

## **Samarth In Participatory Action Society (SIPA)**

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### **Introduction: About SIPA**

Samarth in Participatory Action (SIPA) is promoted by SIPA –Centre for Development Support for implementation of Projects. SIPA is a leading non-profit organization with significant presence in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. With a belief that a strong civil society is key to socioeconomic development, SIPA started out in the year 1995 as a support organization building capacities and networks of voluntary organizations working at the grassroots.

### **Purpose of Employee Handbook**

This manual is meant to provide a useful guide for SIPA managers and employees in developing a clear and comprehensive approach to Human Resource Management in the NGO. It outlines the suggested processes and procedures with regard to Human Resource Management (HRM) and is meant to communicate all the employment and working conditions to staff. The Guide provides employees with a set of common and easily understood organizational policies and related procedures.

It is our hope that this HRM Guide becomes a user-friendly document available to all staff. Your comments are therefore appreciated in this regard so that we may collectively accomplish this aim.

The Guide is the most important set of operating guidelines for all supervisors and managers and should therefore be the most used reference document in the workplace. Hence every supervisor and manager should have a copy and be on the distribution list for all revisions.

This Guide must be read in conjunction with SIPA's HRM Manual which provides more detailed explanations and descriptions of the various aspects of human resource management. Reference should also be made to SIPA's Training Manual which provides detailed outlines of best practices for such HRM processes during Interviewing, conducting employee appraisals, etc.

### **1.3 SIPA Management Structure**

Board Members are as the overall decision-making body, SIPA is headed by the Chief Operating Officer. The professionals (staff) looking after programmes, administration and finance are drawn from various reputed institutions as well as constituting committed youth emerging from the grassroots as community leaders in our intervened areas. Such hiring practice enables the organisation to maintain balance between extensive experience and updated skills. Research, training, capacity building and advocacy pertaining to various sectors such as Education, Health, Governance, Participatory Planning, and so on are the work areas.

## **SIPA Vision, Mission and Aims**

### **SIPA Vision**

Establish a society where every human lives with dignity and participates in developing a sustainable global socio-economic and climatic environment

### **SIPA Mission**

Establish exemplars of participatory development and governance to widely spread different ways of human development and sustainable environment

### **1.4.3 SIPA Strategic Aims**

- To Aware and Strengthen Citizens and representatives in Rural and Urban local bodies by imparting information through various means about legal provisions and strengthening of Participatory Self governance by implementing decentralized provisions.
- To implement programmes for self sustaining as per the Government policy with Poor, dalits, people of vulnerable sector, Women and youth by forming groups .
- Overall development of vulnerable sector by improving their Livelihood, Health, Education, Sanitation and Environment.
- Capacity Building & Sensitization of volunteer organizations in the Gender equality and other developmental issues.
- To carry out research and documentation on the policies, development issues and extension of information and findings.
- To implement such programmes which save the rights and overall development of marginalised community.

## **Employment**

### **Statement**

SIPA is committed to creating an ambience in which all employees can work together in an atmosphere where diversity is valued. In accordance with the general intention of its vision, SIPA confirms its commitment to a comprehensive policy of valuing diversity in employment in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and are given equal opportunities within the workplace. It is SIPA's policy as an employer to treat all people equally irrespective of sex, age, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Minority Class, Other Backward Class, religion, colour, race, ethnic origin, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, creed, mental or physical disability, political belief, national origin, HIV/AIDS status, or any other reason. The aim is to ensure that no job applicant or employee should receive less favourable treatment on any grounds not relevant to good employment practice.

SIPA is more effective in achieving the vision with employees who understand and respect the values of the communities they work with. SIPA is also more effective in its mission by clearly demonstrating a commitment to equality, justice and human rights within the organisation. Capable employees that reflect the diversity of the communities they work with are more able to understand and respect community values. Their inclusion within SIPA serves as a very practical example for promoting equity for others to follow.

## **Principles**

The following principles underpin SIPA's policy on diversity:

- It is common practice to include diversity targets and budget allocation, where required, in all programme plans i.e. to specify the diversity profile of employees to be recruited and anticipate any costs associated with this activity such as transport or making reasonable adjustments.
- Every employee is treated with respect and given the opportunity to reach their full potential to the benefit of SIPA and themselves.
- A person's diversity characteristics alone are not sufficient to make them a suitable candidate. They must also have a minimum level of capability, for example, we are looking for people who can empathize and relate to the people in the communities we work in.

## **Dignity at Work: Harassment**

All employees, including other persons who have dealings with SIPA, have the right to be treated with dignity. We expect that employees act responsibly to establish and maintain a pleasant working environment free of discrimination, bullying, intimidation or victimization. In particular discrimination is unlawful in the workplace. Distributing unauthorized e-mails in any form is a waste of time and resources and in some circumstances could be construed as harassment and will be dealt with as such.

Any employee who is found, after investigation of the facts, to have engaged in harassment or discrimination of any kind will be subjected to appropriate action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure on the basis of gross misconduct.

SIPA recognizes the subjectivity of harassment. If any employee is subjected to discrimination or harassment then initially they should attempt to resolve the problem informally by explaining clearly to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behavior is not welcome, that it offends them and interferes with their work or in the case of discrimination that the behavior is or may be illegal.

If an employee would find this too difficult or embarrassing, then they should seek confidential support from the Management Committee. All allegations will be dealt with as soon as possible and confidentially with a view to protect the employee from victimization.

## **Valuing Diversity: Affirmative Action Policy & Targets**

SIPA is committed to a programme of action to make the diversity policy fully effective. The commitment is made to ensure that all SIPA employees work in an environment free from discrimination, unsolicited or harassment. Furthermore, to achieve equal opportunity, SIPA recognises the need to take affirmative action to identify classifications with under representation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Minorities, females, people living with HIV/AIDS, and the disabled; to set goals and timetables for increasing the employment of underrepresented groups, and to develop an affirmative action plan for implementing those reasonable goals through recruitment, training, and other special activities and commitments.

