

How to identify, manage and prevent conflict of interest for public officials

24 September 2025

Public Integrity Workshop

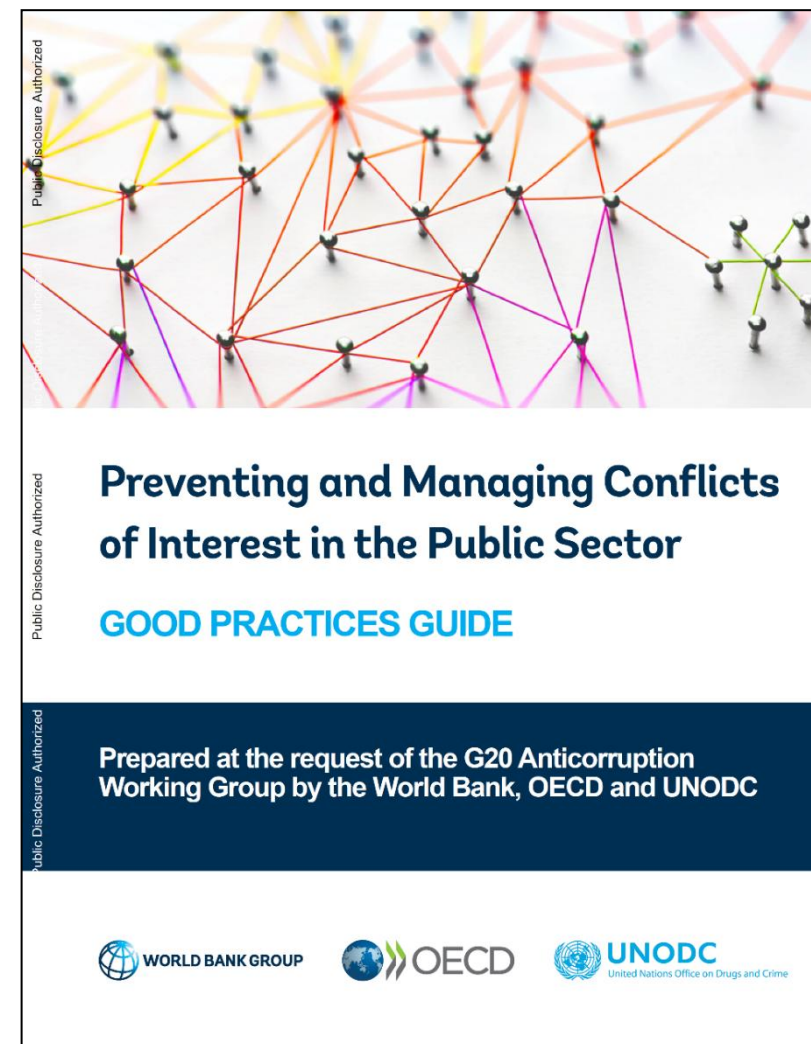
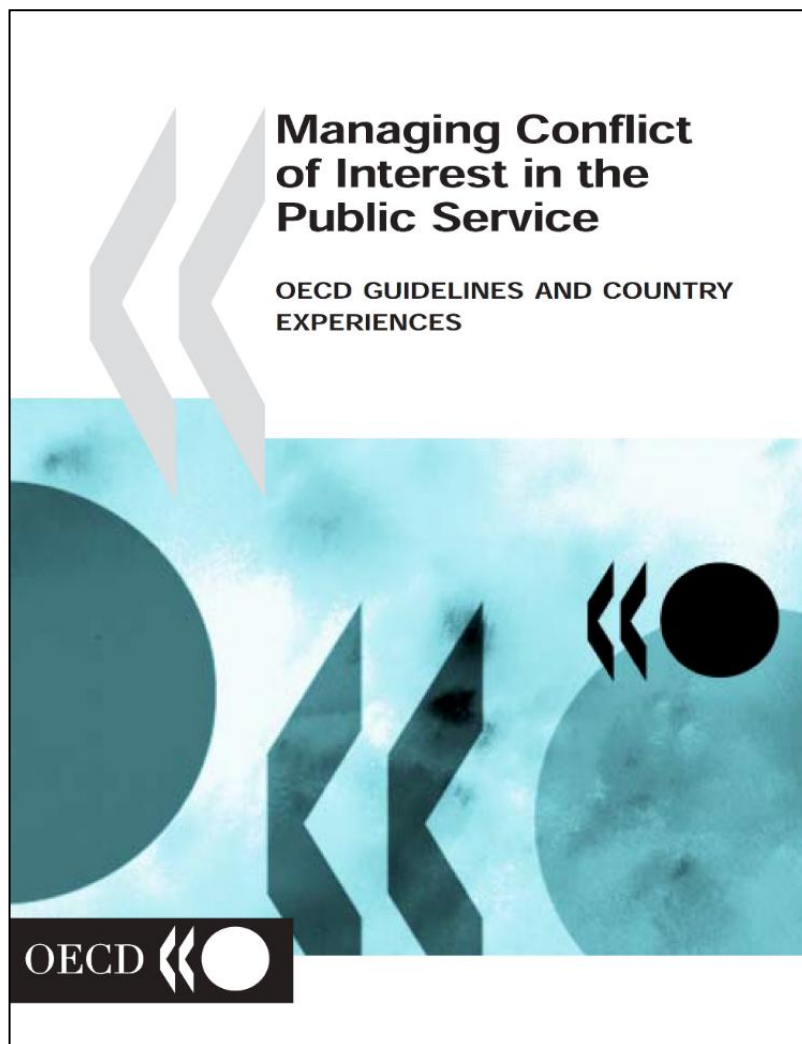
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Is it corruption if...

