

# **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

## WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Edelweiss Financial Services Limited and all its group entities (collectively referred to as '**Edelweiss**') are committed to adhering to the highest standards of ethical, moral and legal conduct of business operations. Edelweiss believes in the conduct of its affairs in a fair and transparent manner by adopting the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, integrity and ethical behavior.

To create enduring value for all its stakeholders and in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, **Edelweiss Rural & Corporate Services Limited ('the Company')** has adopted this Whistleblower Policy/Vigil Mechanism Policy (**'the Policy'**) in addition to the existing Employee Code of Conduct that governs the actions of its employees.

### SCOPE

Under the Policy, all employees of the Company (at all levels and grades, whether regular, fixed term contract or temporary), directors, customers, agencies, contractors, vendors, suppliers and/or any of their employees, deployed to the Company and any other person associated with the Company (collectively referred to as '**Stakeholders**') can report any incident/event as detailed within the Policy.

### PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This Policy aims to:

- a. encourage the reporting of suspected or actual occurrence of illegal, unethical or inappropriate events (behaviours or practices), violation of applicable laws and regulations, irregularities, misconduct, fraud, incorrect or misrepresentation of any financial statements and reports, etc., or violation of Edelweiss' Code of Conduct that can lead to financial or reputational loss to the Company and to Edelweiss;
- b. outline the mechanism within the Company for the reporting and investigation of matters raised by a Stakeholder;
- c. outline the safeguards to protect the Stakeholder who chooses to avail of the Vigil Mechanism against potential victimisation, reprisal or retaliatory action, both from within and outside the Company, resulting from whistleblowing reports.

### OUT OF SCOPE

The Policy does not aim to address:

- a. issues relating to complaints related to employment/superior-subordinate relationship, such as appraisals, service conditions, favouritism, sexual harassment, etc., as the same are dealt with separately under the relevant policies of Edelweiss.
- b. Issues raised against any employee or director, on issues unrelated to the Company.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY

The Company expects compliance of this Policy in letter and spirit. Violation if any will be liable for disciplinary action which may include termination.

## DISPLAY

The Whistleblower Policy is displayed on the Website as well as the Intranet of the Company.

## DEFINITION OF WHISTLEBLOWER

'**Whistleblower**' is any Stakeholder who raises, reports, informs or discloses a concern of any wrongdoing, unethical/illegal activity or conduct, whether actual, suspected or anticipated, that may constitute a breach of the applicable laws or the Edelweiss' Employee Code of Conduct or the Policies thereunder.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WHISTLEBLOWER

- a. The Whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of the allegation; but s/he needs to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern and good faith.
- b. It is understood that the Whistleblower has, after due thought and deliberation, decided to make the Disclosure/Report expressing a genuine concern, grievance, allegation ('**Disclosure/Report**').
- c. Disclosure in this regard shall mean a concern raised by a written communication made in good faith that discloses or provides information of unethical/illegal activity or any conduct that may constitute a breach of the applicable laws, or policies of the Company and Edelweiss.
- d. The Whistleblower may, for this purpose, choose to disclose his/her identity while submitting the Disclosure/Report under the Policy or may choose to remain anonymous. Employees are however encouraged to disclose their identities while submitting a Disclosure/Report as this will assist in obtaining additional details and documentation and evidence during the inquiry.
- e. The Whistleblower Committee may entertain Anonymous Disclosure/Report at its sole discretion and will reserve its right whether to investigate or not into such Disclosure/Report as it may not be possible to interview the Whistleblower and grant him/her protection in accordance with the Policy.
- f. **Reporting in Good Faith:** Any Whistleblower is expected to read and understand this Policy. It is recommended that any Stakeholder, who wishes to submit a Disclosure/Report, must do so after gathering adequate facts/data to substantiate the genuine concerns stated in the Disclosure/Report and not merely base the same on hearsay or rumor. This means that no action will be taken against the Whistleblower, if the Disclosure/Report was made in good faith and no misconduct was found to have been committed upon completion of investigation to the satisfaction of the Committee.

However, if a Disclosure/Report, after an investigation proves to be false, frivolous, fictitious, malicious, vexatious; or made with an ulterior intent; or made for the purpose of malicious prosecution; or if the Whistleblower fails to furnish the complete information available with or

accessible by him in relation to the alleged violation; then the Committee reserves the right to recommend suitable disciplinary action against the concerned Whistleblower or any person so associated with the Whistleblower, which may include termination of employment, reporting to the relevant authorities etc.

