element relating to human resources dissatisfaction or complaint that was not resolved locally. Professional functions and/or mission must declare the nature and extent of their interests whenever they assume a position or at the time of each mission, and then at regular intervals and at the time of any change of situation

Article 21 – Incompatible External Interests

1. WOPEN staff and governance members must not engage in any activity or transaction, or occupy any paid or unpaid position or role, that is incompatible with the correct exercise

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of their professional functions, or that harms this. If it is unclear whether an activity is compatible, staff must request the opinion of their line manager.

2. Subject to the applicable legislation, WOPEN staff and governance members are required to inform and obtain the approval of WOPEN before performing certain paid or unpaid activities, or accepting any positions or roles, outside of their work for WOPEN.
3. WOPEN staff and governance members must declare their affiliation with or membership of organisations likely to harm their role or the correct performance of their duties at WOPEN.

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Article 22 – Gifts

1. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must not solicit or accept gifts, favours, invitations or any other benefit intended for them or their family, parents, close friends or persons or organisations with which WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy have or have had business or political relations, which may influence or appear to influence the impartiality with which they perform their duties and/or their mission or which may constitute or appear to constitute a reward for their duties or their mission. In accordance with WOPEN’s Code of Conduct, this does not include conventional hospitality or small gifts, which must be reported to the line manager.
2. If WOPEN staff is unsure whether or not they may accept a gift or hospitality, they must request the opinion of their line manager.

Article 23 – Reaction to Offers of Unfair Advantages

1. If WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy are offered an unfair advantage, they must take the following measures to protect themselves:
Refuse the unfair advantage. It is not necessary to accept it with a view to using it as proof.



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- Try to identify the person who made the offer.
- Avoid prolonged contact, although knowledge of the reason for the offer may be useful in a statement.
- In the event that the gift cannot be refused or returned to the sender, it must be kept, and handled as little as possible.
- If possible, try to have witnesses, for example colleagues working nearby.
- Draft a written report on this attempt and send it to the line manager and/or the WOPEN Country Coordinator / Representative and/or to wopen25@gmail.com.
- Report the attempt to their line manager and/or their Country Coordinator/Representative in a timely manner.
- Continue to work normally, particular on the contract in relation to which the unfair advantage was offered.

2. Any significant gift which could not be refused must be handed over to WOPEN with an explanatory note.

Article 24 – Vulnerability to the Influence of Third Parties

WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must not place themselves or allow themselves to be placed in a situation that requires them to grant a favour to any person or entity in return. In the same way, their public and private conduct must not leave them vulnerable to the undue influence of third parties.

Article 25 – Abuse of Professional Position

1. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must not offer advantages linked to their professional situation and/or their mission in any way, unless this has been duly authorised in writing.



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2. WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must not attempt to influence any person or entity (including other WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy) for any private purpose, by abusing their professional position or by offering personal benefits

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Article 26 – Implementation Date of the Policy

This Conflict of Interest Prevention Policy comes into effect after approval by WOPEN’s Committee on 23rd of January 2023

Article 27 – Adherence to the Policy

WOPEN staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy certify that they adhere to these principles by signing the WOPEN Policy Acceptance Form and/or by signing their employment contract.