

Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)

Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Purpose

The **Conflict of Interest Policy** is designed to ensure that members, officers, and employees of the **Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)** conduct their duties in a manner that is free from bias or conflicts of interest. This document outlines the procedures for identifying, disclosing, and managing conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity of the Association and the translation profession. ETA is committed to ensuring that all actions taken by members or officers are in the best interest of the Association and the translation industry, upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethics.

2. Definition of Conflict of Interest

2.1. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when an individual's personal, financial, or professional interests interfere, or appear to interfere, with their ability to act in the best interests of ETA or the translation industry. Conflicts may occur in various situations, including relationships between professionals, between translation companies, or between professionals and companies.

2.2. Types of Potential Conflicts of Interest in the Translation Industry

- **Between Translation Companies:** A conflict may arise when two or more translation companies have competing business interests that are not disclosed, leading to unfair competition or collaboration that could harm one party or undermine the integrity of the industry. Conflict of interest between translation companies can also arise when a company gains an unfair advantage by monopolizing opportunities or influencing ETA's decisions.
- **Between Translation Professionals and Companies:** Conflicts of interest can arise when a translator or interpreter has personal or financial relationships with a client or company that may influence the impartiality and quality of their work. For example, a translator working on projects for a company they have personal ties with, without disclosing the relationship, could lead to bias in translation choices. Conflict of interest between translation companies can also arise when a company hires in-house translators but also competes with freelance professionals in a manner that creates an unfair advantage.
- **Between Translation Professionals:** Conflicts can also occur between professionals, particularly in situations where two or more translators may be working on similar projects for competing clients. An example of this conflict could be the sharing of proprietary or confidential information without proper consent, thereby compromising professional ethics

and trust. Such conflict of interest can also happen when professionals engage in unfair practices such as underpricing to win bids while compromising quality.

- **Between Individual members and ETA Leadership:** Conflicts can also occur between individual members, including corporates, and ETA Leadership when a member of the Executive Committee or another leadership body has a financial or personal interest in a decision that impacts the allocation of projects, membership benefits, or leadership positions. Conflicts can arise when a General Manager of a translation company is also registered as an individual translator and has dual voting rights.

2.3. Conflicts of Interest Beyond the Translation Process

Conflicts can also arise in situations outside of specific translation projects, including:

- **Employment and External Business Interests:** A member of ETA may have a financial interest in a company that competes with or provides services in the translation or language industry, thus compromising their impartiality in decisions regarding ETA matters.
- **Personal Relationships:** If a translator or professional is involved in personal relationships (e.g., family members or close friends) with individuals or companies that are involved in competing translation projects, those relationships could create a conflict of interest.

3. Procedures for Disclosing and Managing Conflicts of Interest

3.1. Disclosure Requirements

ETA members, officers, and employees are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest in writing to the **Conflict of Interest Committee** or designated authority at ETA as soon as they are aware of the situation. This includes both current and potential future conflicts.

Situations to disclose include but are not limited to:

- **Financial Interests:** Ownership or investments in translation or language service companies or related entities.
- **Family and Personal Relationships:** Any direct relationships with individuals or companies that may affect impartiality or result in bias during decision-making.
- **Business Interests:** Any positions held in competing or complementary businesses in the translation and localization sectors.

3.2. Timing of Disclosure

3.2.1 Disclosure must be made as soon as the conflict arises or is identified, ideally before any relevant decisions or actions are taken that could be affected by the conflict. In the case of ongoing

or long-term conflicts, disclosure should occur at regular intervals, such as during the annual membership renewal or reporting process.

3.2.2. The Conflict of Interest Committee or designated authority at ETA will:

1. **Evaluate** the impact of the conflict on ETA's integrity.
2. **Determine** if the member must recuse themselves from decision-making.
3. **Implement** alternative arrangements to prevent bias in opportunities and decision-making.
4. **Enforce Transparency** by notifying relevant stakeholders about the measures taken.

3.3. Assessment of Conflicts

Upon receiving a disclosure, the **Conflict of Interest Committee** or designated authority will review the situation to determine the severity and potential impact of the conflict. The committee will evaluate whether the conflict can be effectively managed or if further action is required. This assessment may include:

- A review of the individual's involvement in the conflict.
- Consultation with relevant parties, such as other professionals, clients, or companies involved.
- Evaluation of whether the conflict could affect ETA's reputation, operations, or the integrity of its professional standards.

3.4. Managing Conflicts of Interest

Once a conflict of interest has been disclosed and assessed, the following steps will be taken to manage the conflict:

- **Recusal:** The individual involved in the conflict may be asked to recuse themselves from participating in any decisions or activities that are directly impacted by the conflict.
- **Alternative Arrangements:** ETA may make alternative arrangements, such as assigning another professional to oversee the situation or project, to ensure impartiality.
- **Full Transparency:** Where appropriate, transparency will be maintained by informing relevant parties of the conflict and the measures taken to address it.
- **Review of Policies:** ETA may review its policies and practices to minimize the occurrence of conflicts of interest and ensure fairness within the translation industry.