### **Processes to support diversity Proactive identification of potential candidates**

- Appointing persons are responsible for proactively identifying potential candidates to meet diversity targets.
- Appointing persons should actively identify people who they have identified as having potential and the diversity characteristics likely to be required for future programmes.

### **Programme planning and reporting**

- Diversity targets should be specified, monitored and reported against throughout the programme planning process i.e. from SIPA assessment and writing the project proposal through to specifying budget.
- The Chief Co-ordinator is responsible for approving programme proposals including the diversity targets specified.
- Programme reviews should routinely report on recruited diversity versus target and qualitative outcomes that result from hiring people from minority groups.
- The organisation will routinely and transparently report its diversity profile.

### **Recruitment and selection**

- It is the appointing person's responsibility to proactively seek out candidates to meet diversity targets.
- Recruitment criteria should be carefully defined to ensure that wherever possible the candidate pool can include as wide a range of people as possible. This can be done by:
  - Removing unnecessary experience criteria that can be easily trained on-the-job.
  - Including motivation and attitude criteria as a key indicator of future success.
  - Focusing on core, transferable skills rather than experience.
- Recruitment advertisements should explicitly state the organisation's positive approach towards employing people from minority groups and the flexibility that it can offer to attract diverse talent, such as our willingness to consider:
  - Flexible working patterns.
  - Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace.
- The appointing person is responsible for scoping out the impact of including flexibility in the role and getting approval from the Chief Coordinator before any formal offer of employment is made.

## Individual behaviour

Respect for diversity is a core value of the organization and as such, all employees are expected to behave in a way that is concordant with it.

- It is each individual's responsibility to uphold SIPA's reputation with regard to diversity and challenge any behavior they feel is discriminatory.
- Any formal complaints should be made firstly to the Management Committee and may be referred to the Governing Body if further action is required.

## 2.4 Recruitment

As indicated above SIPA values diversity at work and applies an affirmative action policy. However, it is recognised that there are barriers to recruitment of minority groups. SIPA has processes and procedures to maximise the accessibility of employment and promote equal opportunities, for example, recruitment criteria and processes that allow the broadest range of candidates to apply or making reasonable adjustments to the work environment to enable people to be effective.

Employees should refer to Appendix I for details of the Recruitment and Selection Policy. Any offer of employment is subject to the criteria set out in your offer of employment letter. This includes the requirement to provide proof of identity and copy certificates or other documentary evidence to satisfy the organisation that you have the qualifications set out on your resume and disclosure of any criminal record. You should refer to your contract of employment for further details relating to your employment terms and conditions.

## Contract of Employment & Classification

You should refer to your contract of employment for specific details regarding your employment status and classification.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Your job responsibilities are outlined in your job description. From time to time, you may be asked to work on special projects, or to assist with other work necessary or important to the operation of the organisation. Your cooperation and assistance in performing such additional work is expected. It is your responsibility to fully understand and carry out the performance expectations of your position. The organisation reserves the right, at any time, with or without notice, to alter or change job responsibilities, reassign or transfer job positions, or assign additional job responsibilities at any time during your employment.

## **Training Period**

The first three months of your employment will consist of a training period. During this time, your performance will be closely monitored and reviewed and your employment may be terminated by either you or SIPA giving to the other, not less than one week's previous notice in writing. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the training period, the period of notice required to terminate your employment will be as stated in your contract of employment. SIPA reserves the right to extend the training period for a further three months if required.

## **Productive Work Environment**

We expect that all employees act responsibly to establish and maintain a pleasant working environment free of discrimination, bullying, intimidation or victimisation to enable employees to work efficiently and effectively.

## **Policy for Promotions, Transfers or Demotions**

The purpose of this policy is to achieve optimum utilisation of all our employees' skills and talents by agreement to employ the person in a more advantageous work situation through promotion, transfer, or demotion, and to enhance the career, learning and development of employees. The policy is attached at Appendix II.

## **Hours of Work**

The normal working hours are 9.30 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Saturday, with the exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of every month, including a lunch break of half an hour per day to be taken at a convenient time (preferably between 1 and 2pm). However, you may be required to work such additional hours as are necessary for the proper performance of your duties and we do ask for some flexibility from our employees.

## **Termination of Employment**

SIPA seeks to ensure consistent treatment among employees whose working relationship with the organisation is ending, for whatever reason.

## **Retirement**

Ordinarily, employees will retire upon reaching sixty years of age. You should discuss eligibility to retire beyond this date with the Management Committee as extensions will require the approval of the Governing Body.

## **Salary Administration**

Your salary less deductions will be paid a month in arrears, in equal instalments by cheque, on or about the 28<sup>th</sup> day of each month. However, if funding has not been submitted on time the payment might be postponed until the grant is released.

## **Pay Reviews**

Your salary will normally be reviewed annually at the end of the financial year and will be based on your performance and the performance of the SIPA over the previous calendar year. Where you receive a salary increase it will ordinarily be effective from the month next following the completion of your review and upon the final approval of the Management Committee. You do not have a contractual right to an increase in salary.

## **Reimbursement of Employee Expenses**

### **Travel & Expenses Policy**

SIPA reimburses employees for the expenses of travel, including transportation, meals, and lodging, provided such costs are performed in the course of conducting SIPA duties. Activities which normally justify the reimbursement of travel expenses include the attendance at meetings, conventions, and seminars or other selected educational functions related to the employee's job. All travel must be approved in advance. Once approval has been received, the employee has an obligation to keep costs to a minimum.

### **Travel**

Employees may use their personal vehicles on official SIPA business provided prior approval has been obtained. Destination and number of miles driven must be documented and fuel receipts retained to enable reimbursement as per distance.

Travel advances shall be provided to SIPA staff / employees travelling on official purposes. For the intention of these rules, any official travel undertaken by the professionals / staff of SIPA outside the municipal limits of headquarter involving more than twelve hours of absence from the place of posting shall be considered as 'official tour'. However, field visits of the field staff in their own project areas will

not be treated as tour and therefore such field visits shall not be considered for Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA). In exceptional cases, sanction will be desired from the Executive Director.

