

Approved by international GBC & SABHA vote
“Principles & Practices / Dikṣā-guru Projects”
February 2025

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- **Preface**

In 2006 the international GBC held a series of strategic planning sessions. One of the purposes of those meetings was to put down in writing the standards and principles Śrīla Prabhupāda envisioned for various aspects of ISKCON. Such GBC statements are intended to be a gift to future generations, like time capsules containing messages of guidance for future generations of ISKCON devotees. Two of such position papers have been completed and approved by the GBC. These are “Harmonizing Lines of Authority” and “Carrying out Srila Prabhupada’s order” (which outlines the history and purpose of the GBC). There is Vaisesika prabhu’s book “Our family business” laying out the history, principles, and best practices of book distribution. There is a paper in the works aiming to outline Srila Prabhupada’s vision for the relationship between the BBT and the GBC.

At that 2006 strategic planning meeting, one of the key areas the GBC determined was in need of clarity and established procedures was the relationship between ISKCON and its *dikṣā-gurus*. This committee was established to work on this issue, and the first fruit of our efforts was the above mentioned “Harmonizing Lines of Authority” paper (approved as an official ISKCON position paper in 2015).

After our committee completed “Harmonizing Lines of Authority,” the GBC requested us to focus on issues regarding *guru-dakṣiṇā* and “guru projects.” The proposal you have in your hands has grown out that effort. Our work has included two worldwide surveys of *dikṣā-gurus*, GBCs, ISKCON deputies, temple presidents, and others. There have also been several in-person discussions with the full GBC at mid-term meetings. This committee has been diligently moving forward via in-person meetings pre-Covid and twice-monthly Zoom calls during the pandemic. We hope that the fruit of our efforts, found in this proposal, will meet with your satisfaction and approval. We recognize that this is a first draft and we look forward to your comments and suggested improvements.

- **Introduction**

While we are confident of the good intent of the diksha gurus and their disciples and while we recognize the many benefits that flow from projects inspired by *dikṣā-gurus*, there are also risks. These risks can be minimized if we all remain vigilant about our responsibilities as spiritual leaders and members of ISKCON.

Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed this concern in a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture he gave on December 15, 1973, in Los Angeles:

The leaders must be perfect. Therefore, according to Vedic civilization, at least three persons in the society . . . The first: the priest or the spiritual master, who are engaged in teaching people about religiosity, he must be perfect, above suspicion. Similarly, public leader-- he must be also above suspicion. A brāhmaṇa . . . Brāhmaṇa means priest also. He must be above suspicion. And the king must be above suspicion. Then things will go on.

In many lectures, conversations, and letters Śrīla Prabhupāda would quote the proverb “Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion,” meaning that if one is associated with a prominent figure, one must avoid attracting negative attention for this will reflect poorly on that prominent person, in our case, on Srila Prabhupada and his mission.

Leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should set a proper example. Thus, like Śrīla Prabhupāda, in all their dealings with ISKCON’s resources, they must be transparent and accountable concerning such activities as accumulating and spending funds. This will preserve Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spotless reputation as well as their own.

Additionally, when planning and developing projects, all devotees, especially those in such an important leadership role as a *dikṣā-guru*, should follow the regulations established by the Society. This is expected of any leader serving in ISKCON.

There is another consideration. Even if a project or initiative appears to be successful, if it is operating independently of the authority structure Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us for his ISKCON, then, by definition, that is problematic. The simple fact is that Śrīla Prabhupāda directed that projects and initiatives in ISKCON should be legally under the umbrella of ISKCON. Hence, even when projects appear successful and thus attractive to duplicate, if they are operating outside Śrīla Prabhupāda's desired framework, this status can lead to problems.

We recognize that there will need to be occasional exceptions to this general rule. How those exceptions should be handled will be discussed later in this document.

To help ISKCON avoid potential difficulty, the planning and fund-raising for *dikṣā-guru* inspired projects should be shared transparently and approved (as outlined later in this proposal) both before as well as during the project’s development. By doing so, these projects will be aligned properly with ISKCON’s management structure. Thus, they will be accepted as ISKCON initiatives and can be promoted as such.

The cause of greatest concern is an issue that has been with us ever since the physical departure of Śrīla Prabhupāda: the seemingly automatic tendency toward *dikṣā-guru* centricity. This is where many devotees see their *dikṣā-guru* as their one and only authority and point of focus.