- g. The following is an indicative list of instances in which a Disclosure/Report will not be entertained:
- i. Disclosure/Report that are illegible, if handwritten;
  - ii. Disclosures/Report that are trivial or frivolous in nature;
  - iii. Matters which are sub-judice (i.e. pending before a court of Law, State, National Human Rights Commission, Tribunal or any other judiciary or quasi judiciary body);
  - iv. The concern expressed, relates to service matters or personal grievance (such as increment, promotion, appraisal etc.).
- h. The Whistleblower shall undertake and declare that he/she:
- i. has reviewed the completed and signed Disclosure / Report for completeness and accuracy and that the information contained therein is true, correct and complete to the best of his/her knowledge; and
  - ii. agrees to provide to the Whistleblower Committee all co-operation in the matter whenever required; and
  - iii. agrees to be obligated to provide the evidence as may be sought by the Whistleblower Committee.

## **REPORTING OF THE CONCERN/INCIDENT**

### **Reporting Platforms for Disclosure/Report**

A Whistleblower can submit a written Disclosure/Report of the concern/incident through any of the following channels:

- a. Portal of the Corporate Whistleblower Initiative (CWI), an independent online reporting service, at [www.cwiportal.com](http://www.cwiportal.com);
- b. Email to the designated e-mail address viz. [whistleblower@edelweissfin.com](mailto:whistleblower@edelweissfin.com)
- c. By Post in a sealed envelope marked "Whistle Blower - Private and Confidential" to the Whistleblower Committee at the following address:

Corporate - Employee Relations  
Edelweiss House, Off C S T Road,  
Kalina, Mumbai 400 039

### **Steps for Disclosure on Corporate Whistleblower Initiative Portal (CWI Portal):**

- a. Go to [www.cwiportal.com](http://www.cwiportal.com)
- b. Click on "Lodge Report";
- c. Enter organization code "myedelcap" and follow the instructions on the website;
- d. After submitting the Disclosure/Report, save the "Report Number" and password, to enable tracking the status of the Disclosure/Report.

### **Disclosure to the Whistleblower Committee**

The Disclosure under the Policy may be addressed to the designated email address of the Whistleblower Committee i.e. [whistleblower@edelweissfin.com](mailto:whistleblower@edelweissfin.com)

### **Format for Disclosure/Report by Whistleblower**

Where the Disclosure/Report is submitted by email or via a letter, the format for submitting the same along with the Declaration is attached in **Annexure A**.

### **WHISTLEBLOWER COMMITTEE**

- a. The Whistleblower Committee (**'the Committee'**) is constituted to receive, review, investigate and redress the concerns raised in the Disclosures made on any one of the above Reporting Platforms and currently comprises the members as per **Annexure B**.
- b. Any Disclosure sent directly to the personal and/or official email address of the senior management of the Company will be forwarded to the Committee which will deal with the same in the manner described in this Policy.
- c. The Committee shall investigate the Disclosure/Report in accordance with applicable law, the Edelweiss Employee Code of Conduct and policies of the Company and Edelweiss.
- d. **Acknowledgment:** The designated Secretary of the Committee shall acknowledge receipt of a Disclosure/Report to the concerned Whistleblower (if contact details have been provided) within seven (7) working days of the date of receipt thereof by the Committee and ensure timely closure of the Disclosures/Reports.
- e. The Committee shall ensure to accept all Disclosures/Reports appearing prima-facie of substance and shall not reject any Disclosure merely for the reason of it being anonymous.
- f. The Committee will proceed to determine whether the allegations of the Whistleblower constitute misconduct. The detailed investigation and redressal process to be followed by the Committee is set out in **Annexure C**.
- g. The Committee shall submit a report to the Audit Committee pertaining to the details of all Whistleblower Complaints received during the year.

### **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

- a. The Audit Committee of the Company (**'Audit Committee'**) as constituted by the Board of Directors in accordance with section 177 of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rules thereunder will oversee the Vigil Mechanism as laid out in this Policy.
- b. If any member of the Audit Committee has a conflict of interest in any given matter, then the said member will recuse himself/herself from the deliberations in the said matter.