## **Employee Benefits**

### **5.1 Summary of Benefits**

#### **5.1.1 Eligibility**

As a permanent employee of SIPA you are eligible for our employee benefit schemes. If you have any queries regarding these schemes please contact the Management Committee.

#### **5.1.2 Medical Insurance**

Upon commencing employment you will also be provided with the option to join the medical insurance scheme, that can be extended, by own contribution, to cover spouse and children. A summary of the current scheme can be found within the Management Committee. SIPA reserves the right to withdraw, amend or replace the policy or any of its terms at its absolute discretion and you shall be advised of any changes which affect your cover.

#### **5.1.3 Group Insurance Scheme**

SIPA provides a policy to give some financial security for family and financial dependents in the event of the retirement or the death of an employee. You will be eligible to join the scheme at the start of each financial year. Leavers of the scheme will get paid their part balance owing. The policy applies whilst the employee is in SIPA's service. SIPA reserves the right to withdraw, amend, or replace the policy or any of its terms at its absolute discretion and you shall be advised of any changes which affect your cover.

#### **5.1.4 Savings & Loan Scheme**

SIPA provides a savings and loan scheme. Details of the current scheme can be found within the Management Committee. Employees who opt to join will have a monthly payment deducted from their salary. Under the terms of this scheme employees are eligible for a loan to pay back over an agreed schedule. Employees are entitled to release funds from the scheme when required. SIPA reserves the right to withdraw, amend, or replace the policy or any of its terms at its absolute discretion and you shall be advised of any changes which affect your cover.

## **5.2 Canteen Facility**

There are no subsidized eating facilities available as a benefit to employees at SIPA. Staff must provide their own lunch and may use the canteen facilities during the lunch time period.

## **5.3 Educational Assistance**

Eligibility for any of the benefits under this policy is dependent upon employee's commitment towards SIPA and the course requirements. Funding and support is therefore entirely discretionary and contingent upon the employee's on the job work performance, attending all courses, exams and working diligently towards successful completion of the programme. Failure to do so will result in a termination of their eligibility to any agreed benefits, for example educational leave. Educational leave will be granted for a maximum of three months in any one given period and exam leave will be granted up to a maximum of one week in any one given period.

## **5.4 Employee Counselling**

SIPA recognizes the value in supporting employees who experience personal problems or employment-related issues or who need guidance or rehabilitation. If you require such support you should speak to the Management Committee in the first instance.

## **5.5 Purchase of Company Products & Services**

You should refer to the Management Committee regarding the procedures for purchasing company products and services. All purchases must be supported by a receipt in order for reimbursement to be made.

## **5.6 Relocation**

Funding for relocation is discretionary and will be considered by the Management Committee on a case-by-case basis.

## **6. Company Premises and Work Areas**

### **6.1 Employee Health & Safety**

SIPA is committed to high standards of health and safety. It is our policy to encourage employees to contribute to their own welfare and that of their colleagues. Ensuring safety awareness, positive attitudes and continuous improvement in safety performance requires the commitment and active involvement of employees at all levels. Our objectives are, so far as is reasonably practicable, to avoid accidents, injuries and damage to property and to conserve the environment. You should report accidents to the Management Committee immediately.

### **6.2 Maintenance of Work Areas**

Employees are required to keep work areas clean and tidy and should maintain a clear desk policy with documents appropriately filed.

### **6.3 Personal Property**

SIPA reserves the right to search personal property as well as employer provided equipment. We cannot and do not guarantee the security of your personal belongings. Please do not leave your belongings unattended in the office and ensure you take all reasonable precautions.

### **6.4 Solicitation**

SIPA does not permit third parties to distribute literature or printed material of any kind, to sell merchandise, to solicit financial contributions, or to solicit for any cause during working hours without its consent.

### **6.5 Parking**

SIPA provides an area for parking and use of the space is at your own risk. We cannot guarantee the safety of your vehicles and provision of on-site parking is not a contractual right.

### **6.6 Security**

SIPA endeavours to provide a secure working environment. In turn you are required to safeguard the security of SIPA property. We prohibit weapons on the work premises and reserve the right to search employees if they suspect an employee is in contravention of this policy. SIPA will ensure adequate provisions are in place for women working unsociable hours to safeguard their safety, dignity and transportation from the workplace to their nearest point of their residence.

## **6.7 Smoking**

SIPA maintains a smoke-free policy throughout the premises.

## **7. LEAVE POLICY**

### **7.1 Attendance & Punctuality**

As an employee of SIPA, you are expected to be punctual and regular in attendance. Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, on time, and prepared to start work. Employees also are expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule, except for meal periods or when required to leave on authorized organizational duties. Late arrival, early departure, or other unanticipated and unapproved absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and

should be avoided. Any tardiness or absence causes problems for your fellow employees.

If you are unexpectedly late, on any occasion, you should call, where possible, to explain the circumstances of the delay and advise of your anticipated time of arrival. If you are unable to report for work on any particular day, you must under all but the most extenuating circumstances call with as much advance notice and prior to the time you are scheduled to begin working for that day. Employees also must inform the Management Committee of the expected duration of any absence. Excessive tardiness and absenteeism may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **7.2 Leave eligibility**

All officials covered under pay -roll of SIPA shall avail the leave benefits provided by the organization. However, short-term consultancy contractors are not entitled to any leave benefits. No leaves are permissible in first three months of the service for new employees or based on confirmation of the services of officials, however,

casual and medical leaves can be taken on pro-rata basis up to a maximum of 6 days on production of medical certificate.

### 7.3 Leave categories

The officials of SIPA shall be entitled to avail following categories of leave:

- a) **Casual / Medical Leaves:** 20 calendar days in an year – As per requirement, subject to decision/approval of the Management or by the authorized person.
- b) **Earned Leave:** 15 calendar days in an year - starting only after completion of one year of continuous service, and shall be credited at the beginning of the year, as per leaves earned by an employee. An employee earns 15 days of earned leave after continuously working for one year.
- c) **Maternity Leave:** Maximum of 3 months for female employees, up to 2 living children.
- d) **Paternity Leave:** For 7 days to male employees after delivery of his child.
- e) **Optional leave:** 2 Optional leave in a year in addition to scheduled holidays.