Anna is a municipal procurement officer and is responsible for evaluating bids for a large infrastructure project. One of the companies bidding has recently approached her about the possibility of a well-paid private sector job after her public service contract ends. Anna has not accepted the job, but she continues to participate in evaluating that company's bid.



<https://precoro.com/blog/skills-for-procurement-manager/>

Is this already corruption?



Important to note...



A conflict of interest is **not corruption**, it is **an integrity risk** that must be handled in a transparent manner – to ensure the integrity of the process and to protect the official him/herself.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST ≠ CORRUPTION

REAL

- > involves a conflict between the **public duty** and **private interests** of a public servant.

POTENTIAL

- > arises when a public servant has private interests that **may lead to a conflict if, in the future**, the public servant is involved in certain relevant official activities involving the exercise of responsibilities.

APPARENT / PERCEIVED

- > exists when it appears that a public servant's private interests **might inappropriately influence** the performance of his or her duties, **even if this is not the case**.



Private interests may include, but are not limited to...

Financial, monetary or material interests

(as ownership of businesses, beneficial interests in trusts or other properties, ownership of real properties, etc.)

Belonging to an association or group of people

Personal affiliations and associations, family interests

Additional employment

Engagement in private activities

(e.g. sitting on a board of directors of a non-profit entity, etc.)

Employment before or after public employment and the relationships established in the context of such work experiences

Also consider...

