

Whistleblower Policy for the Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)

Purpose:

This document encourages members of the **Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)** to report **misconduct** or **ethical violations** without fear of **retaliation**. It provides clear procedures for reporting misconduct, protections for whistleblowers, and a transparent investigation process to ensure accountability and integrity within the Association.

Definitions of Key Terms

1. **Whistleblower:** A member who reports misconduct, unethical behavior, or violations of the Association's policies or the law.
2. **Misconduct:** Any action or behavior that violates the Association's **Code of Ethics, Articles of Association**, or applicable laws and regulations.
3. **Retaliation:** Any adverse action taken against a whistleblower for reporting misconduct, such as harassment, demotion, suspension, or expulsion.
4. **Anonymous Reporting:** The process of reporting misconduct without revealing the whistleblower's identity.
5. **Investigation:** A formal process to examine and resolve whistleblower complaints in a fair and transparent manner.

1. Procedures for Reporting Misconduct Anonymously

1.1. Reporting Channels

- Members may report misconduct through the following channels:
 - **Online Form:** A secure online form available on the Association's website, which allows for anonymous reporting.
 - **Email:** A dedicated email address (e.g., whistleblower@translatorsethiopia.org) for submitting complaints anonymously.
 - **Hotline:** A confidential hotline number where members can report misconduct anonymously.

1.2. Information Required

- Whistleblowers are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible, including:
 - The nature of the misconduct (e.g., ethical violation, financial fraud, harassment).
 - The names of individuals involved (if known).
 - The date, time, and location of the incident(s).
 - Any supporting evidence (e.g., documents, emails, recordings).

1.3. Confidentiality

- The Association will protect the identity of whistleblowers who choose to report anonymously.
- All reports will be handled with the utmost confidentiality to prevent any risk of retaliation.

2. Protections for Whistleblowers Against Retaliation

2.1. Non-Retaliation Policy

- The Association strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against whistleblowers.
- Retaliation includes, but is not limited to:
 - Harassment, intimidation, or threats.
 - Demotion, suspension, or expulsion.
 - Unfair treatment or exclusion from Association activities.

2.2. Legal Protections

- Whistleblowers are protected under Ethiopian law and the Association's policies.
- The Association will take immediate action to address any instances of retaliation and ensure the safety and well-being of the whistleblower.

2.3. Support for Whistleblowers

- Whistleblowers will have access to support services, including:
 - Legal advice and representation.
 - Counseling and emotional support.
 - Assistance in resolving any issues arising from the whistleblowing process.

3. Investigation Process for Whistleblower Complaints

3.1. Initial Review

- Upon receiving a whistleblower complaint, the **Executive Committee** or a designated **Whistleblower Committee** will conduct an initial review to determine the validity and seriousness of the complaint.
- The Committee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **7 days** and provide an estimated timeline for the investigation.

3.2. Investigation Team

- An independent investigation team will be formed to examine the complaint. The team may include:
 - Members of the Executive Committee.
 - External legal or ethical experts (if necessary).
 - Representatives from the **FDRE Ministry of Culture and Sports** (if the complaint involves legal violations).

3.3. Investigation Process

- The investigation team will:
 - Gather evidence, including documents, emails, and witness statements.
 - Interview the whistleblower (if not anonymous), the accused individual(s), and any relevant witnesses.
 - Maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process.
- The investigation will be completed within **30 days**, unless additional time is required due to the complexity of the case.

3.4. Findings and Recommendations

- The investigation team will prepare a report detailing the findings and recommendations for action.
- If the complaint is substantiated, the report will recommend appropriate disciplinary actions, such as:
 - Warnings, suspension, or expulsion of the accused individual(s).
 - Corrective measures to address the misconduct (e.g., policy changes, training programs).
- If the complaint is unsubstantiated, the report will recommend closing the case with no further action.

3.5. Decision and Implementation

- The **Executive Committee** will review the investigation report and make a final decision on the recommended actions.
- The decision will be communicated to the whistleblower (if not anonymous) and the accused individual(s).
- The Association will implement the recommended actions promptly and monitor compliance.

3.6. Appeals Process

- The accused individual(s) may appeal the decision to the **General Assembly** within **14 days** of receiving the decision.
- The General Assembly will review the appeal and make a final decision, which will be binding.

4. Transparency and Accountability

4.1. Reporting to Stakeholders

- The Association will provide periodic updates to its members and stakeholders on the status of whistleblower complaints and investigations.
- The updates will include the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints, and the outcomes of the investigations.

4.2. Continuous Improvement

- The Association will use the findings from whistleblower investigations to identify areas for improvement in its policies, procedures, and practices.
- The Association will implement corrective measures to prevent future misconduct and promote a culture of integrity and accountability.

5. Compliance with FDRE Ministry of Culture and Sports Directive

5.1. Reporting Serious Violations

- If a whistleblower complaint involves serious legal or ethical violations, the Association will report the matter to the **FDRE Ministry of Culture and Sports** for further action.
- The Association will cooperate fully with any investigations conducted by the Ministry.

5.2. Collaboration with the Ministry

- The Association will collaborate with the **FDRE Ministry of Culture and Sports** to ensure that whistleblower complaints are handled in accordance with Ethiopian laws and regulations.
- The Association will participate in Ministry-led initiatives to promote ethical behavior and accountability in the translation and interpretation sector.

Conclusion

This **Whistleblower Policy** ensures that members of the **Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)** can report misconduct or ethical violations without fear of retaliation. By providing clear procedures for anonymous reporting, robust protections for whistleblowers, and a transparent investigation process, the Association promotes a culture of integrity, accountability, and trust.

Approved by:

Ethiopian Translators Association (ETA)