### 7.4 Procedure for availing leaves:

Irrespective of anything contrary specified earlier, the entitlement of Casual and Medical leaves begins after completion of three months of continuous service by any staff member i.e. in case a staff member takes a leave within three months of his/her joining, the same shall be treated as without pay.

In case of Earned Leave, the entitlement of the same shall start only upon completion of one year of service. However, the leave due shall be calculated from the date of joining of a staff member.

The procedure for available the aforesaid leaves will be as under:

- a) **Casual Leave** – It can be availed in multiples of full/half days till the end of the calendar year. Any left-over casual leave will be treated as lapsed and shall not be carried over to next year. In one trench of casual leave of maximum 3 days

may be availed. In case of planned leave, prior intimation of leave application should be submitted to the competent authority/Supervisor before at least three working days. In case of any emergency, at least a telephonic intimation to the competent authority is a MUST, and a proper leave application shall be submitted immediately upon joining, otherwise the leave will be treated as 'Leave Without Pay'. Casual leave can either be suffixed or prefixed with an intervening holiday, but any leave with both prefixing and suffixing holidays are not permissible and in that case intervening holidays shall be counted as leave days.

**b) Medical /Sick Leave** – The purpose of sick/medical leave is to meet any absence due to sickness or any planned medical treatment / investigation. It can also be availed in multiples of full/half days. A telephonic intimation about absence to the competent authority is a MUST. For sick/medical leave of more than three continuous days, a medical certificate is required to be submitted along with the leave application. However, in case of any prolonged illness, the sick leave can be combined with either due leave i.e. Earned or Casual, at the discretion of the Management.

**c) Earned Leave (Non En-cashable)** – It can be availed for a minimum of three days at a time, but not exceeding twice in a calendar year. The Management shall also have a right to re-call any staff member during the leave period to meet the exigencies of work. The staff members are required to submit their earned leave plan at least 10 days in advance.

Staff is encouraged to take earn leaves and the leaves are not en-cashable. The purpose of earned leave is to provide break from the work so that employees can come back energized and motivated. The leaves can be used to visit with family members, holiday destinations or for enhancing skills by joining any course.

**d) Maternity leaves** – It can be availed by a female employee after her child's birth. For child care and feeding the infant, extra one hour every day is allowed for lactating mothers for two months from the date of re-joining after the maternity leave.

**e) Paternity leaves** - This leave can be availed by a male employee after delivery of his child. This is applicable only to those employees who have completed one year of regular employment.

**f) Optional leaves** - In addition to scheduled holidays, as declared by the Management, the staff members are also entitled to avail two optional leave in a year to meet their specific religious requirement. However, in case a person has not completed three months of continuous service, in a calendar year, he/she shall

not be entitled for any optional leave. To avail the optional leaves, every staff member is required to submit his/her options/alternates in the beginning of the year and the same shall be sanctioned ensuring smooth working.

### **7.5 Leave Travel Concession (LTC):**

LTC can be claimed from the earned leaves. Once in two years up to maximum of 10 days. The leaves will be deducted from earned leaves. A total reimbursement of 50% of the basic salary will be made towards travel after furnishing of tickets. It can be claimed once in two years.

### **7.6 For all planned leaves:**

Except casual leaves, leave applications for all leaves should reach to HR Section through proper channel at least three days before and the employees will be only entitled to take the leave in compliance of decided procedure.

### **7.7 Leave Policy for Consultants:**

The Consultants carrying contract for more than 6 months, will be eligible to avail the leave as per organization policy, except the earned leave and for the Consultancy contracts periodically less than 6 months, shall be entitled for one leave in a month.

THESE LEAVE RULES SUPERSEDES ALL OTHER PREVIOUSLY ISSUED CIRCULARS, LETTERS, AND SHALL REMAIN EFFECTIVE TILL FURTHER NOTICE AND ARE TO BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

ANY PERSON WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW PROCEDURE OF TAKING LEAVE WILL BE SUBJECTED TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND LEAVES WILL BE CONSIDERED "LEAVE WITHOUT PAY".

### **7.8 Holidays**

Apart from all Sundays, second and third Saturdays, SIPA will observe 12 festival holidays, including three National Holidays, which are as following:

- Republic Day
- Holi
- Ram Navmi
- Independence Day
- Id ul Fitra
- Dashehra
- Gandhi Jayanti

- Dipawali
- Bhaidooj
- Id ul Juha
- Christmas

In addition, there will be two optional holidays. A list of festival and optional holidays will be circulated in the month of January every year. The staff members are required to submit their options in respect of optional holidays in advance to the Administrative Section. However, the Management reserves its right to ask any staff member to alter their optional leave to ensure smooth functioning of Office. The current optional holidays can be chosen from the following:

- Mohhram
- Makar Sankantri
- Mahashivratri
- Good Friday
- Raksha Bandhan
- Janmashtmi
- Onam
- Karwwa Chouth

## **8. Personal Conduct**

### **8.1 Behaviour of Employees**

It is important that SIPA employees are exemplary in their conduct at work. SIPA employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to external agencies and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Management Committee any deficiency in the provision of service, impropriety or breach of procedure. Employees must ensure that they use SIPA funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. Employees should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge. Employees should never do anything that is incapable of being justified to the public.

### **8.2 Personal Appearance of Employees**

Employees are expected to dress smartly and appropriately. When working in the field, however, staff are expected to dress accordingly to the audience they are visiting.

## **8.3 Public Relations**

SIPA needs to maintain a professional and positive image so that the public and other agencies and the community feel confident about approaching us for help. People want accessible and efficient services, and we must all aim to meet these demands and treat other people the same way you would like to be treated. All forms of communication (telephone, face to face contact and written correspondence) are equally important.

