

# WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY

## 1. BACKGROUND

This Whistle Blower Policy (“**Policy**”) is created with a purpose to provide a secured framework which an employee, consultant or contractor (“**Individual(s)**”) can use to share his/ her views, observations and objections with regard to unacceptable behavior of other employees, consultants or contractors of ICRIER which shows malpractice or wrongdoing which may adversely affect the rights of the Individuals of ICRIER or tarnish the image and reputation of ICRIER.

## 2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

This Policy seeks to provide a channel to the Individuals to report to the management, concerns in relation to malpractices and events which have taken place/ suspected to take place, involving:

- (i) Breach of the Code of Conduct of ICRIER;
- (ii) Breach of integrity and ethics;
- (iii) Breach of terms and conditions of employment with ICRIER and rules thereof;
- (iv) Intentional financial irregularities, including fraud, or suspected fraud;
- (v) Deliberate violation of laws/regulations;
- (vi) Gross or willful negligence causing substantial and specific danger to health, safety and environment;
- (vii) Manipulation of data/records of ICRIER;
- (viii) Pilferation of confidential/propriety information;
- (ix) Gross wastage/misappropriation of funds/assets of ICRIER.
- (x) Incidents which are adversely impacting an Individual’s performance and engagement during the course of his/ her association with ICRIER.
- (xi) Any act of physical assault which endangers or puts the fear of life endangerment in the mind of an Individual while at work.

- (xii) Any verbal volley or targeted communication which psychologically intimidates the self- respect and social image of an Individual in the opinion of another. Any issue or grievance which the Individual has experienced due to an action or series of actions at work which the Individual has reason to believe that it cannot be shared with anyone other than a third person who may be able to independently assess and help resolve the issues. This mechanism neither releases Individuals from their duty of confidentiality in the course of their work nor can it be used as a route for raising malicious or unfounded allegations against people in authority and / or colleagues in general.

### **3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This Policy covers malpractices and events which have taken place / suspected to have taken place involving instances of violation of applicable laws, misuse or abuse of authority, fraud or suspected fraud, violation of rules and Code of Conduct of ICRIER, manipulations, negligence causing danger to public health and safety, misappropriation of funds of ICRIER, and other matters or activity on account of which the interest of ICRIER or the Individuals are affected and formally reported by Whistle Blowers.

### **4. DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 **"Code of Conduct"** means the code of conduct as applicable to ICRIER.
- 4.2 **"Complaint"** means a concern raised by an Individual or group of Individuals, through a written communication and made in good faith which discloses or demonstrates information about an unethical or improper activity with respect to ICRIER. However, the Complaints should be factual and not speculative or in the nature of an interpretation / conclusion and should contain as much specific information as possible to allow for proper assessment of the nature and extent of the concern.
- 4.3 **"ICRIER"** shall mean Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations.
- 4.4 **"Individuals"** means all employees, consultants or contractors engaged by ICRIER.

- 4.5 **“Investigating Officer”** means the officer appointed by the management of ICRIER from amongst the employees of ICRIER to assist in the investigation of a Complaint.
- 4.6 **“Management”** means management of ICRIER comprising of Director & CE
- 4.7 **“Policy”** means this Whistle Blower Policy and including any amendments made to it from time to time.
- 4.8 **“Subject”** means a person or group of persons against or in relation to whom a Complaint is made or evidence gathered during the course of an investigation.
- 4.9 **“Whistle Blower”** is an Individual or group of Individuals who make a Complaint under this Policy and also referred in this Policy as Whistle Blower.
- 4.10 **“Whistle Blower Committee”** shall comprise of the following members

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Email - ID</b>
1	Dr Radhicka Kapoor	Senior Visiting Fellow	<a href="mailto:rkapoor@icrier.res.in">rkapoor@icrier.res.in</a>
2	Ms. Sanjana Joshi	Senior Consultant	<a href="mailto:sjoshi@icrier.res.in">sjoshi@icrier.res.in</a>
3	Mr. Harsh Wardhan	Consultant Fellow	<a href="mailto:hwardhan@icrier.res.in">hwardhan@icrier.res.in</a>
4	Mr. Pawan Kumar Kashyap	Senior Finance Officer	<a href="mailto:pkashyap@icrier.res.in">pkashyap@icrier.res.in</a>
5	Mr. Manish Mayank	Research Associate	<a href="mailto:mmanish@icrier.res.in">mmanish@icrier.res.in</a>

