

SOF Ethics and Transparency Policy

Preamble

Shifting Orbits Foundation (SOF) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and transparency in all our operations. These principles guide our interactions with beneficiaries, donors, partners, employees, volunteers, and the wider community. This policy outlines our ethical commitments and our approach to ensuring accountability and openness.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals/organisations associated with SOF in any way, hereinafter referred to as SOF Associates, categorised as follows:

1. SOF Staff and Consultants would be all those who have an employment/consultancy contract with the SOF .
2. SOF Volunteers who volunteer their time and contribute to the mission and objectives of the SOF on a volunteer basis and without any financial benefit.
3. SOF Partner staff refers to any paid or unpaid individuals who have committed to or support the SOF in its programs or initiatives. It includes visitors, consultants, interns, sponsors, donors, all staff/consultants of partner organisations or local government bodies, and any other individual or organization working within a Partnership Agreement/contract with SOF.

How to read this policy document

In the following section, all mandatory requirements as well as suggested guidelines of **each area of Ethics and Transparency** have been listed. It is recommended that wherever possible, ALL the points mentioned are abided by to ensure maximum compliance. The section will also specify the procedure/approvals required for any exceptional conditions. All SOF Associate specifically contractors/partners may be provided with relevant text in their contract so that they are aware of our policy and agree to work under its purview.

2. Core Ethical Principles

- **Integrity:** We operate with honesty, fairness, and respect in all our activities. We uphold the trust placed in us by our stakeholders.
 - **Respect & Inclusion:** We treat all individuals with dignity, regardless of their background, gender, religion, or socio-economic status.
 - **Accountability:** We take responsibility for our actions and their impact on the communities we serve.
 - **Confidentiality:** We respect the privacy of our beneficiaries, partners, and team members and handle sensitive information responsibly.
 - **Non-Discrimination:** We provide equal opportunities in employment, volunteering, and program participation, ensuring no discrimination based on race, caste, gender, disability, or any other factor.
 - **Sustainability:** We commit to responsible use of resources, ensuring that our programs have a lasting and positive impact.
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3. Financial Transparency

- **Responsible Fund Management:** All donations and funding received are utilized strictly for the intended purposes, ensuring maximum impact.
 - **Audited Financials:** SOF maintains accurate financial records, undergoes annual audits, and publishes financial reports for public access.
 - **Donor Accountability:** We communicate openly with our donors regarding fund utilization and program effectiveness.
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4. Governance & Decision-Making

- **Board Oversight:** Our Board of Directors ensures adherence to ethical standards and organizational accountability.
 - **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Board members, staff, and volunteers must disclose and avoid any conflict of interest in financial or programmatic decisions.
 - **Whistleblower Protection:** We encourage reporting of unethical practices and provide protection for whistleblowers.
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5. Program & Beneficiary Ethics

- **Informed Consent:** We seek consent from beneficiaries before collecting or using their data.
 - **Child Protection:** SOF enforces strict child safety policies to prevent abuse, exploitation, or harm.
 - **Impact Measurement:** We regularly evaluate program effectiveness with honesty and transparency, ensuring alignment with our mission.
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6. Volunteer & Employee Conduct

- **Code of Conduct:** Volunteers and employees must adhere to ethical behavior, respect community norms, and uphold our mission.
 - **Fair Workplace:** We foster an environment free from harassment, discrimination, or exploitation.
 - **Grievance Redressal:** We have mechanisms to address complaints fairly and promptly.
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7. Public Communication & Advocacy

- **Honest Representation:** We ensure all public messaging accurately reflects our work, impact, and goals.
 - **Data Transparency:** We provide truthful reports, avoiding exaggeration or misrepresentation of impact.
 - **Responsible Social Media Use:** Employees and volunteers must follow ethical guidelines when representing SOF online.
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8. Review & Compliance

- This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with best practices and legal requirements.
 - Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary actions, including termination of association with SOF.
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For any concerns or queries or complaints related to ethics and transparency or workplace issues, please contact hr@shiftingorbits.org immediately or reach out to CEO - shariharan@shiftingorbits.org t +91 968 657 7038.

At SOF, we believe that ethical governance and transparency are the foundation of trust. This policy is a commitment to our stakeholders and the communities we serve.