## **8.4 Receipt of gifts**

Employees are not to accept gifts of more than nominal financial value from partners, vendors, suppliers or other SIPA employees.

## **8.5 Use of Resources & Communication Systems**

Employees should always make sure that any facilities, such as stationery, telephones, IT or photocopying, provided by SIPA for use in performance of their duties are used strictly for those duties and for no other purpose. Private work should not be undertaken in SIPA's time, and it is equally important that any such work is carried out without reliance upon SIPA materials or services; SIPA's materials may only be used in pursuance of such work with the prior agreement of the Management Committee. Loading of any software on any SIPA computers by users is prohibited. Employees should be aware that SIPA may access and monitor employee communications.

## **8.6 Telephone**

Excessive personal use of telephone system has an adverse effect on its operation for genuine organisational purposes and is not acceptable.

## **8.7 Information Systems Policy**

### **8.7.1 Personal E-mail Policy**

Whilst you may send and receive personal messages, this must not interfere with your work or be detrimental to the duties and responsibilities of other employees. Use should also not be excessive. The content of all work related emails must avoid any possibility of offence or harassment and must therefore exclude any sexual,

racial or religious content, whether explicit or implicit, and must be written using only vocabulary acceptable for professional communication in the workplace.

### **8.7.2 Internet**

The Internet Service is provided to all employees primarily for SIPA organisational use; however, it is acceptable for individuals to utilise this resource for personal use provided that usage is reasonable, sensible and managed by each employee responsibly, especially in respect of the time utilised when accessing the internet. All users agree to SIPA monitoring and reviewing Internet access. Users may not use the Internet in such a manner that might be prejudicial to the interests of SIPA. An example of this might be subscribing to a web site that contains illicit or illegal material. Employees may not use the Internet for playing online games or for online gambling.

Employees may not use the Internet to locate, download, access or otherwise investigate material of a nature which may cause offence to other SIPA employees on grounds of gender, race, religious belief or otherwise. Prohibited uses of the Internet at all times include, but are not limited to, viewing and, or storing and, or distributing or otherwise using the facilities for the following: illegal activities (including any violation of copyright laws); threatening, abusive, harassing or discriminatory behaviour; slanderous or defamatory purposes; obscene, suggestive or intimate messages or offensive graphical images or pornographic materials, political and religious activities; activities that will incur a cost to the organisation without prior proper authorisation; private, commercial activities for profit making purposes; malicious damage.

### **8.7.3 Security and Access Considerations**

SIPA is entitled to make provision to protect itself and its computer systems, websites and employees from external or internal security threats, real or potential. Examples of security measures which may be deployed include but are not limited to the following: Firewalls and Proxy Servers to block outgoing / incoming Internet traffic; Anti-virus software; Access control software (typically restricts access to specific web sites) and measures to prevent the downloading of software.

Whilst access to the Internet is generally unrestricted for those who are provided with the Internet, SIPA may block access to known sites that contain or are believed to contain illegal, pornographic or otherwise offensive material. This is at the discretion of SIPA.

SIPA computer systems and resources are the property of the organisation, or are managed by SIPA, and are to be used in furtherance of SIPA purposes. Accordingly, SIPA reserves the right, without further notice to monitor employees' use of any SIPA computer systems or network resources including the use of Internet services.

### **8.8 Conflicts of Interest**

You have an obligation to ensure that actual or potential conflicts of interest are avoided. A conflict of interest may occur if you are in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for you.

### **8.9 Confidential Nature of SIPA Affairs**

Detailed information on SIPA and its affairs are confidential. The obligation to maintain confidentiality at all times is included in your contract of employment.

### **8.10 Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure**

Employees should refer to Appendix III whereby guidelines for a progressive discipline system and procedures for addressing work-related complaints are established.

### **8.11 Alcohol & Drugs Policy**

SIPA seeks to provide a safe working environment that is free from the effects of alcohol and drug misuse. Under no circumstances should alcohol or unlawfully obtained, non-prescription drugs be brought or consumed on site.

## **9. Other HR Policies**

### **9.1 Data Protection & Access to Information / Personnel Records**

SIPA will hold and process, both electronically and manually, the data which it collects relating to employees in connection with their employment for the purpose of administering and managing its employees and complying with applicable laws, regulations and procedures. You have a right to inspect certain documents in your official employee file, in the presence of a SIPA representative at a mutually convenient time. No copies of documents in your file may be made, with the exception of documents that you have previously signed. You may add your comments to any disputed item in the file. All such comments must go through the Management Committee.

SIPA will restrict disclosure of your employee file to authorised individuals within the organisation. Any request for information contained in employee files must be directed to the Management Committee. Only the Management Committee are authorised to release information about current or former employees. Disclosure of employee information to outside sources will be limited. However, SIPA will cooperate with requests from authorised parties conducting official investigations as legally required. All requests for references must be directed to the Management Committee. No other employee is authorised to release references for current or former employees.

## **9.2 Changes to Personal Information**

Employees are required to advise the Management Committee if their personal details change.

## **9.3 Performance Appraisals**

SIPA will conduct a regular process of measuring performance against overall job requirements, feedback and objective setting to ensure that employees are valued for their work, development needs are identified and that there is a better understanding and achievement of goals and objectives.

Every staff member is required to submit his / her half yearly appraisal, on the prescribed format, highlighting achievements during the last six months together with plans for the next six months, for the review of the Director.

Upon completion of one year of service from the date of respective joining, every staff member shall be issued an Annual Appraisal Form, to be filled in individually, providing information highlighting the outstanding achievements, problems and difficulties faced during the appraisal period together with suggestions for remedial measures. The annual appraisals shall be submitted either to the H.R. Section or the person so designated, by the 10<sup>th</sup> of succeeding month in which a staff member has joined his / her duties each year, and shall also prepare an analysis, submitting the same to the Director for his review.

Based on the analysis, review and assessment of half yearly and annual appraisals, the Director, at his sole discretion, may announce the respective awards in terms of either promotions and / or increments, in addition to any other perks or benefits.