- Gifts / benefits / hospitality
- Insider information

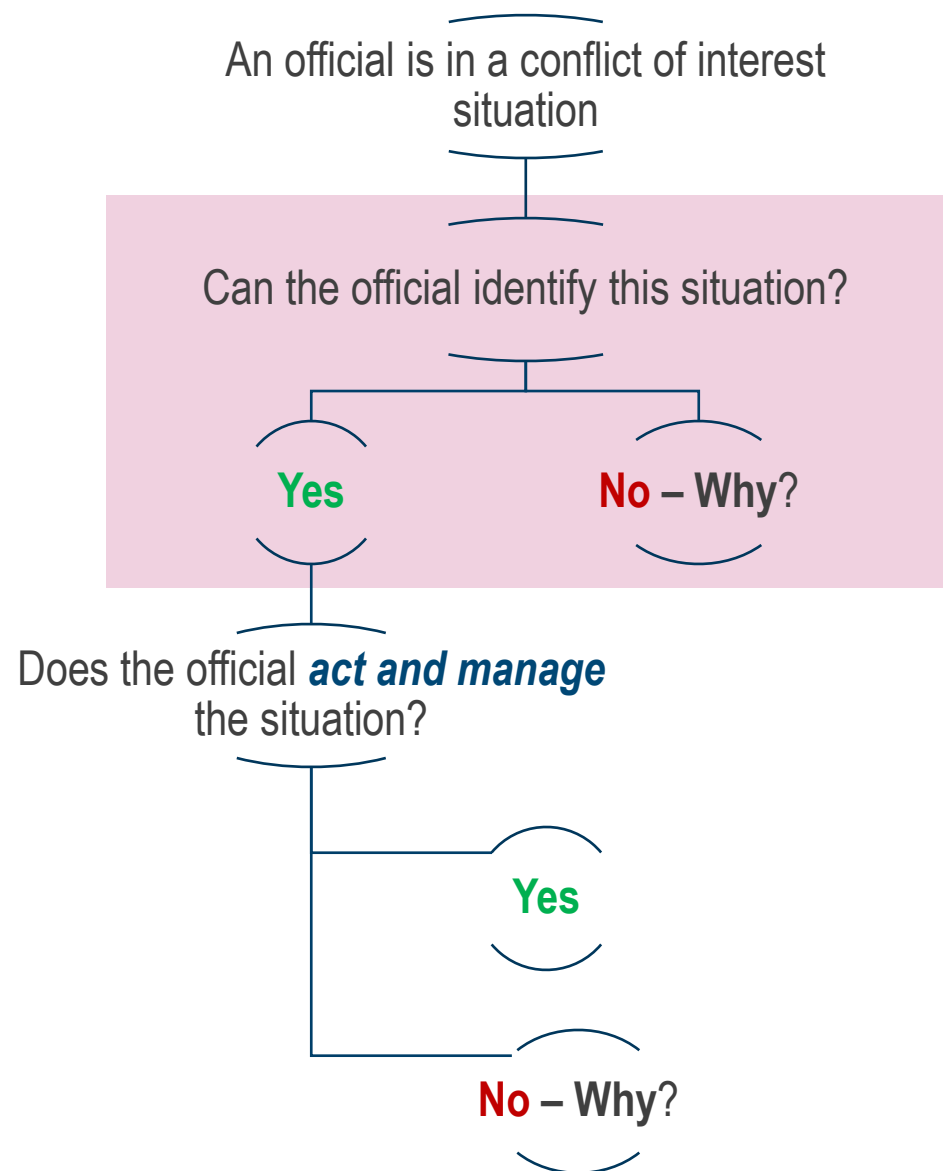


Managing conflicts of interest from the perspective of the individual

What can go wrong?

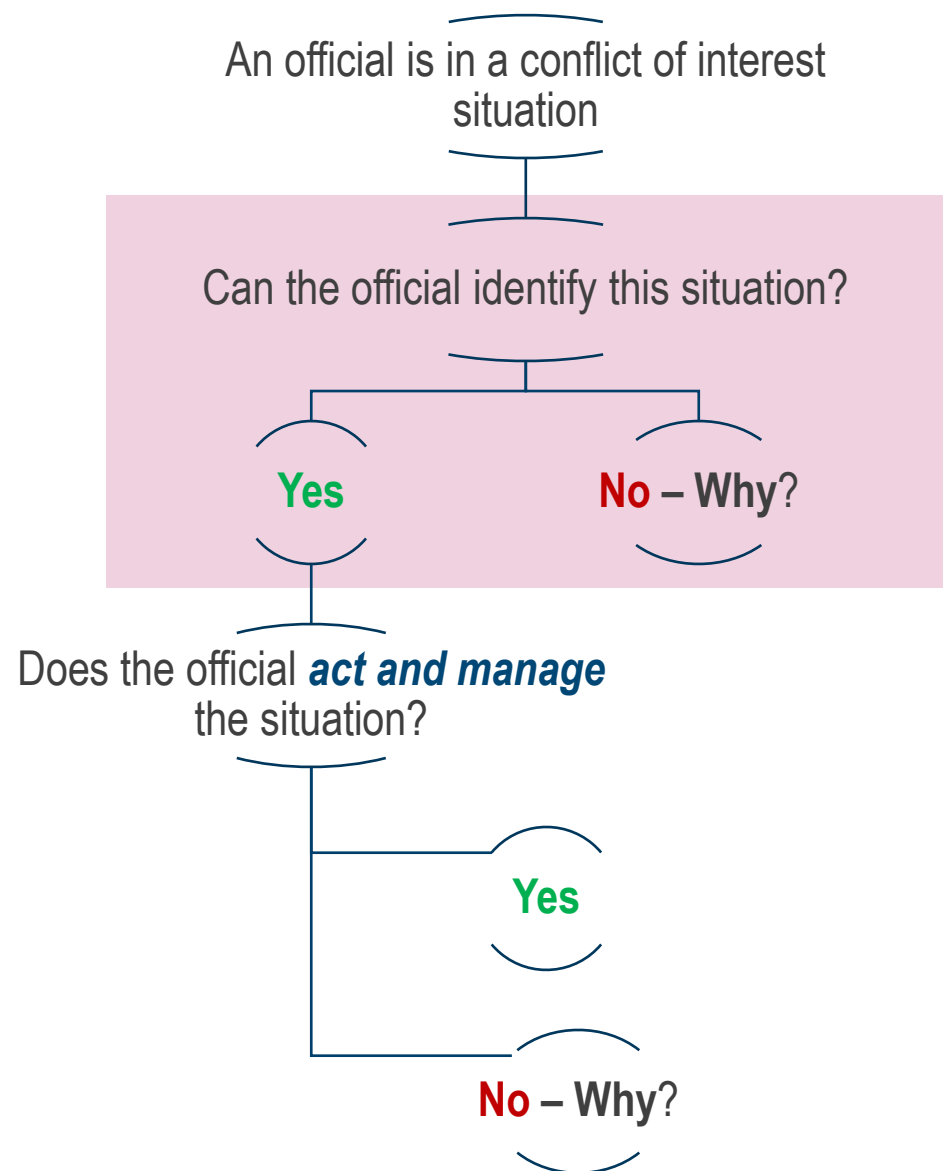
1. The official does not identify the situation