## **5. RECEIPT AND DISPOSAL OF COMPLAINTS**

- 5.1 Complaints should be reported in writing and should be duly signed by the Whistle Blower. The Complaint should be made as soon as possible after the occurrence of the event the said Complaint relates to and the Whistle Blower becoming aware of the occurrence of such event so as to ensure a clear understanding of the issues raised.
- 5.2 The Complaint made should either be typed or written in legible handwriting and may be in English or in Hindi. The Whistle Blower shall clearly write his/her name, designation, location and address on the Complaint. It may be noted that anonymous/ pseudonymous Complaints will not be investigated.
- 5.3 All Complaints should be addressed to the Whistle Blower Committee by sending an email. An individual must exercise sound judgment in

raising concerns to avoid baseless allegations.

- 5.4 On receipt of the Complaint, the Whistle Blower Committee shall make a record of the Complaint and also ascertain from the Whistle Blower whether he/ she was the person who made the Complaint or not for further appropriate investigation and needful action.
- 5.5 The Whistle Blower Committee may call for such further information or particulars from the Whistle Blower as he deems fit.

## **6. INVESTIGATION**

- 6.1 All Complaints under this Policy will be recorded and thoroughly investigated. The Whistle Blower Committee will investigate and may at its discretion consider involving any other officer of ICRIER for the purpose of the investigation. In case the Whistle Blower Committee deems necessary it may identify an Investigating Officer.
- 6.2 The investigation may involve study of documents and holding of interviews with various individuals. Any person required to provide documents, access to systems and other information for the purpose of such investigation shall co-operate in doing so. Individuals with whom the Investigating Officer requests an interview for the purposes of such investigation shall make themselves available for such interview at all reasonable times and shall provide the necessary co-operation for such purpose.
- 6.3 Subject(s) will normally be informed in writing of the allegations at the outset of a formal investigation and shall be accorded opportunities for providing their inputs during the investigation.
- 6.4 The Whistle Blower Committee or the Investigating Officer, as the case may be, will make best endeavors to complete the investigation and submit to the Management, an investigation report within 30 days from the receipt of the Complaint.

## **7. DECISION AND REPORTING**

- 7.1 The Whistle Blower Committee along with its recommendations will report the findings of the investigation to the Management within 30 days of receipt of a Complaint for further action as deemed fit. In the event a prima facie case exists against the Subject, the Management

shall take appropriate action in this regard or shall close the matter, as the case may be, for which the Whistle Blower Committee shall record the reasons. Copy of the above decision shall be addressed to the Management who in turn shall intimate the Whistle Blower and the Subject of the same.

- 7.2 In case the Subject is any member of the Whistle Blower Committee, the Management shall in turn will appoint another employee as a member of the Whistle Blower Committee to examine and investigate the Complaint. If there is breach on the part of the head of the institution complaint will be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Committee. A member of the Whistle Blower Committee shall be designated as the Chairperson of the committee
- 7.3 In the event the Whistle Blower Committee is of the view that a Complaint has not been made in good faith such an event shall be viewed seriously and the Whistle Blower may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. In case of repeated frivolous complaints or false allegations by an Individual, the Whistle Blower Committee, may take suitable disciplinary action including reprimand against the concerned Individual in accordance with the rules, procedures and policies of the Company.
- 7.4 The Whistle Blower Committee shall keep and maintain the following records in respect of the Complaint, its investigation and action taken:
- (i) Brief facts of Complaints stating whether the same Complaint was raised previously by anyone, and if so, the outcome thereof;
  - (ii) Details of actions taken by Whistle Blower Committee/ Investigating Officer for processing the complaint.
  - (iii) Findings of the Whistle Blower Committee/ Investigating Officer;
  - (iv) The recommendations of the Whistle Blower Committee/ other action(s).

## **8. SECRECY / CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Whistle Blower, Whistle Blower Committee, Management, the Subject and everybody involved in the investigation and redressal process shall:

- (i) Maintain utmost confidentiality of all matters under this Policy;

- (ii) Not discuss the matter with any person whatsoever except to the extent or with those persons as required under this Policy for completing the process of the investigation;
- (iii) Not keep related documents unattended anywhere at any time; and
- (iv) Keep all related electronic mails / files under password.

