Whistleblower Policy

Version-02

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Approved by

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Executive Director
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1. Introduction

1.1. General Policy

icddr,b recognizes its duty to its stakeholders in ensuring efficient and effective use of the resources entrusted to icddr,b and in ensuring strict compliance with applicable legal and contractual obligations by incorporating an open, transparent and fair system that encourages and promotes integrity of all its stakeholders.

icddr,b requires employees, seconded scientists, guest investigators, students, consultants and vendors at all times to act honestly and with full integrity and comply with the Law, Code of Ethics and Professional Conduite (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Code’) and any applicable rules, regulations, policy or procedure.

Each individual has an obligation to report any noncompliance with the Law, Code and any applicable rule, regulation, policy or procedure, hereinafter collectively referred to as ‘Non Compliance Event(s)’.

To enable and encourage this reporting of non-compliance event(s) icddr,b wishes to provide an open and transparent process through the provision of this ‘Whistleblowers policy’ that protects an individual from risk or any subsequent retaliation.

The objective of the Whistleblowers Policy is to establish:

A. Principles that protect the individual(s) reporting the non-compliance event(s).
B. The provision of Definitions.
C. The provision of guidelines for reporting and escalating non-compliance event(s),
D. The roles and responsibilities of each individual involved in the process.

2. Principles of this Policy

2.1. Protecting the Whistleblower

The Whistleblowers policy provides an open, fair and transparent process to encourage individuals to raise non-compliance event(s) within icddr,b for investigation and appropriate action where necessary.

2.2. No Retaliation

With this goal in mind, no person, who in good faith, reports a non-compliance event shall be subject to retaliation or in the case of an employee, adverse employment consequences.

In addition any individual who retaliates against another individual who has reported a non-compliance event in good faith will be subject to Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

2.3. Confidentiality

Reports of non-compliance event(s) and investigations following thereafter shall be kept confidential to the extent possible consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. Disclosure of reports or details of investigations of non-compliance event(s) to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious offence and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

2.4. Acting in Good Faith

Any individual reporting non-compliance event(s) must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates noncompliance with the Law, Code and any applicable rule,
regulation, policy or procedure. The act of making a allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated or made maliciously, recklessly or with the knowledge that the allegations are false will viewed as a serious offence and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

2.5. Co-operation with Investigations
All employees, seconded scientists, guest investigators, students, consultants and vendor will co-operate with investigations and provide the required information under this policy.

2.6. Anonymous reports
For this Policy to apply, the report must be made in person, or by official email, or by using the integrity helpline, or in any such manner from which the recipient can identify the Whistleblower. Any anonymous report will not be investigated.

However, in line with icddr,b’s commitment to protect the privacy of its employees, the identified Whistleblower, in communicating the alleged matter to the authorised person, may request for ‘anonymity’. icddr,b is committed to use its best effort to the greatest extent possible to protect the privacy of such Whistleblower during the initial assessment stage. The Whistleblower should however be advised that if the matter results into an investigation and if the matter alleged is of such nature where the investigation may require the testimony of the Whistleblower, then his/ her anonymity may no longer be maintained. If the matter, despite best effort, cannot be resolved without revealing the Whistleblower’s identity, icddr,b will first discuss with the Whistleblower regarding whether and how to proceed.

3. Scope and applicability
The Whistleblower Policy applies to all icddr,b staff members, employees, seconded scientists, guest investigators, students, consultants and vendors as well as any other representatives from outside agencies who wish to report non-compliance event(s)

4. Definitions
4.1. Non-Compliance Event
A breach or failure to implement or comply with law, icddr,b Code of Conduct, policy, procedure, rule, regulation or established standards of practice. Non-compliance event(s) may be mismanagement or misconduct and may have occurred or be likely to occur.

4.2. Conflict of Interest
Any situation in which a Board or Staff member has the opportunity or appears to have the opportunity to influence icddr,b’s decisions or use resources or confidential or proprietary information of icddr,b in ways that could lead to professional, personal or financial gain, or otherwise give improper advantage to the Board or Staff member or institutions in which he or she holds official positions or prohibited or significant financial interests.

4.3. Fraud
The use of deception with the intention of obtaining an advantage, avoiding an obligation or causing loss to another party. Fraud can be used to describe such acts as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, corruption, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion. Fraud normally causes wrongful gain to self and or others and or wrongful loss to others.
4.4. Scientific Misconduct

The fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations of judgment or data.

4.5. Plagiarism

The theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work. The theft or misappropriation of the intellectual property includes unauthorized use of ideas or unique methods obtained by a privileged communication such as a grant or manuscript.