- does not understand the concepts of risk or conflict of interest, or confuses it with influence peddling/corruption;
- does not understand that he/she is being placed in a situation of conflict of interest on purpose through gifts or invitations without quid pro quo.





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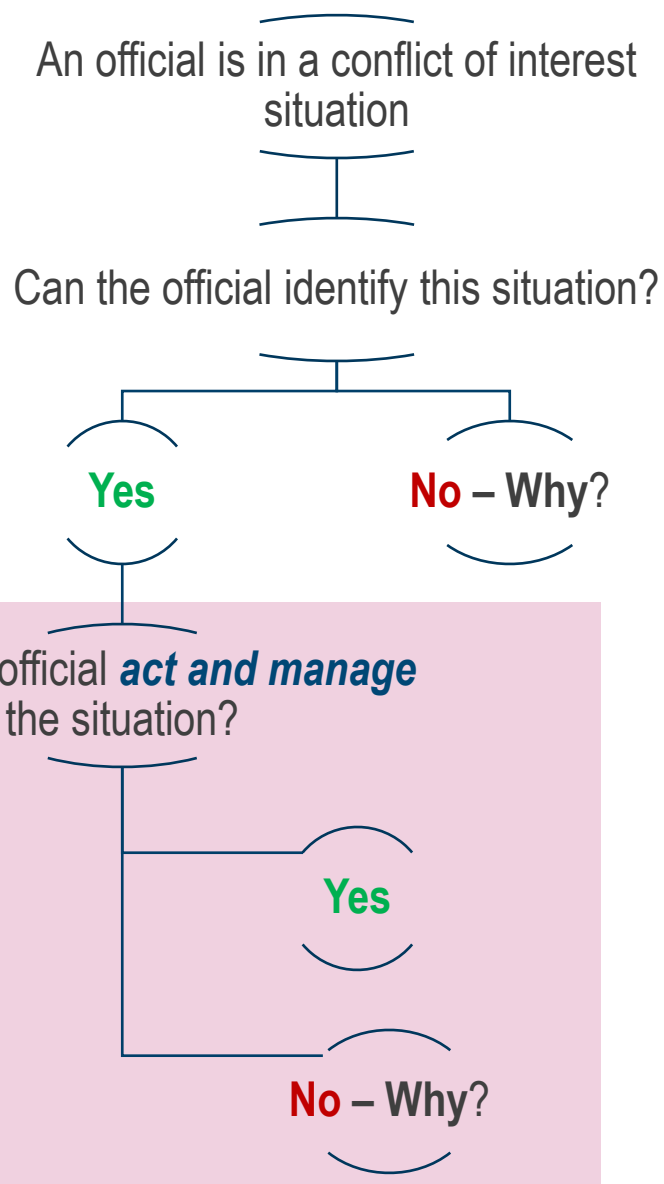
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2. Knows, but does not want to declare the situation

- **wants to take advantage of the situation**
- acting requires too much work



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2. Knows, but does not want to declare the situation

- **wants to take advantage of the situation**
- acting requires too much work

3. Knows, but does not manage the situation well

- does not recognise/denies the risk (to self, to public trust)
- acknowledges the risk, but overestimates its ability to remain impartial (cognitive bias or reciprocity relations)
- acknowledges the risk, but is afraid to talk about it (confuses it with corruption or has no one to talk to in confidence)



Managing conflicts of interest is not a strictly legal issue...

How would this look if it appeared on the front page of the newspaper?

What would happen if everybody did this?

How would I like it if someone did this to me?





Focus: private interest

- Declare
- Divest
- Resign
- Waive
- Remove control over the interest

Focus: public official

- Recusal
- Reassignment
- Voluntary resignation or involuntary termination from public position

- ✓ Leaders
- ✓ Dedicated and professionalised individuals or units
- ✓ Clear separation between help/advise and detection/sanctions (safe harbour!)



Thank you!

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