

The Botanical Society of South Africa (BotSoc) Code of Good Practice

Each BotSoc member subscribes to the following **Code of Good Practice** upon joining the organisation:

1. Members shall promote the integrity of the natural environment and encourage the protection of and the love for, indigenous flora and vegetation among the people of South Africa.
2. Members shall not act in contradiction to the principles of equality and non-discrimination as set out in the Constitution of South Africa.
3. Members shall conduct all activities relating to the BotSoc in good faith and in a manner which brings credit to the Society. Such an approach necessarily excludes dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation or bias.
4. Members shall declare and recuse themselves from all activities where there is a potential conflict of interest.
5. Members shall not act in a way that brings the Society into disrepute.

Depending on the nature and severity of a transgression of the Code of Good Practice, Council may, having conducted a disciplinary enquiry, apply two categories of sanctions.

1. Intermediate:

This sanction consists of remedial sanction without termination of membership. Such sanction would include, a written warning and temporary suspension of membership. On issuing a second written warning issued within 6 (six) months of the first, Council may suspend the membership of the member for a period no longer than 1 (one) year from the date of the conclusion of the hearing. However, if the behaviour / transgression is considered by Council to be of such a serious nature, the ultimate sanction may immediately be invoked.

2. Ultimate:

This sanction will be the immediate termination of membership for serious, repeated significant transgressions or compounding transgressions by a member on suspension.

In the circumstance where membership is suspended or terminated, membership fees paid will not be refunded.

Process:

1. Council shall make the decision to have an inquiry which would involve discussion with the member(s).
2. Council may appoint a mandated committee/individual(s) to deal with the matter.
3. Outcomes of the discussion/inquiry would have the objective of:
 - a. Getting the member to refrain from repeating such action(s) / behaviour; and
 - b. Getting the member to understand the error of his/her ways regarding the action.
4. Written communication will follow to member informing him/her of the displeasure and disapproval of such behaviour from the Council which will be signed by a council member [Chairperson] as well as an acceptance signature by the individual under discussion.
5. A copy of such will be noted in the council files within the Head office.
6. The above process makes provision for remedial action to be taken in the instance of the intermediate sanction and punitive action in the instance of ultimate sanction being imposed after the process of an inquiry.
7. Records of such meetings will be kept on file.

Appeal

Should a member be aggrieved by the disciplinary sanction issued, the aggrieved member may within 7 (seven) days appeal to the Chair of Council via the Head Office. The Chair of Council shall ensure that the appeal is fairly considered within a reasonable time. The disciplinary sanction issued by Council shall be suspended until Council and the aggrieved member is notified of the Appeal Decision.

Examples of transgressions (but not limited to):

- a) Actions which could be seen as abuse of any of the membership benefits, e.g. abuse of the membership card by any member,
- b) Conflict of interest by a member, committee member, council member, branch volunteer, not declared and pursuing ventures where such an individual may stand to gain personally in any way.
- c) Sexual Harassment e.g. of a verbal nature

1. Intermediate:

- a) This sanction serves as the first action for remedial input to retain the member;
- b) To change the behaviour, if need be.

2. Ultimate:

- This sanction is at the discretion of the Council and could lead to an inquiry resulting in the possible suspension/termination/revoking of the membership to the Botanical Society. Transgressions which call for the ultimate sanction to be considered include but are not limited to:
 - Embezzlement of the Society's funds
 - Physical Assault
 - Sexual Harassment of a more serious nature
 - There could be limits imposed to the period of suspension/revoking/terminations of the membership under this sanction.

Background to the context:

Constitution IV COUNCIL AND MANAGEMENT

(2) The Council shall be vested with the following powers:

(b) To frame such by-laws as it may think fit for the good management of the Society, which by-laws shall be subject to confirmation at the Annual General Meeting.

1. The current updated Branch operational manual is one such output of a by-law.
2. The discussion and decisions around the Code of Good Practice for members will be a second by-law.
3. This Code of Good Practice document (by-law) will serve as the basis of the process to be followed in the event of Council deciding on an enquiry to be held and in consideration of possible sanctions by the Council or its mandated committee against a member of the Society in the event of a transgression in terms of the Code of Good Practice of the Botanical Society of South Africa.

This document was presented before the Special General Meeting of the BotSoc Council called in terms of clause ix.1 of the Constitution to be held on 30 March 2015 as a decision from the minutes of the meeting of the BotSoc Council held on 12th February 2015 at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, Cape Town. The document was accepted by members votes.