



Code of Conduct

Approved by the Coordinating Committee – September 2008

Preamble

The Halifax Initiative (HI) recognizes that transparency and accountability are essential elements of sound institutional governance. Accordingly, the Halifax Initiative will comply with the principles of this Code of Conduct in all of its activities and operations.

The Code of Conduct, and the organization's compliance with the Code, will be reviewed every two years. Halifax Initiative staff will prepare an assessment for review by the Coordinating Committee.

Revisions will be made to the Code as deemed necessary.

1.0 Organizational Integrity

- 1.1 HI is politically and financially independent. Its governance, programs and policies are non-partisan, independent of specific governments, political parties and the business sector.

HI lists all sources of funding on its web site.

As part of Tides Canada Initiatives, HI reports quarterly on all advocacy activities to ensure that it complies with requirements regarding charitable status.

- 1.2 HI shall ensure that allegations made by a coalition member, employee, volunteer or member of the Coordinating Committee of misconduct or other irregularities on the part of anyone associated with HI are dealt with impartially, respecting the rights of the involved parties for confidentiality and disclosure.

The Halifax Initiative Personnel Policy establishes a procedure for addressing such allegations.

- 1.3 HI shall ensure that its activities are consistent with its stated mission, objectives and public policy positions.

2.0 Governance

- 2.1 HI has an independent, active and informed Coordinating Committee that serves without compensation.

The Halifax Initiative Coordinating Committee Terms of Reference address such issues as Committee responsibilities, member selection, meetings, quorum and decision-making procedure.

- 2.2 The Coordinating Committee shall govern fairly, impartially and responsibly.

Coordinating Committee members understand their responsibilities and liabilities as members of the Coordinating Committee. Members make independent decisions and do not “rubber stamp” the recommendations of staff or non-committee members. Coordinating Committee members are not indebted, financially or otherwise, to any paid staff. The Coordinating Committee represents a diversity of constituencies and viewpoints.

- 2.3 The Coordinating Committee determines HI policies and programs, and is responsible for the management of coalition finances.

The Halifax Initiative Coordinating Committee Terms of Reference establishes the Coordinating Committee’s roles and responsibilities.

- 2.4 Coalition members are consulted on new policies and are encouraged to provide input.

The Halifax Initiative Coordinating Committee Terms of Reference establishes a process by which members are consulted on new policies.

- 2.5 The Halifax Initiative prohibits direct and indirect conflicts of interest by members of the Coordinating Committee, employees and volunteers.

The Halifax Initiative Conflict of Interest Policy establishes guidelines and procedure for addressing conflict of interest.

3.0 Transparency

- 3.1 HI is committed to full, open and accurate disclosure of relevant information concerning its goals, programs, finances and governance.

The Halifax Initiative discloses a list of all grants received by the coalition on its web site, as well as planning documents outlining the coalition’s goals.

Information regarding the principal decisions taken by the Coordinating Committee is available to the general public upon request.

Tides Canada Initiatives, which has full governing, legal, and fiduciary responsibility for the Halifax Initiative, discloses annual audited financial statements on its web site. The Halifax Initiative also has its own unaudited balance sheet and income statement specific to our operations and produced on an annual basis. This is available on request.

- 3.2 The activities of HI shall, upon request, be open and accessible to scrutiny by its donors, except for personnel matters, legal matters and propriety information, including anything specified by provincial or federal laws.

For example, HI maintains approved minutes for all Coordinating Committee discussions and decisions.

4.0 Finances

- 4.1 Tides Canada Initiatives, which has full governing, legal, and fiduciary responsibility for the Halifax Initiative, shall have an annual audited financial statement conducted by a qualified, independent accountant. The audited financial statement shall comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Requirements according to the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Tides Canada Initiatives discloses its annual audited financial statements on its web site. The Halifax Initiative also has its own unaudited balance sheet and income statement specific to our operations and produced on an annual basis. This is available on request.

- 4.2 HI shall operate a budget approved by the Coordinating Committee. It shall account for funds from the moment they are received or committed until they are spent. HI exercises internal controls over disbursements to avoid unauthorized payments. HI shall not have any funds that are not accounted for and it shall prohibit any unaudited transactions or loans to members or staff.

HI maintains copies of all cheques requisitioned by the organization. Tides Canada Initiatives keeps detailed records of HI finances.

- 4.3 HI shall ensure that funding is used for the purposes for which it is given.

HI provides annual financial and narrative reports to its funders.

5.0 Communications

- 5.1 HI communications to the public shall accurately describe its identity, purpose, programs and positions.

HI posts all official communications to government officials and all published materials on our web site

- 5.2 HI shall be responsible in its public criticisms of individuals and organizations, ensuring that such criticism amounts to “fair public comment.”

Staff are aware of what constitutes “fair public comment.”

6.0 Privacy

- 6.1 When the Halifax Initiative is in receipt of personal information from a member of the public, as occurs, for example, with subscriptions to our newsletter, with participant registration for HI events and with donations made on our website, the Halifax Initiative shall not disclose or disseminate such information without the person's explicit consent.

7.0 Management Practice and Human Resources

- 7.1 HI guarantees the rights and fair treatment of all employees.

HI has a written personnel policy that clearly defines and protects the rights of employees, ensuring fair treatment in all matters. Employee benefits are clearly described and communicated.

- 7.2 HI makes financial arrangements to protect its ability to honour its obligations to employees.

At all times HI ensures that it has sufficient cash flow to cover staff wages and benefits for a period of two months.

- 7.3 HI clearly defines and communicates its expectations of its employees.

All employees sign an annual contract with Tides Canada Initiatives that outlines the employer/employee relationship. The contract includes a copy of the terms of reference for each position.

- 7.4 The HI personnel policy includes procedures for evaluating the performance of all staff on a regular basis.

A work review and staff evaluation is conducted on an annual basis in accordance with the HI Personnel Policy.

8.0 Conflict of Interest

- 8.1 HI promotes institutional decision-making that is free of influence from interests that conflict with those of the coalition.

HI staff and members of the Coordinating Committee comply with the Halifax Initiative conflict of interest policy.