



CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS

The South African Council for Business Women (SACBW) has a proud history of good governance since its inception in 1988. The Council, through its National Executive Committee, adheres to and accepts the guidelines of the King Report on Governance (King IV) as applicable to its operations. The SACBW is a registered non-profit organisation with Office Bearers (Service Providers) and a virtual National Office that runs the day-to-day operations.

VISION

The **vision** of the SACBW is to be the trusted conduit for all South African Business Women who are determined to leverage their individual and collective power to rise into full potential, whilst lifting others, today and in the future.

MISSION

The **mission** of the SACBW consists of five pillars:

- ❖ Embracing our feminine power and responsibility to create the change we want;
- ❖ Equipping each other to take our rightful place on the business stage;
- ❖ Empowering one another to rise into unimaginable potential;
- ❖ Create a sisterhood, a safety net, a lighthouse in times of uncertainty; and
- ❖ Educating women about business and life so that they can be informed and protect themselves and their business interests.

1.0 CORE ETHICS

The SACBW has adopted the following **core ethics**:

- **Integrity:** We believe in honesty on all levels of business, reporting and communication and we maintain high moral value.
- **Objectivity:** We believe in fairness and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong through objective evaluation.
- **Professional competence:** We believe in the ability of our leadership to perform their duties with acceptable quality and we invest in the skills development of our members.
- **Confidentiality:** We believe in the protection of information, of both our Organisation and our members and will not share information that may cause harm to the organisation or its members, collectively and individually.
- **Professional behaviour:** We believe and expect respectful and courteous conduct in the business environment from our members.





2.0 CODE OF ETHICS

The SACBW adopted a **Code of Ethics** to maintain fairness, transparency, honesty, impartiality, objectivity, credibility, integrity and, above all, accountability, when conducting its affairs, both inside and outside the Council. The **Code of Ethics** guides the behaviour and decision-making of the Council when engaging with members, competitors and other role-players.

The **Code of Ethics** contains guidelines that will help officials to perform their tasks and duties with confidence, in an ethical and irreproachable manner. It will further guide and support all members in identifying, considering, understanding and appropriately responding to work ethics. It is intended to provide clarity and certainty about responsibilities in terms of ethics in the Council.

3.0 OUR CONDUCT

Ethical conduct refers to acceptable standards of conduct or behaviour for members of the SACBW. Ethical conduct is fostered and maintained when individuals act with integrity, honesty and in good faith in all their actions and on behalf of the Council.

3.1 OPERATIONAL INTEGRITY

The SA Council for Business Women believes that its reputation for honesty and integrity attracts and retains members and that this will ultimately have a direct impact on the resources available to the Council to fulfil its mandate. Trustworthy members represent trust in the organisation. The Organisation believes that by applying strong ethical values, it will derive added benefits, such as:

- Improved operational management.
- Increased success in serving our members.
- An enhanced Organisational image that attracts members; and
- Earning the public goodwill.

3.2 BEHAVIOUR OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE SACBW

The Council expects that all members will protect information and assets of the Council. Furthermore, the Council places emphasis on the protection of information of individuals as well as any confidential information relating to the operation of the Council.





3.2.1 Handling of information:

Members elected to leadership roles will have access to confidential information of the Council during their terms of office. It is prohibited to disclose any confidential information, to third parties, that could harm the Council. Information should be used only for the intended purpose and officials should respect the confidentiality of Council and protect personal information.

3.2.2 Intellectual Property Rights:

Confidential information about the Council's research and development activities, methodologies, and product development may not be shared with third parties, unless authorised by the National Executive Committee.

3.2.3 Compliance with Legislation:

The Council is committed to comply with all the legal requirements and to provide truthful information on its conduct, financial reports and other information. The SACBW strongly opposes the inclusion of false or misleading entries into any books or records of the Council.

