

# **WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY & VIGIL MECHANISM**

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## **PREAMBLE**

Section 177 of the Companies Act, 2013 requires every listed company and such class or classes of companies, as may be prescribed to establish a vigil mechanism for the directors and employees to report genuine concerns in such manner as may be prescribed.

The Company has adopted a Code of Conduct for Directors and Senior Management Personnel ('the Code'), which lays down the principles and standards that should govern the actions of the Directors and Senior Management Personnel.

Any actual or potential violation of the Code, howsoever insignificant or perceived as such, is a matter of serious concern for the Company. Such a vigil mechanism shall provide for adequate safeguards against victimization of persons who use such mechanism and also make provision for direct access to the chairperson of the Audit Committee in appropriate or exceptional cases.

Effective October 1, 2014, Clause 49 of the Listing Agreement between listed companies and the Stock Exchanges, *inter alia*, provides for a mandatory requirement for all listed companies to establish a mechanism called 'Whistle Blower Policy' for employees to report to the management instances of unethical behavior, actual or suspected, fraud or violation of the company's code of conduct.

## **POLICY**

In compliance of the above requirements, Assam Entrade Limited (Company), being a Limited Company has established a Vigil (Whistle Blower) Mechanism and formulated a Policy in order to provide a framework for responsible and secure whistle blowing / vigil mechanism.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The Vigil (Whistle Blower) Mechanism aims to provide a channel to the Directors and employees to report genuine concerns about unethical behaviour, actual or suspected fraud or violation of the Codes of Conduct or policy.

The Company is committed to adhere to the highest standards of ethical, moral and legal conduct of business operations and in order to maintain these standards, the Company encourages its employees who have genuine concerns about suspected misconduct to come forward and express these concerns without fear of punishment or unfair treatment.

The mechanism provides for adequate safeguards against victimization of Directors and employees to avail of the mechanism and also provide for direct access to the Chairman of the Audit Committee in exceptional cases.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**"Protected Disclosures"** means a written communication of a concern made in good faith, which discloses or demonstrates information that may evidence an unethical improper activity.

**“Subject”** means a person or group of persons against or in relation to whom a Protected Disclosure is made or evidence gathered during the course of investigation.

**“Whistle Blower”** is a Director or employee who makes a Protected Disclosure under this Policy.

## **SCOPE**

- (a) This Policy is an extension of the Company’s of Conduct. The Whistleblower’s role is that of a reporting party with reliable information. They are not required or expected to act as investigators or finders of facts, nor would they determine the appropriate corrective or remedial action that may be warranted in a given case.
- (b) Whistleblowers should not act on their own in conducting any investigative activities, nor do they have a right to participate in any investigative activities unless as requested by the Chairman of the Audit Committee or the investigators.
- (c) Protected Disclosure will be appropriately dealt with by the Chairman of the Audit Committee, as the case may be.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

All Directors and Employees of the Company are eligible to make protected Disclosures under the Policy in relation to matters concerning the Company.

## **PROCEDURE**

- (a) All Protected Disclosures should be addressed to the Chairman of the Audit Committee of the Company for investigation.
- (b) The contact details of the Chairman of the Audit Committee as under :

Mr. Anoop Kumar Gupta,  
Chairman – Audit Committee  
Assam Entrade Ltd.  
16 Tara Chand Dutta Street, Kolkata
- (c) If a Protected disclosure is received by any executive of the Company other than Chairman of the Audit Committee, the same should be forwarded to the Chairman of the Audit Committee for further appropriate action. Appropriate care must be taken to keep the identity of the Whistleblower confidential.
- (d) Protected Disclosures should preferably be reported in writing so as to ensure a clear understating of the issues raised and should either be typed or written in a legible handwriting in English.
- (e) The Protected Disclosures should be forwarded under a covering letter which shall bear the identity of the Whistleblower. The Chairman of the Audit Committee, as the case may be shall detach the covering letter and forward only the Protected Disclosure to the Investigators for investigation.
- (f) Protected Disclosures should be factual and not speculative or in the nature of a conclusion, and should contain as much specific information as possible to allow for proper assessment of the nature and extent of the concern and the urgency of a preliminary investigative procedure.

- (g) The Whistleblower must disclose his/her identity in the covering letter forwarding such Protected Disclosure. Anonymous disclosures will not be entertained as it would not be possible to interview the Whistleblowers.

## **INVESTIGATION**

All protected Disclosures under this Policy will be recorded and thoroughly investigated. The Audit Committee Chairman will carry out an investigation himself or by involving any other Officer of the Company before referring the matter to the Audit Committee of the Company.

The Audit Committee, if deems fit, may call for further information or particulars from the complainant and at its discretion, consider involving any other / additional Officer of the Company or an outside agency for the purpose of investigation.

The investigation by itself would not tantamount to an accusation and is to be treated as a neutral fact finding process.

The investigation shall be completed normally within 90 days of the protected disclosure and is extendable by such period as the Audit Committee deems fit.

Any member of the Audit Committee or other officer having any conflict of interest with the matter shall disclose his/her concern/interest and shall not deal with the matter.

## **DECISION AND REPORTING**

If an investigation leads to a conclusion that an improper or unethical act has been committed, the Chairman of the Audit Committee shall recommend to the Board of Directors of the Company to take such disciplinary or corrective action as it may deem fit.

Any disciplinary or corrective action initiated against the Subject as a result of the findings of an investigation pursuant to this Policy shall adhere to the applicable personnel or staff conduct and disciplinary procedures.

A quarterly report with number of complaints received under the Policy and their outcome shall be placed before the Audit Committee and the Board.

A complainant who makes false allegations of unethical & improper practices or about alleged wrongful conduct of the Subject to the Audit Committee shall be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the rules, procedures and policies of the Company.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The complainant, Chairman of the Audit Committee, Members of Audit Committee, the Subject and everybody involved in the process shall, maintain confidentiality of all matters under this Policy, discuss only to the extent or with those persons as required under this policy for completing the process of investigations and keep the papers in safe custody.

## **PROTECTION**

No unfair treatment will be meted out to a Whistle Blower by virtue of his/her having reported a Protected Disclosure under this policy. Adequate safeguards against victimisation of complaints shall be provided. The Company will take steps to minimize difficulties, which the Whistle Blower may experience as a result of making the Protected Disclosure.

The identity of the Whistle Blower shall be kept confidential to the extent possible and permitted under law. Any other employee assisting in the said investigation shall also be protected to the same extent as the Whistle Blower.

## **DISQUALIFICATIONS**

While it will be ensured that genuine Whistle Blowers are accorded complete protection from any kind of unfair treatment as herein set out, any abuse of this protection will warrant disciplinary action.

Protection under this Policy would not mean protection from disciplinary action arising out of false or bogus allegations made by a Whistle Blower knowing it to be false or bogus or with a mala fide intention.

Whistle Blowers, who make any Protected Disclosures, which have been subsequently found to be mala fide, frivolous or malicious, will be disqualified from reporting further Protected Disclosures under this Policy.

## **ACCESS TO CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Whistle Blower shall have right to access Chairman of the Audit Committee directly in exceptional cases and the Chairman of the Audit Committee is authorized to prescribe suitable directions in this regard.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Directors and Employees shall be informed of the Policy by publishing on the website of the Company.

## **RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS**

All Protected disclosures in writing or documented along with the results of investigation relating thereto, shall be retained by the Company for a period of 7 (seven) years.

## **AMENDMENT**

The Company reserves its right to amend or modify this Policy in whole or in part, at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever. However, no such amendment or modification will be binding on the Directors and employees unless the same is not communicated in the manner described as above.