The announcement of respective awards for the individual staff member shall be made upon completion of his / her one year's of service from the date of joining the duties.

Based on the extra-ordinary and outstanding performance by any individual staff member, the Director may announce the award at any time of the year and in any form he may deem fit and proper, as a management gesture to reward, recognize and encourage the individual performance.

## **9.4 Flexible working**

SIPA recognises the need for flexible working arrangements in today's work environment and may accommodate requests for alternate working schedules provided that alternate working times meet organisational requirements and are agreed in advance with the Management Committee. It is SIPA's aim to give serious consideration to each request to work flexibly and to ensure a fair procedure. However, due the nature of some of SIPA's operations there may be significant limitations on the type of flexible arrangement that can be accommodated. Where a specific request cannot be accommodated, SIPA will always consult with the employee to see if any alternative solution can be agreed.

## **9.5 Child Rights Policy**

### **Defining Child:**

As per Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which came into force with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the age groups of 'Child' and 'Juvenile' (adolescent) have been re-defined as under:

- Child: In the age group of 6 to 14 years
- Juvenile (Adolescent): In the age group of 14 to 16 years

Under this Child Rights Policy, both child and juvenile (adolescent) have been grouped together and referred to as 'Child / Children'.

### **About the Child Protection:**

“Child protection means identifying the possible abuse of children, discrimination, and exploitation and prevents, and takes up measures to take action against the abusers or perpetrators through complaint mechanism”

Child Protection is about protecting children from or against any perceived or real danger to their life, their personhood and childhood.

It is about reducing their vulnerability to any kind of harm - social, psychological and emotional. It must ensure that no child falls out of the security and safety net and those who do, receive necessary care and protection and are brought back into the safety net.

### **Four basic Child Protection Principles according to UN CRC 1989:**

1. Non discrimination (Art 2)
2. In the interest of the children (Art 3)
3. Right to Life and development (Art. 6)
4. Upholding the right to expression of children (Art 12)

We believe that child protection is crucial for ensuring that children under 16 years of age have the rights, confidence and environment in which they can make choices, express their views and communicate effectively with other children and adults. Children cannot become empowered change agents to improve their lives and that of their families and communities if they are not safeguarded from abuse, discrimination and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

### **Child Abuse:**

These definitions therefore point to four types of cruelties against children:

- **Physical abuse:** including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.
- **Sexual abuse:** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities.
- **Emotional abuse:** repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.
- **Neglect:** the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.

### **Complaints procedure:**

- a. Committee constituted under the policy of sexual harassment will also to perform as Child Rights Committee. It consists of Executive Director, Senior Manager – Programme, and Manager - Administration and HR
- b. Any case diagnosis for Child abuse shall lodge a formal written complaint to the Child Rights Committee (CRC) of SIPA.
- c. On receiving the complaint the CRC of SIPA shall acknowledge the receipt of the same.
- d. CRC of SIPA shall than constitute an investigation team to inquire into the merits and demerits of the complaint.
- e. During the investigation process, the investigation team of SIPA shall maintain complete confidentiality of all respondents, handle the investigation and conduct cross examination with sensitivity with the objective of gathering impartial credible evidence to substantiate the contents of the complaint.

### **What we will do (Staff and Personal):**

As a condition of working with our organization, all trustees, employees, officers, staff, interns, volunteers, researchers, consultants, and advisers of SIPA are required to undergo the following:

1. Both acceptance of and commitment to our Child Protection Policy working with children.
2. Signing a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions.

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

- **Awareness:** we will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
- **Prevention:** we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimize the risks to children.
- **Reporting:** we will ensure that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

- **Responding:** we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

### **SIPA Code of Conduct:**

The SIPA believes in to advocate children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation. This Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children, and also of children towards other children. It has been developed with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration and should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense.

### **Don'ts for Staff and others:**

- Do not promote child labour at home and work place;
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way;
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their homerun supervised;
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working;
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;

- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others;
- This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

**It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:**

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these;
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks;
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged;
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

## 9.6 HIV/AIDS And Sexual Harassment Policy

### 1. **Introduction:**

1.1 SIPA - Centre for Development Support is a non-profit organization registered under the Madhya Pradesh Trust Act 1951. The organization has been active in the States of Madhya Pradesh and Chattishgarh of India since 1996. SIPA promotes participatory development and participatory governance through direct field action, action and training for capacity building, evidence based research and advocacy.

1.2 The SIPA HIV Workplace Policy intends to address the following issues:

- a. Confidentiality
- b. Non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation
- c. Education and information
- d. Prevention
- e. Treatment, care and support
- f. Monitoring and evaluation

### 2. **Objectives of the SIPA HIV/AIDS workplace policy:**

The SIPA's HIV/AIDS workplace policy is intended to:

- i) Ensure a supportive work environment for employee / staff / consultant infected and affected by HIV and AIDS;
- ii) Minimise the possibility of HIV infection for SIPA employee/staff / consultant and their partners and dependents;
- iii) Manage and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on the work of the SIPA;
- iv) Eliminate stigma and discrimination in the workplace on the basis of real or perceived HIV status, or vulnerability to HIV infection.

3. **Definitions relevant to the context of SIPA HIV/AIDS workplace policy:**

3.1 HIV-related information -

‘HIV-related information’ includes information that someone:

- May have HIV;
- Has been asked to have an HIV test or has been counselled about having a test for HIV;
- Is receiving or has received treatment or counselling which suggests he or she may have HIV;
- May have had experiences which put him or her at risk of contracting HIV;
- Has a close association or relationship with someone with HIV.

3.2 HIV screening -

‘HIV screening’ means any measurement of potential or actual HIV infection, whether direct (HIV testing), indirect (assessment of risk-taking behaviour) or asking questions about tests already taken or about medication.

3.3 Reasonable accommodation -

‘Reasonable accommodation’ means any modification or adjustment to a job or to the workplace which is reasonably practicable and which will enable a person living with HIV to have access to, or participate or advance in, employment.