3.2.4 Financial Resource Protection:

As a non-profit organisation the Council has limited financial resources and officials should protect these resources to ensure the sustainability of the Council. Should it be necessary to incur expenses to further the goals and objectives of the Organisation, the National Treasurer should ensure that the appropriate value is received for such expenditures.

Any member of the Council collecting payments for events from members and guests must at all times act responsibly with the money. Attendance registers at events should be used as a proof of payments received. All payments collected must be deposited into the Council's applicable bank account within **3 (three) working days** from receipt. Business Leaders must scan and submit any financial receipts, invoices, etc. to the National Treasurer for record keeping and accounting purposes. Records will be kept by National for 3 years.

No refunds will be payable to any person and/or organisation on behalf of the Council, unless approved by the National Treasurer, in writing, prior to such payment being made.

3.2.5 Caring for our people:

People are one of the core resources of the Council and the SACBW commits to treat all members of the organisation in the most compassionate way and we strongly promote a professional work ethic.





The Honorary Life Members (past Presidents) of the SACBW will be welcomed at all events as an honorary life member.

We also honour the values of respect, dignity and equal opportunity and fully subscribe to the personal development of National Executive Committee members, employees and SACBW members.

The Council is proud of the unique diversity in the South African communities and regard all people as equal in terms of privileges and access to opportunities and information. The Council will act upon any remarks or actions of discrimination and will not tolerate derogatory or foul language at any of its events, in any communications or members talking bad of others.

Although the SACBW accepts that it is acceptable practice to evaluate the competitors in the business environment but condones any action by any official to seek sensitive information or data from third parties. Such communication is unacceptable and will not be allowed. Members found guilty of such conduct may be expelled.

3.2.6 Commitment to Quality:

The Council is committed to provide quality information and service of high value to members through its operations, activities and services. The SACBW commits to continuous development of resources to ensure that quality is maintained. We will review our strategies annually to remain relevant.

3.2.7 Commitment to Society:

The Council regards itself as a responsible body corporate, whose mandate is defined by the Constitution of South Africa and any other relevant legislation and its own Constitution. As such, the Council is fully committed to being good citizens and to embark on projects and campaigns to improve the quality of life of all South Africans. We will identify needs in our communities and address this through our corporate social investment activities, in collaboration with the community.

3.2.8 Professional appearance:

The SACBW expects that members will dress appropriately when conducting the business of the Council. Acceptable business attire is recommended to further the image and brand of the SACBW and to show respect to other role-players we are engaging with at the time. Although the Council acknowledges that individual tastes may differ, we appeal to all members to remain professional in their behaviour.





3.2.9 Environmental commitment:

The SACBW is committed to the protection of the natural resources of South Africa and commits to being responsible when planning printing, events, campaigns and communication strategies so that we encourage our members and the communities we serve to act responsibly too. We believe that part of the legacy of the Council will be to ensure that the next generations have access to resources like clean water, fresh air and a clean environment.

3.2.10 Conflict of Interest:

Conflict of interests exists when a member has a personal interest that could interfere with her objectivity in performing official duties for the Council. The Council expects members to not use their position or knowledge gained through their positions with the Council, for private and/or personal gain or to act in such a manner that may be perceived to be conflict of interest. Members are not prohibited from taking membership of other business networking organisations but we expect that the Council's interest and IP will not be shared or discussed with any other networking organisation. We also respect the privacy and rights of other organisations and will not expect members to divulge information on other organisations.

3.2.11 Political Involvement:

The SACBW acknowledges the rights of members to participate in political processes and activities. Members may however not make any political statements, derogatory remarks or public comments on any of the official platforms of the SACBW. The SACBW retains the right to remove such comments and ask the official to vacate her position with immediate effect.

3.2.12 Using the SACBW to solicit payments, gifts or loans:

Members may not use their positions in the Organisation to solicit any form of favour, payment, gifts or loans from a member or other outside person/organisation associated with the Organisation. It is also prohibited to pay or receive any bribes or kickbacks in any way, and in any circumstances.