3.5. Ongoing Monitoring

ETA will ensure that conflicts of interest are regularly monitored. This includes ongoing communication with members to assess whether disclosed conflicts have been resolved or whether new conflicts have arisen.

4. Consequences for Failing to Disclose a Conflict of Interest

4.1. Immediate Actions

Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in immediate disciplinary action. The severity of the consequence will depend on the nature of the conflict and whether it has been resolved in accordance with the policy. The following actions may be taken:

- **Written Warning:** A formal written warning may be issued, noting the failure to disclose the conflict and the requirement for future compliance.
- **Suspension of Membership:** In cases where the conflict of interest is deemed serious or ongoing, the individual's membership may be suspended pending resolution of the conflict.
- **Permanent Termination of Membership or Employment:** In cases where the conflict is found to be a severe offense and have compromised the integrity of ETA, its members, or the translation industry, membership or employment with ETA may be terminated.

4.2. Impact on Reputation

In addition to formal disciplinary actions, failing to disclose a conflict of interest can damage the reputation of the individual involved as well as ETA. If the conflict of interest is discovered after decisions have been made, it could lead to a loss of trust from clients, colleagues, and other professionals in the industry.

5. Ethical Considerations in Conflict of Interest Cases

5.1. Professional Integrity

- 5.1.1. Members of ETA must prioritize the integrity of the translation profession above personal or financial interests.
- 5.1.2. All projects should adhere to professional translation and interpretation standards.
- 5.1.3. Any conflict of interest that compromises the ability to provide fair and unbiased services, especially in a competitive marketplace, is to be handled with the utmost seriousness.

5.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential when handling conflicts of interest. All disclosures and discussions of conflicts will be treated with discretion to protect the privacy of individuals and maintain the reputation of ETA.

5.3. Fairness in Business Practices

In the translation industry, fairness is vital for maintaining professional standards. Conflicts of interest can compromise the fairness of competition, result in biased translations, or affect client relationships. ETA seeks to ensure that all members adhere to the highest ethical standards in their professional activities.

6. Additional Provisions to Address Member Concerns

6.1. Equal Opportunity and Fair Distribution of Opportunities

- **Disclosure of Opportunities:** All job opportunities, tenders, and projects facilitated by ETA shall be disclosed to all members through the Association's official communication channels (e.g., website, email, newsletters, social media platforms).
- **Transparent Allocation Process:** Opportunities shall be allocated based on a transparent and fair process, such as open bidding or rotation systems, to ensure equal access for all members.
- **Prevention of Favoritism:** The **Executive Committee** shall ensure that no member or company receives preferential treatment. Any member found to be influencing the allocation of opportunities unfairly shall be subject to disciplinary action.

6.2. Prevention of Monopolization of Opportunities

- **Anti-Monopoly Measures:** ETA shall implement measures to prevent any single professional or company from monopolizing opportunities. This may include setting limits on the number of projects a member can undertake within a specific period.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement:** The **Conflict of Interest Committee** shall monitor the distribution of opportunities and take action against any member or company found to be monopolizing opportunities.

6.3. Consequences for Unethical Practices

- **Low Pricing and Non-Professional Practices:** Members who offer excessively low prices to win bids or engage non-professionals to perform translation or interpretation jobs shall be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.
- **False Representation:** Members who misrepresent their qualifications or the qualifications of their employees shall be subject to disciplinary action.

6.4. Dual Membership and Voting Rights

- **Prohibition of Dual Voting:** Individuals who are registered both as a professional and as a representative of a company shall only be entitled to one vote in Association matters. The **Executive Committee** shall ensure that voting rights are not duplicated.
- **Disclosure of Dual Roles:** Members with dual roles (e.g., General Managers registered as both individuals and company representatives) must disclose this information to the **Conflict of Interest Committee**.
- Members must not use their positions to unfairly influence voting or decision-making.
- Any detected manipulation of elections or committee decisions will result in disqualification from holding office.

7. Enforcement and Amendments

7.1 Implementation and Monitoring

- The Conflict of Interest Committee will conduct regular audits to ensure compliance.
- Anonymous reporting mechanisms will be available for members to report potential conflicts.

7.2 Amendments to the Policy

- The Conflict of Interest Policy may be reviewed and amended as needed by the Executive Committee and approved by a majority vote at a general assembly.

8. Conclusion

The **Conflict of Interest Policy** of the **Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)** is essential for maintaining the professional integrity of the Association and its members. By implementing this policy, ETA ensures that all conflicts are disclosed, managed effectively, and prevented from compromising the trust and respect within the translation and interpretation community. This policy will help foster a transparent, ethical, and professional environment for all members and stakeholders involved in the translation industry.

Approved by:

Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)