Conflicts of Interest Policy

Policy Owner	Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board
Approved By	ARNECH Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board
Effective Date	2021
Next Review Date	January 2027
Version	3.0
Applies To	All ARNECH staff, consultants, subcontractors, and field teams
Last Updated	January 2025

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how ARNECH identifies, declares, and manages actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that could compromise the independence or integrity of a research or consulting engagement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all ARNECH staff, Advisory Board members, and consultants involved in the design, delivery, or governance of ARNECH engagements, including participation in procurement, hiring, or evaluation decisions.

3. Policy Statement

A conflict of interest arises where a person's personal, financial, or other interests could improperly influence, or appear to influence, their judgement or actions on behalf of ARNECH. Examples include:

- A financial interest in a client, supplier, or competing organisation
- A close personal or family relationship with someone involved in a procurement, hiring, or evaluation decision
- Simultaneous engagement with an organisation whose interests may conflict with ARNECH's or a client's

All personnel are required to declare any such interest as soon as it arises or becomes foreseeable.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Individuals are responsible for identifying and declaring their own conflicts of interest promptly and in writing.
- The Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board maintains a conflicts of interest register and determines appropriate management measures.
- Unit Heads are responsible for reassigning tasks or decisions where a declared conflict affects their team's work.

5. Procedures

- Declarations are made in writing to the Advisory Board using ARNECH's conflict of interest declaration form.
- The Advisory Board assesses each declaration and determines whether the conflict requires recusal, independent review, disclosure to the affected client or funder, or no further action.
- The conflicts of interest register is reviewed annually and updated as new declarations arise.
- Failure to declare a known conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action.

6. Reporting Concerns and Breaches

Where an individual is unsure whether a situation constitutes a conflict of interest, they should raise it with their Unit Head or the Advisory Board for guidance. Concerns about an undeclared conflict may also be raised through the whistleblowing procedure.

7. Training and Awareness

Guidance on identifying and declaring conflicts of interest is provided at induction and reinforced ahead of procurement, hiring, or evaluation exercises where conflicts are more likely to arise.

8. Related Standards and References

This policy is aligned with the following external standards and frameworks:

OECD Guidelines for Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service — https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/policy-issues/conflict-of-interest.html

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed by the Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board at least every two years, or sooner where changes in law, donor requirements, or organisational practice require it. Comments and proposed amendments may be submitted to the Policy Owner at any time.

Registration certificates, financial statements, and full policy documentation are available on request for prospective partners, clients, and funders as part of due diligence.