4. **Responsibility for implementation** -

4.1 The Executive Director has responsibility for the implementation of this policy through the SIPA Project Management Unit.

4.2 In SIPA Regional Offices, overall responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Regional Coordinators.

5. HIV screening, Recruitment and Employment -

- 5.1 The only medical criterion for recruitment is fitness to work. HIV infection does not, in itself, constitute a lack of fitness to work.
- 5.2 There is no obligation on applicants or staff to inform the SIPA of their HIV status.
- 5.3 HIV screening will not be required either as a condition of recruitment or for continuation of employment, unless required by law (e.g. for duty travel).

6. Confidentiality -

- 6.1 SIPA encourages a supportive work environment in which staff can discuss HIV and AIDS openly, including their own experience living with HIV.
- 6.2 Where employees/consultants disclose that they, or their dependents, are living with HIV, confidentiality will be respected with regard to the circumstances in which the information was shared. If there is any doubt, the person living with HIV should be consulted before further disclosure takes place.
- 6.3 HIV related information relating to applicants for employment, employee/consultant or dependents will be kept strictly confidential, and be kept only on medical files.
- 6.4 Employee/consultants/interns/volunteers working for the SIPA shall sign a confidentiality agreement, and shall be informed that the unauthorised disclosure of HIV-related information is a disciplinary offence. It may also lead to legal proceedings against the person who disclosed the information, and the SIPA.
- 6.5 With the voluntary and informed consent of the person concerned, HIV-related information may be disclosed strictly as necessary for the purposes of recruitment or assignment of staff living with HIV where the job description or task identifies this qualification.

7. Travel, Assignment and Vaccination -

- 7.1 When arranging short-term travel for SIPA employee/consultant, the SIPA administration team will notify the relevant individual of any legal restrictions on entry for people with HIV, and any recommended or required vaccines.
- 7.2 Individuals living with HIV must make personal choices as to whether or not they wish to attempt to travel with legal restrictions.
- 7.3 Individuals living with HIV should seek medical advice on the advisability of vaccination according to their particular health status.
- 7.4 If a staff member cannot undertake short-term travel for these reasons, reasonable accommodation will be made to identify other ways of accomplishing necessary tasks.
- 7.5 When arranging long-term travel or reassignment for existing staff, or recruitment of new staff to positions outside India, the SIPA administration team will notify applicants of any legal requirements for HIV screening, as well as recommended or required health precautions and vaccinations in the country in question.
- 7.6 When HIV screening is required, the SIPA will ensure referral to pre- and post-test counselling to relevant employee / consultant or short-listed applicants, and will reimburse the cost for such counselling if it is not otherwise available free of charge.
- 7.7 If an existing employee / consultant is unable to take an assignment in a particular country because of that country's HIV-related requirements, SIPA will take reasonable steps to find an alternative post.

## 8. Information and Training -

- 8.1 SIPA will provide information and training on the workplace issues raised by the epidemic, on appropriate responses, and on the general needs of people living with HIV and their careers.
- 8.2 Such information and training will be gender sensitive, as well as sensitive to race, disability, and sexual orientation.
- 8.3 Information will include the availability of local support organisations for people living with HIV, and other affected communities.

8.4 As far as practicable, such information and training will be integrated into existing education and human resources policies and programmes as well as occupational safety and anti-discrimination strategies.

8.5 Employee/consultant training on HIV/AIDS will take place during paid working hours and attendance by all employee / consultant including senior staff shall be considered as part of work obligations.

8.6 Managers and supervisors will be trained on the implementation of this policy.

9. Stigma and Discrimination -

9.1 SIPA will not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived HIV status, or membership of a group at increased risk of HIV infection, in the conditions of work, including opportunities for transfer and advancement.

9.2 Employee/consultant living with HIV will be treated no less favourably than staff with other serious illnesses.

9.3 SIPA will undertake activities to address HIV and related stigma in the workplace, including through employee / consultant training and the promotion of an open, accepting and supportive work environment for staff who chose to disclose their HIV status.

10. Reasonable accommodation -

10.1 SIPA may reasonably accommodate the special needs of employee/consultant living with, or directly affected by HIV on a case-by-case basis, subject to the overall requirements of the organisation.

10.2 Reasonable accommodation may include flexible working hours and time off for counselling and medical appointments, extended sick leave, transfer to lighter duties, part-time work, and return-to-work arrangements.

11. Termination of employment:

11.1 HIV infection is not a cause for termination of employment. Employee/consultant with HIV-related illness will continue in

employment as long as they are medically fit for available, appropriate work.

- 11.2 In the case of termination of employment due to extended illness, employee / consultant living with HIV will be accorded the same benefits and conditions as apply to termination due to other serious illnesses.

12. Gender dimension:

- 12.1 SIPA acknowledges that HIV and AIDS impacts on male and female staff differently. This includes the recognition that women normally undertake the major part of caring for those with AIDS-related illnesses, and that pregnant women with HIV have additional special needs.

- 12.2 Any employee/consultant and family assistance programmes will be designed to accommodate these differing impacts, and as appropriate to redress gender inequalities, for example by encouraging and supporting men as carers.

13. Counselling, Grievance and Disciplinary procedures:

- 13.1 SIPA will provide information to all employees/consultant where HIV-related advice, counselling and referral can be found outside the work environment. SIPA will also identify a staff member in its Regional Office from whom staff can seek confidential advice, counselling and referral on HIV-related matters.

- 13.2 SIPA will provide procedures that can be used by employees / consultants for work-related grievances, including failure by the SIPA to implement any aspect of this policy.

- 13.3 Disciplinary proceedings may be commenced against any employee /consultant who violate this policy.

14. Monitoring & Evaluation:

- 14.1 The implementation and management of this policy will be monitored on a regular base by the Executive Director responsible for the specific office, and evaluation procedures will be conducted by the Chief Executive.

- 14.2 Annual meetings will be held with staff to review this policy based on the monitoring and evaluation reports.

15. Revision:

15.1 Senior management, including the Executive Director, along with the SIPA shall review this policy as per need of amendment made.