## **9. MISUSE OF THE PROGRAM AND CHANNEL**

- 9.1 ICRIER recognizes the need to offer Individuals this safe and secure channel to share their inputs and grievances about instances covered under this Policy with a neutral and independent panel for investigation and action. It is also important for Individuals to be cognizant of the fact that ICRIER discourages and shall take serious action should such channels be misused for any other purpose than for which they have been incorporated.
- 9.2 The Whistle Blower Committee is required to assist in the investigation of a complaint reported by an Individual and ensure that every measure of confidentiality is taken to safe guard the identity and inputs shared by the reporter of the issue ("**Whistle Blower**").
- 9.3 The program requires equal confidentiality from the Whistle Blower as much as the Whistle Blower believes in the confidentiality at the end of the Whistle Blower Committee. Thus any Individual can report immediately of any action of repercussion arising out of leak of information at his/ her end. Such leak of information may occur by error of mention or sheer negligence on the part of the Individual. The Whistle Blower Committee reserves the right to independently investigate this afresh and take necessary action against the erring parties involved (including the reporter if the facts of investigation so reveal).
- 9.4 The use of this framework and channel is discouraged in any of the following scenarios which may be considered as 'Business as Usual' issues and should be reported to the respective business level authorities who are designated to address the same in each business by virtue of their roles. The below list is suggestive in nature and not exhaustive; the Whistle Blower Committee reserves the discretion not to entertain such incidents and may advice the Individual to report it to the appropriate manager/ authority.

- Non- functional / Malfunctioning infrastructure, telecommunication systems and/ or virtual systems.
- Disagreements between Individuals arising out of the normal course of discussion with regard to business as usual (BAU) actions and/ or expectations.
- Domestic issues which are personal to an Individual.
- Historical conflicts between two or more Individuals which are personal in nature.

## **10. PROTECTION**

10.1 No unfair treatment will be meted out to a Whistle Blower by virtue of his/ her having reported a Complaint under this Policy. The Company, as a policy, condemns any kind of discrimination, harassment, victimization or any other unfair employment practice being adopted against Whistle Blowers. Complete protection will, therefore, be given to Whistle Blowers against any unfair practice like retaliation, threat or intimidation of termination/ suspension of service, disciplinary action, transfer, demotion, refusal of promotion or the like including any direct or indirect use of authority to obstruct the Whistle Blower's right to continue to perform his duties / functions including making further Complaints. If the Whistle Blower is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Company will arrange for the Whistle Blower to receive advice about the procedure etc.

10.2 A Whistle Blower may report any violation of the above clause to the Whistle Blower Committee, who shall investigate into the same and recommend suitable action to the Management.

10.3 The identity of the Whistle Blower shall be kept confidential to the extent possible. The identity of the Whistle Blower will not be revealed unless he himself has made either his details public or disclosed his identity to any other office or authority. In the event of the identity of the Whistle Blower being disclosed, the Whistle Blower Committee will be authorized to initiate appropriate action against the person making such disclosure. The identity of the Whistleblower, if known, shall remain confidential to those persons directly involved in the implementation of this Policy, unless the issue requires investigation by law enforcement agencies.

10.4 Any other Individual assisting in the said investigation shall also be

protected to the same extent as the Whistle Blower. This Policy does not protect an Individual from an adverse action taken independent of his/her disclosure of unethical and improper practice etc. unrelated to a disclosure made by such Individual pursuant to this Policy.

## **11. COMMUNICATION**

This Policy shall be published on the website of the Company.

## **12. RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS**

All Complaints documented along with the results of investigations relating thereto, shall be retained by the compliance department of the Company for a minimum period of 5 years or as required by applicable laws, whichever is more, from the date of the decision in specific matters.

## **13. ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

The Whistle Blower Committee shall be responsible for the administration, implementation, interpretation, application and review of this Policy in consultation with the Management. The Whistle Blower Committee shall be empowered to bring about necessary changes to this Policy, if required at any stage, with the concurrence of the Management. The Management may also establish further rules and procedures, from time to time, to give effect to the intent of this Policy and further the objective of good corporate governance.