# Feminist Approach to Technology

## Conflict of Interest Policy

**Purpose**

The public purpose and charitable nature of an organization demands highest standard of transparency and public accountability. The need to have a written policy on conflict of interest is important to make full disclosures in the event of a conflict arising, including a perceived conflict of interest. The principles regarding conflict of interest with respect to a ‘non-profit’ would be different from that of ‘for-profit’ entities. e.g., Two non-profits may cooperate if a larger public purpose is served.

In pursuance of good internal governance practices it is now proposed for the Board to adopt a written conflict of interest policy. Conflict of interest including perceived conflict of interest may occur when a Member, Executive, or Employee is in a position to influence decisions that may result in personal gain for herself such as (but not restricted to) remuneration, donation, grant, award, membership, professional assignments, sales/purchases, paid position. This clause extends to their immediate family members or an organization where s/he may have a stake, interest and affiliations. Immediate family members include parents, spouse, siblings, children and in-laws.

**The Basic Tenet**

The Board recognizes that the resource pool available to this sector is limited and virtually every Trustee, Executive and Employees is a valuable resource person in his or her own right. The mere fact that such a resource person may also serve a similar purpose organization, as a Trustee, member, paid consultant, should not be a deterrent for the Organization to give grant to or work with such organization provided the concerned discloses all possibilities of real or perceived conflict in writing and abstains from decision making, and the decision makers in view of the fact feel convinced that such grant or association will serve the greater interest of the Organization and the sector. Any decision under such circumstances should be properly recorded with disclosures to avoid suspicion that the decision was not taken in transparent manner and was not in keeping with the common good.

**The Policy**

This policy intends to protect the integrity and reputation of FAT through the disclosures of all interests, relations, holdings and affiliations that could affect the ability of Trustees, Executive, employees and vendors to loyally serve, safeguard, and promote the mission and affairs of the Organization. This policy is meant to provide reassurance that no individual associated with the Organization has any vested interest. Conflict of interest may be examined in following or similar circumstances:

1. Giving grant to an organization where an individual associated with the Organization, his/her family members, may hold a position of power or has a financial stake or interest.
2. Accepting paid assignment, reimbursements from a FAT grantee, organization or individual.
3. Accepting the positions such as Board member in a grantee organization.
4. Dealing with supplier or vendor where an individual (responsible for issuing or approving orders for the purchase of supplies, equipment, or transportation) or his/her immediate family members have any financial interest.
5. Employing staff who may be a close relative/ immediate family member of an individual associated with the Organization.

Individual associated with the Organization involves staff, Executive Director and Board Members.

Conflict of interest may be real or perceived. It extends to illegal and unethical behavior as well a conduct or judgments that appear to be based on self-interest even when no instance of actual wrong-doing is involved. Conflict of interest may involve the possibility of direct or indirect benefit or financial gain for an individual associated with the Organization, and his/her family members, close associates or business interests (“Self-dealing”) as well as the suggestion of unfair or biased influence on board and administrative decisions.

Real or perceived conflict of interest may result when a Board Member / Staff is affiliated with an organization doing business with the trust; when the Board Member / Staff benefits from insider knowledge about the affairs and activities of the Organization; or when a Board Member has duties, affiliations, or loyalties to other individuals or organizations whose interests may seem to compete or conflict with those of the Organization.

In situations of actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, the concerned Board Member, Executive, Staff must give full disclosures in writing, of the nature of the conflict, including the name or the organization or individuals involved and the nature of the relationships. In every such case, the concerned individual will not take part or try to influence decision about a transaction or a situation that may involve his or her conflict of interest.

As a matter of general principle, the concerned staff, Executive or the Trustee should abstain from decision making or transaction, in particular involving financial transaction and in case such transaction is approved. At the discretion of the Executive Director (for matter involving a staff member) or the Chair where it involves the Executive Director or a Board Member, however, the concerned person may be consulted for his/her inputs, but not for voting or decision making on the issue.

FAT will also undertake a disclosure policy to share the existing affiliations of staff members with other voluntary organization and vendors with whom FAT could have a relationship of potential conflict of interest.