- c. The Committee will provide the Whistleblower with direct access to the Chairperson of the Audit Committee, in exceptional cases.
- d. The Committee will send timely updates to the senior management on receipt of a Disclosure/Report and on conclusion of the case.
- e. The Committee will submit a status report of the number of Disclosures received, pending and redressed to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.
- f. The Audit Committee of Edelweiss Financial Services Limited, where appropriate, may at its discretion and where it deems necessary, also refer a case to the Audit Committee or Senior Management of the Company.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- a. Maintaining confidentiality is critical in ensuring that no reprisal or retaliatory action is taken against the Whistleblower.
- b. The Whistleblower and everyone involved in the matter/process shall:
  - i. Maintain complete confidentiality/ secrecy of the Disclosure/Report
  - ii. Not discuss the Disclosure/Report and the investigation thereof in any informal, social gathering, meetings
  - iii. Not leave unattended any papers and/or electronic mails/files pertaining to the Disclosure/Report/Investigation.
- c. The Committee:
  - i. will treat all Disclosures/Report in a confidential and sensitive manner;
  - ii. will not disclose the identity and existence of the Whistleblower without his/her consent in writing, unless required by applicable laws and shall maintain the same throughout the process of investigation, inquiry and examination.
- d. The Company shall not compel disclosure of the identity or existence of the Whistleblower or the information provided by the Whistleblower, except to the extent relied upon in any proceeding initiated against such person by the Company/Edelweiss.
- e. However, in order to effectively carry out investigations, it will be necessary to reveal, on a confidential basis, the nature of the Disclosure/Report made by the Whistleblower to those on a 'need to know' basis, including to those involved in the investigation process.
- f. It will also be necessary in most cases to disclose the facts of the matter (not including the identity of the Whistleblower) to all person(s) who may be the subject of the allegation, thereby ensuring that they are afforded an opportunity to defend themselves against the allegation.
- g. The Disclosure / Report may, at the discretion of the Company, be made available when it is required to be disclosed in connection with any legal proceedings in furtherance of its legal position; or as may be otherwise required or permitted by law, to the following:

- i. any regulatory authority; or
  - ii. any self-regulatory organization; or
  - iii. the surveillance/investigation wings of recognised stock exchange or clearing corporation; or
  - iv. any law enforcement organization including the police or any central/state revenue authorities; or
  - v. a public prosecutor in connection with any criminal proceedings.
- h. Such sharing of information contained in the Disclosure/Report shall be in accordance with such assurances of confidentiality as the Committee determines appropriate.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD RETENTION**

The Whistleblower Committee shall maintain documentation of all Disclosures/Reports, subject to this Policy. The documentation shall include all Disclosures, written submissions provided by the Whistleblower, any other documents identified in the complaint as relevant to the complaint, a summary of the date and manner in which the Disclosure was received by the Company/Committee and the results of investigation relating thereto. All such documentation shall be retained for a minimum period of eight (8) years from the closure of the case or as required by law, whichever is higher.

## **PROTECTION TO WHISTLEBLOWER**

- a. The Committee will take cognisance of each and every Disclosure/Report received subject to the exclusions stated in the Policy.
- b. The Company strictly prohibits retaliation, victimisation, reprisal, discrimination or harassment of any kind against the Whistleblower who has made a Disclosure/Report and the Committee will recommend appropriate steps to protect the Whistleblower from exposure to any possible retaliatory action including demotion, termination, threat of any kind, discriminatory or biased behaviour or any unfair employment practice as a result of any genuine disclosures or concerns expressed in the Disclosure/Report. Any other person/Stakeholder assisting in the investigation shall also be protected to the same extent as the Whistleblower.
- c. Nothing in this Policy shall:
  - i. Impede or prohibit any Whistleblower who believes that he or she has been subject to retaliation or victimisation, from approaching any competent authority, court or tribunal for appropriate relief;
  - ii. Diminish the rights and privileges of or remedies available to any Whistleblower under any other law in force.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The Company shall endeavor to enhance awareness of the Stakeholders on the availability of the mechanism of Whistleblowing, from time to time.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY**

The Company reserves its right to amend or modify the Policy, in whole or in part, at any time without notice and without assigning any reason whatsoever. However, no such amendment or modification will be binding on the directors, employees and Stakeholders unless the same is notified to the Directors and Employees in writing and displayed on the Website, in case of Stakeholders.

**REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

The Policy shall be reviewed at least once in two years to keep abreast with changing requirements.





## Annexure A

### FORMAT FOR DISCLOSURE/REPORT

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION OF THE WHISTLEBLOWER

1. First Name and Last name
2. Address
3. Telephone
4. Mobile
5. Email ID
6. Employee ID (*if applicable*)
7. PAN

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CONCERNS BEING REPORTED:

1. What wrongdoing is being reported?
2. Has the violation: Occurred / Occurring / Potential to occur in future?
3. If the violation has occurred, date of occurrence: dd/mm/yyyy (*in case exact date is not known, an approximate period may be entered*).
4. Name/(s) of the persons alleged to have committed or about to commit the wrongdoing.
5. Please describe in detail why you think the wrongdoing submitted is a violation?
6. How was the alleged wrongdoing committed? Please provide the specific location and time where the wrongdoing occurred?
7. Why do you believe the activity to be improper?
8. What facts or supporting material/evidence is your allegation based on? Please attach any additional documents to this form, to corroborate the allegations, if necessary.
9. Identify any documents or other information in your submission that you believe could reasonably be expected to reveal your identity and explain the basis for your belief that your identity would be revealed if the documents were disclosed to a third party.
10. Provide detail of other witnesses (if any) to the alleged wrongdoing
11. Has the Whistleblower had any prior communication or representations with the Committee concerning this matter? **No / Yes (Details thereof)**
12. Does the wrongdoing relate to an entity of which the individual is or was an officer, director, counsel, employee, consultant or contractor? **No / Yes (Details thereof)**
13. If yes to the above question, was the original information submitted first to your Head or internal legal and compliance office? **Yes (Please provide details with Date of submission) / No**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that:

- a. I have read and understood the provisions of the Company's Whistleblower Policy.
- b. I accept that the Company is under no obligation to enter into any correspondence regarding action or inaction taken as a result of my Disclosure/Report.
- c. I declare that the Disclosure contained herein is true, correct and complete and I fully understand that I may be subject to Disciplinary action if, in my Disclosure Report, I knowingly and wilfully make any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations or use any false writing or document knowing that such writing or document contains any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement.

**Name:**

**Place and Date:**

**Annexure B****Whistleblower Committee**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	Ramya Rajagopalan	Chairperson
2	Kashmira Mathew	Member
3	B. Renganathan	Member
4	Varalakshmi Venkatraman	Member
5	Aakash Agarwal	Member
6	Chetna M Malaviya	Member Secretary

## Annexure C

### INVESTIGATION AND REDRESSAL PROCESS

1. All Disclosures/Reports received under this Policy will be thoroughly reviewed and those falling within the scope of the Policy will be thoroughly investigated. The Committee is authorised to seek help from internal/external legal counsel or any other professional as maybe necessary.
2. Based on a preliminary investigation, the Committee shall under the supervision, assistance and direction of the Audit Committee, as maybe necessary, determine whether the allegations made in a Disclosure constitute a malpractice/ improper or unethical/illegal activity or conduct as described below:
  - a. If it is determined that allegations are false, the Committee will record such finding along with reasons and will communicate the same to the Whistleblower, if required.
  - b. If it is determined that the allegations are true, the Committee will proceed to perform a detailed investigation of the Disclosure/Report.
3. The Stakeholders shall not interfere with any ongoing investigation and no evidence shall be withheld, destroyed or tampered with by any person having access to it. The witnesses shall not be influenced, coached, threatened or intimidated.
4. The Committee shall conduct such investigations in a timely manner and shall submit a written report or provide closure not later than 90 (ninety) days or such other later date as the Committee in consultation with the Audit Committee may agree upon, from the date of receipt of the Disclosure/Report by the Committee.
5. Once the investigation is completed, the Committee will share the results with the Audit Committee and finalise its report. The Committee will share the report with its recommendations with Senior Management.
6. In order to ensure that the Policy is not misused by any Stakeholder, any false or frivolous concern raised by a Stakeholder will be viewed seriously and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the concerned Stakeholder.
7. The Committee will keep the Whistleblower informed of the result of the investigations and its recommendations, if deemed feasible, subject to confidentiality obligations and applicable law.