

WSAVA Policy on Conflict of Interest

World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)

Last Review: July 2022

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the WSAVA's decision-making process, to enable our stakeholders to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputation of volunteers, staff and the WSAVA Brand.

All volunteers and staff of WSAVA will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the association on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other.

This policy is to help volunteers and staff of WSAVA to effectively identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of WSAVA and manage risk to the association.

2. Objective

The WSAVA Executive Board aims to ensure that all volunteers and staff are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of the WSAVA.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Conflicts of interests (Col)** - A conflict of interest occurs when a person's interests' conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the association.

Conflicting interests include duties and direct interests as well as those of family, friends, or other organizations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as an employee or shareholder). A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non- financial.

- 3.2. **Material interest** - A material personal interest is one which provides a personal benefit (whether that interest is direct, indirect, contingent or contractual) to the volunteer or an associated person or entity, which is of a real or substantial kind, having the capacity to influence the opinion and vote of the volunteer on the decision to be made.
- 3.3. **Committee** - A Committee includes the Executive Board and all Committees and Working Groups of WSAVA.
- 3.4. **Volunteer** – Includes any Chair, office holder or member of a Committee.
- 3.5. **Staff** – Any full or part-time employee or contractor engaged by WSAVA for a fee.
- 3.6. **Board** – Executive Board

4. Restrictions on participation

4.1. Industry Partner Representatives on WSAVA Executive Board, Committees and Groups

- 4.1.1. **Executive Board/Committee Chair** - Full and part-time employees or contractors of an animal health industry partner cannot serve on the Executive Board nor become Chair of a committee.
- 4.1.2. **Committee Member** – Full time employees of an animal health industry partner may only be invited as a member of a committee in exceptional cases and if reasons are expertise based and under a non-voting capacity.
- 4.1.3. **Committee Advisory Member** – Animal health industry partner representatives can be invited as an advisory capacity, subject to the committee terms of reference, and would be entitled to a face to face or teleconference with the committee chair and/or committee annually.

4.2. Other conflicts of interests of WSAVA Committees;

4.2.1. Business Shares – Anyone with a significant material interest in a business awarded a contract by WSAVA cannot be a Chair or member of a WSAVA committee or group.

4.2.2. Relationship – A committee member who is related to a member of staff or the Executive Board cannot be involved in a decision to be taken on staff pay and/or staff and Executive Board conditions.

5. Declaration

All committee members shall sign a declaration of conflict of interest upon first becoming part of the committee. WSAVA must ensure that all its volunteers and staff are aware of this policy and that they disclose any actual or perceived material conflicts of interests as required.

All paid staff of WSAVA will be made aware of this policy and their obligations for disclosure will be contained in a signed agreement on their engagement with WSAVA.

6. Responsibility of the Executive Board, LNC and Committee Chair

The Leadership and Nomination Committee (LNC) will ensure each new committee members receives a copy of the Conflict of Interest (Col) Policy and the Committees Terms of Reference (ToR). A signed declaration of any current, potential or perceived conflicts of interest by a new committee member will be sent to the Secretariat who will make it available to the Committee's Chair.

A Committee Chair will request at the commencement of any meeting any updates on Col's, or whether any Col would likely come about in the agenda for the meeting. Any new Col's will be minuted. The Chair will adjudicate as to the extent of the new Col and the ability of the committee member to take part in the discussion or vote in respect of the agenda item. Where there is disagreement on the extent of the Col the Board will be the final arbiter.

7. Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest has been identified, it must be raised with the Secretariat. The WSAVA Secretariat must maintain a register of these conflicts and record related information, including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it.

8. Actions

8.1. Conflicts of interest of volunteers - Once a conflict of interest has arisen, the Chair of the meeting must decide whether or not those conflicted should participate in any debate or vote.

- 8.1.1. Any conflicts that arise during a meeting and whether the person was present, did or didn't participate in the discussion or voting on the issue is to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 8.1.2. If the issue cannot be resolved by the Chair of the meeting the person concerned will not be allowed to be present, participate in any debate or vote during the agenda item. The Chair will provide details of the issue, and their recommendation, to the Board for its decisioning on the issue for future committee meetings. The course of action will be decided by the Board after hearing all interested parties.
- 8.1.3. Where the Col is with the Chair of the meeting they must stand down as Chair and allow the participants of the meeting to elect a new Chair for that meeting. The replacement Chair should notify the Executive Director of the situation immediately after the meeting has concluded.
- 8.1.4. In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a volunteer from regularly participating in discussions, the Board will consider whether it is appropriate for the person conflicted to resign from the committee.
- 8.1.5. The approval of any Board action requires a majority decision (unless specified otherwise) during any meeting of the Board (excluding any conflicted member/s). The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the register of interests.

8.2. Points of Consideration

- 8.2.1. **Prior to appointment** - Prior to an initial appointment to any WSAVA Committee the LNC will consider;
 - whether the conflict needs to be resolved or simply documented
 - whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
 - the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the association.

8.2.2. Current members of a committee - The Chair of a Committee must consider all of the following when an actual, potential or perceived Col arises in the normal course of a Committee activities;

- whether the conflict needs to be resolved or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the association.

9. Compliance

9.1. Conflict of Interest Forms – Prior to appointment, each committee member will make a full, written disclosure of interests, such as relationships, and posts held, by signing the Conflict of Interest and Disclosure of Interests form (Appendix 1). This written disclosure will be kept on file by the Secretariat and the register of interests updated as appropriate.

9.2. Arising Conflicts during term – If a conflict of interest arises while a member of a committee the volunteer is to disclose the conflict of interest to the Chair of the committee as soon as possible prior to the next meeting. This Col is to also be disclosed at the commencement of the first meeting following the change in circumstances so that it can be minuted.

9.3. Arising Conflicts during meeting - If, during a meetings or activities, a conflict of interest arises for any of the volunteers present, the volunteer(s) will disclose the Col immediately. After disclosure, the volunteer will be asked to leave the room for the discussion as to the significance of the Col and will not be able to take part in the agenda discussion on the topic where the Col arises.

9.4. Failure to Comply - If any committee member has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, the issue is to be raised with the Executive Director who will investigate the circumstances. If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Executive Director will take a recommendation to the Board for decisioning. This may include seeking to terminate the individual's relationship with WSAVA.

10. Appendix 1 Conflict of Interest and Disclosure of Interests

*World Small Animal Veterinary Association
Conflict of Interest and Disclosure of Certain Interests Signature Form*

Please describe below any relationships, positions, or circumstances in which you are involved that you believe could contribute to a Conflict of Interest whether actual, potential or could be perceived (as defined in the WSAVA Policy on Conflicts of Interest).

- None
- Yes
Describe

Employment by a WSAVA sponsor

Directorship or membership of an advisory board or special interest group whose interests are supported by a WSAVA sponsor company

- None
- Yes
Describe

Assisting in the design of clinical studies concerning the use of products manufactured by a WSAVA sponsor

- None
- Yes
Describe

Investments held in WSAVA sponsor companies

- None
- Yes
Describe

Other

I hereby certify that the information given above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have read and agree to abide by the Conflict of Interest Policy of the WSAVA.

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Please return the completed declaration to the WSAVA secretariat at admin@wsava.org