4.0 AVOID ACTION

- 4.1 Familiarise yourself with the Code of Ethics and the guidance it gives. This will guide your behaviours and decision-making and will alert you of potentially harming situations.
- 4.2 Familiarise yourself with other codes, rules, procedures, regulations, report and guidelines of the Council.





- 4.3 Be sensitive to situations that could lead to unethical or illegal behaviour and avoid such situations. Should you be unsure or need guidance, feel free to contact the National Executive Committee.
- 4.4 Do not tolerate unethical and criminal behaviour and report such behaviour to the National Executive Committee. Failure to do so may result in harm coming to the SACBW or you may deem to have been withholding information that may potentially damage the image of the Council.
- 4.5 Treat people with fairness, courtesy and sensitivity to their rights. Should you feel that there has been an infringement on your rights, please report this to the National Executive Committee.
- 4.6 Always remain honest and perform your duties with integrity, to the best of your ability and the good of the Council. Should any claims be brought against you, it will be investigated by an objective panel before any recommendations will be made.
- 4.7 Communicate openly and honestly and act with commitment to achieve a fair, transparent and a responsible end result. The Code of Ethics is a tool to support you in your role as a member.
- 4.8 Take responsibility and accept accountability for your actions and decisions. Should you be requested to vacate the position or if your membership is terminated, please accept the decision and leave in an amicable way.
- 4.9 Understand and keep up to date with South African laws as these relate to your activities when representing the Council. This will also help you to adhere to these guidelines.
- 4.10 Obtain authority for any public statement that may be interpreted as an official comment from the Council. Do not follow the news in the grapevine!
- 4.11 Make a personal commitment to act according to the Council's Code of Ethics, communicate this commitment to others and lead by example.
- 4.12 Take responsibility for the unethical conduct of other members and report it to ensure that serious or recurrent misconduct is dealt with appropriately. Do not tolerate any form of retribution against those who speak up.

5.0 RESOLVING ETHICAL PROBLEMS: STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Acting ethically often means being able to choose the correct decision or course of action when faced with a number of conflicting alternatives. Having to accept responsibility and accountability for decisions and being able to prove that these decisions were ethical is what makes ethical behaviour in the Organisation so critical.

In order to best resolve an ethical dilemma, it is best to break the problem down into its components by asking a number of ethical questions. Some of the generic questions are listed below (these will not always address the specifics of every situation). The step-by step approach is a guideline to help you through a work-related ethical problem:





5.1 Analyse the situation:

- How did it occur?
- What must be decided?
- Who can make the decision?
- What are the implications of the decision?
- What written codes, rules, procedures, regulations, policies, guidelines should be consulted?
- Who should be consulted?
- What are the ethical alternatives and the rationale for each?
- If any of the choices require that an ethical principle be compromised, evaluate the facts and assumptions carefully.
- Is there room for a compromise that should not violate the Organisation's standard of integrity?
- Would another National Executive Committee member agree with your ethical judgement?

5.2 Consider the Possible Outcomes

- Which outcome would be ethically preferable?
- Who could be hurt/who could be helped by the decision?
- To what extent could the persons affected be hurt or helped? What alternatives would be ethically permitted?
- Of the choices identified, which are the most effective in reducing harm: which are the most effective in producing help; which are the most aligned with the Organisation's standard integrity and values and which most strongly preserve the rights of those involved?

5.3 Ask the Following Questions:

- Would I be proud to tell my family and friends about my actions or have my actions be made public?
- If I were on the other side of the table, would I consider it fair?
- Would my actions be viewed proper by other National Executive Committee members?
- Will my decision still be seen correct a year, two, five years from now?
- Will my actions contravene a law?

6.0 CONTRAVENTION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

Non-adherence to this Code and guidelines or transgression thereof could be regarded as detrimental to the interests of the Organisation which constitutes misconduct which will result in disciplinary action being taken. In serious cases it could lead to the National Executive Committee members removal from the position and/or cancellation of membership.