**16. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY:**

16.1 All employees/consultants of SIPA, irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), would equally be allowed to work in an environment free from stigma, discrimination and sexual harassment.

16.2 SIPA imposes a responsibility on all its employees/consultants and associates to respect the SOGI and treat other employees/consultants and associates in an appropriate manner in consonance with this.

16.3 SIPA wishes to make it clear that it regards stigma, discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace as a serious issue, and commits itself to dealing with any violation of this policy by any employees/consultants or associate, which vitiates the work environment and enforces stigma, discrimination, or harassment based on SOGI, as a disciplinary offence.

16.4 SIPA reiterates that stigma, discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace, and SIPA is committed to ensuring that these offences do not occur. It understands that such offences are a violence, which can severely affect physical and mental health as well as morale and work performance.

16.5 SIPA understands and applies the concept of sexual harassment in a broader ambit than the traditional understanding where it is generally perceived as that of as male - female phenomena, and acknowledges that it also occurs between people of the same gender, or with those of differing sexual orientations and gender identities.

16.6 Sexual harassment is regarded as a disciplinary matter to be dealt with in accordance with terms and conditions of employment.

16.7 SIPA considers that it is each individual's responsibility to challenge any form of stigma, discrimination and sexual harassment, and imposes this responsibility on all its staff and associates, with the risk of punitive consequences in case of failure to do so. Sexual harassment in this regard

shall be any overt or covert action, either one-off or sustained, that vitiates the work environment and makes it difficult for a staff member to continue to work effectively and efficiently without degrading his/her self respect, dignity, or bodily integrity, certain details of which are explained herein below.

16.8 Acts which are not deliberately or intentionally offensive but which nevertheless cause offence may constitute sexual harassment. Although this is not an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can be defined as:

- a) Unnecessary touching or unwanted physical contact;
- b) Suggestive remarks or other verbal insults or abuse of a sexual nature;
- c) Suggestions that sexual favours may further someone's career (or that refusal may damage it);
- d) Compromising invitations;
- e) Display of offensive pornographic materials that is not relevant to the work of SIPA;
- f) Physical or sexual assault;
- g) Unnecessary or irrelevant gossip and scandal mongering that may incite other employees/consultants to treat a staff badly, or may injure the reputation of that staff member generally.

16.9 Nobody should have to tolerate sexual harassment in their workplace. It is essential that all employees/consultants feel able to raise their concerns about sexual harassment and that these concerns are taken seriously.

16.10 The disciplinary procedures of SIPA shall deal with complaints proceedings in case of sexual harassment in the workplace,

16.11 SIPA shall follow laid down guidelines to investigate any complaints, and shall implement the punitive consequences that follow from an established and proven instance of sexual harassment.

16.12 If any employee/consultant is experiencing any form of sexual harassment (no matter how minor it may seem), it is requested and required that this be immediately brought to the attention of the immediate supervisor who is requested to bring it to the attention of the Sexual Harassment Committee of SIPA, which shall comprise of the Executive Director, Senior Programme Manager, Manager- Administration and HR.

16.13 All reports dealing with sexual harassment will be considered in SIPA as confidential by all parties concerned.

### **17. Consequences of acts of sexual harassment:**

17.1 Anybody found violating the SIPA policy on sexual harassment would face disciplinary action.

17.2 Such disciplinary action shall follow the procedures laid down below.

17.2.1 SIPA recognizes that issues in relation to sexualities, sexual orientation and gender variance are not ordinarily discussed within our society. This results in denial, ignorance, oppression and harassment of people with alternate sexualities. The effect of this in the workplace is that people are not encouraged to be open about their sexuality and therefore this actively contributes to the heterosexism (the oppression of people who have the same gender relationships) within our society.

17.2.2 SIPA therefore also undertakes to pro-actively create a work environment that supports individuals to work in it irrespective of their SOGI.

17.2.3 Although this is not an exhaustive list, Sexual harassment can be defined as:

- i) Jokes stigmatising different, marginalised sexual orientations and gender identities;
- ii) Suggestive remarks or other verbal insults or abuse of the sexual nature;
- iii) Unnecessary touching or unwanted physical contact;
- iv) Display of sexual material;
- v) Expressing opinions or views that same sex relationships are less worthy than sexual relationship;
- vi) Non-verbal behaviour which is gender phobic.

### **18. Disciplinary and Complaints handling procedure:**

18.1 Complaints procedure:

- a) Any employees/consultants facing sexual harassment shall lodge a formal written complaint to the Sexual Harassment Committee (SHC) of SIPA.
- b) On receiving the complaint the SHC of SIPA shall acknowledge the receipt of the same.

18.2 Investigation procedure:

- a) SHC of SIPA shall then constitute an investigation team to inquire into the merits and demerits of the complaint.
- b) During the investigation process, the investigation team shall maintain complete SIPA confidentiality of all respondents, handle the investigation and cross examination with sensitivity with the objective of gathering impartial credible evidence to substantiate the contents of the complaint.
- c) The investigation team shall within a period of not more than one calendar month submit a detail investigation report.

18.3 Review of investigation report:

- a) The SHC of SIPA shall impartially analyse and review the investigation report and discuss with the investigation team if required for a comprehensive understanding of the investigation report.
- b) Based on its review, the SHC shall either acquit the accused or frame charges against the accused if adequate and credible evidence to substantiate the same has been put together.

18.4 Acquittal:

- a) In case the investigation report reveals that there is no merit in the complaint, the SHC shall recommend to the Executive Director of SIPA-RO that the accused be acquitted and damages, if any, that may have been caused to the falsely accused because of the complaint, be considered as per the SIPA policies.
- b) All actions thereafter shall be undertaken by the Executive Director of SIPA to conclude the case.

18.5 Framing of charges:

- a) If the investigation report reveals that there is substantial evidence to support the complaints made the complainant, the SHC shall frame appropriate charges and submit the same to the Executive Director.
- b) The Executive Director shall at that time determine appropriate disciplinary and punitive action against the guilty.

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