4.6. Examples of Non-Compliance Event(s)

Based on the above definitions, individual(s) are expected and encouraged to report any of the following:

- Failure to implement or comply with icddr,b's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, rules, procedures, policies or established standards of practice
- Conflict of interest
- Fraudulent activity
- Scientific misconduct
- Plagiarism
- Financial impropriety
- Conduct which is potentially unethical, immoral or inconsistent with the standards to which icddr,b subscribes
- Conduct which is or will result in a waste of icddr,b’s resources or intentional misuse of such resources
- Conduct which poses a risk to icddr,b’s reputation or integrity
- Conduct likely to cause harm or damages to persons or property involved with icddr,b
- Discrimination in the course of employment or in the provision of service
- Unauthorized interruption of work
- Unauthorized association contrary to the interests of icddr,b
- Adverse publicity, inappropriate communication with the media or making public statements in the social platforms contrary to the interests of icddr,b
- Insubordination of management decisions
- Racial, ethnical religious or gender discrimination
- Abuse or harassment, including physical or sexual harassment
- Aiding, abetting, soliciting, procuring or concealing of any of the above acts or omissions
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information belonging to icddr,b
- Misuse of icddr,b communication systems including telephone, electronic or paper based
- Carrying, trading or consuming illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages whilst on icddr,b premises
- Carrying of fire arms or other weapon on icddr,b premises
- Unauthorized removal of property or equipment from icddr,b premises
- Gambling, betting or other lotteries on icddr,b property

Note: this list is non-exhaustive
5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Whistleblower

5.1.1. At any time an individual may have a confidential discussion regarding a non-compliance event(s) or possible misconduct with the Executive Director or Chief Operating Officer or Director, Human Resource Management (hereinafter HRM) or the Head, HRM and will be counseled about appropriate procedures for reporting their Concern(s).

5.1.2. The Whistleblower will be entitled to the following
- The ability to provide information to the investigators
- To request icddr,b for attendance of any witness with supporting knowledge
- To review portions of the investigation pertinent to his/her allegations or testimony
- To be informed of the results of the investigation
- To be protected from retaliation
- To be provided with the confidentiality to the extent possible with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

5.1.3. Reporting an Event
An individual who wishes to report a non-compliance event(s) should use any of the following channels to report same. The report may be provided verbally or in writing. It must be noted that further information may be required in writing. Assistance will be provided in documenting the non-compliance if this is required.

- 24 Hour Integrity Hotline (when implemented)
  - This hot line will be accessed daily by the Head, HRM or designee.
- Their immediate supervisor
- Director of Internal Audits
- Any Centre or Service Director
- Any Manager in HR
- Chief Operating Officer
- Executive Director

5.2. Recipients of a Non Compliance event
Any individual either listed above or other who has been provided with a Non Compliance Event by an individual must report the details of that event, in writing, to the Head, HRM within 24 hours of receipt.

If, however, the report of the Non Compliance Event is against the Head, HRM, then any individual either listed above or other who has been provided with a Non Compliance Event by an individual must report the details of such event, in writing, to the Director, HRM within 24 hours of receipt; and the presupposed roles and responsibilities of the Head, HRM, as depicted below by this policy, with respect to dealing with Whistleblowers shall then be carried out by the Director, HRM along with his/her any other relevant additional responsibilities in this regard.

5.3. Head, Human Resource Management

The Head, HRM is responsible for ensuring that all reports of Non-compliance Event(s) are investigated and
Whistleblower Policy

October 2015

resolved within 60 calendar days. All out measures must therefore be taken for ensuring strict adherence to the 60 days’ timeline, so that compliance can be achieved with the complying with the existing and conventional labour laws of Bangladesh. If the Head, HRM, however, apprehends that it may not be possible to complete the investigation and resolution of the reports of Non-compliance Event(s), then the Head, HRM shall report such matter to the Executive Director and request for necessary legal consultation.

The Head, HRM be responsible for ensuring a comprehensive, fair and objective investigation is completed. This includes:

- Appointment of the appropriate investigation and remediation resources. These may include internal and and/or external expertise.
- Providing a governance process to complete a comprehensive investigation and provision of any required follow up actions.
- Apprising the Whistleblower of the outcome of the investigation and providing due recognition or sanction, as the case may be, to the said Whistleblower. [If the Investigation Team finds the allegation(s), in its Final Investigation Report, to be proven against the accused staff member, the Whistleblower will be met by the Head, HRM; and due recognition would then be offered to the Whistleblower with regard to his/her proactiveness. However, if the allegation(s) is/are found to be unsubstantiated or made maliciously, recklessly or with the knowledge that the allegation(s) is/are false, the whistleblower may be perceived as having committed a serious offence and as such, he or she may face disciplinary actions which may even result in his or her dismissal.]

5.3.1. Reference Policies

The following polices should be referenced when conducting an investigation into a noncompliance event.

Appendix 1: Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
Appendix 2: Whistleblower Policy (HR)
Appendix 3: Fraud Policy (Finance)
Appendix 4: Conflict of Interest Policy (HR)
Appendix 5: Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct (Centre's of Research)
Appendix 6: Disciplinary Policy (HR)
Appendix 7: Policy on Sexual Harassment (HR)
Appendix 8: Employees’ Code of Conduct (HR)
Appendix 9: Media Relations Policy (Communications Department)
Appendix 10: Gender Policy (HR)