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed his disciples to form a GBC, thus diverging from the age-old tradition of handing down authority to a single successor *ācārya*, this heralded a new

dawn. Unfortunately, that new dawn did not continue to shine on the Gauḍīya Maṭha, as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's instruction did not gain sufficient traction and was ultimately abandoned.

However, both in deference to that instruction and because he understood its critical importance, some forty years later Śrīla Prabhupāda adopted the same GBC model for ISKCON. And although ISKCON has faced many challenges in the decades since Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure, the GBC concept and authority structure Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us have remained in place, with many benefits derived from this.

To preserve the GBC model Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us in the 1970s, and to ensure that the new dawn ushered in by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in the 1930s continues to shine on ISKCON, we need to remain vigilant in our efforts to protect and practice this essential principle and structure.

Again, one of the main challenges to that system of governance is the same one the Gauḍīya Maṭha faced in the 1930s. That challenge is the tendency for everything to revolve solely around the *dikṣā-guru*, with many disciples seeing their *dikṣā-guru* as their ultimate and sometimes only authority.

While there is nothing wrong with a single-guru system per se, in the context of a multi-guru society in which all members, including the gurus, are meant to work under the ultimate managing authority of a governing body, exclusive "guru-centricity" creates confusion and conflict. We, the GBC, recognize the importance of the disciples' surrender to their *dikṣā-guru's* instructions, as well as the importance of their recognition of the GBC as the ultimate and final authority within ISKCON. We embrace both principles, in honor of and in service to Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions.

The service carried out by our *dikṣā-gurus* in guiding and inspiring their disciples is much appreciated and much needed. Their efforts are essential for the health and growth of ISKCON. The following are intended as "best practice" principles. They are intended to help the *dikṣā-gurus* in their invaluable service. These guidelines are intended to help everyone know the standards expected and the parameters to stay within. As mentioned earlier, the GBC policy paper entitled "Harmonizing Lines of Authority" elaborates on the relationship between ISKCON, the GBC, and the *dikṣā-gurus*.

The following are specific categories of the types of problems ISKCON faces in regard to this topic.

- [Notes](#)

1. A question that needs to be resolved by the GBC is what about associated and affiliated organizations and projects? Because the concept and structuring of affiliates and associates have not yet been established and implemented in ISKCON, it is not possible for this paper to address these issues. A separate committee, chaired by Devakinandana prabhu and Nanda Kishore prabhu, will prepare a draft proposal specifically addressing the issues of affiliates and associates and present that to the GBC for review.

Our committee has crafted the proposal in hand so that the issue of affiliates and associates can be dealt with later on, while the rest of the proposal can move forward now. Let us at least get these basic principles approved and in place. The GBC can then review and approve the issue of affiliates and associates when Devakinandana prabhu and Nanda Kishore prabhu have their work ready for that review.

2. The paper you have in your hands is Part One of this effort. After the GBC has approved the principles presented below, Part Two can then be crafted. Part Two will lay out the details of the practical application of those principles. But the GBC needs to first approve the principles and then the practices can be crafted.
3. The categories and examples below have come from the two worldwide surveys and the many interviews with leaders and devotees in general that were carried out by our committee. The categories and examples below came up again and again.
4. Out of Vaisnava etiquette, we have avoided mentioning any names or specific projects.

- **Types of problems**

1. **Exploiting disciples for personal benefit:**

ISKCON's resources (manpower, funds, and other facilities) should not be used by *dīkṣā-gurus* for their personal benefit beyond what is reasonable and necessary. What is "reasonable and necessary", will be detailed in Part Two of this initiative.

Disciples are naturally inclined to serve their *dīkṣā-guru*, and this service attitude is essential for the disciples' spiritual growth. These guidelines are intended only to avoid extreme situations, those in which the line is crossed from the natural, modest, and simple services offered by the disciple to those actions that are excessive and even exploitative.

Again, the details and parameters of what is "natural, modest, and simple" and what is considered to be "excessive and exploitative" will be laid out in Part Two.

Some examples:

- a) *Dīkṣā-gurus* asking disciples to take care of a member of the guru's family for extended periods (when this a clear hardship for the disciple's personal and or spiritual life)
- b) Extravagant personal gifts (what is "extravagant" will be defined in Part Two)

2. **Recruiting disciples for "pet" projects:**

A *dīkṣā-guru* should avoid drawing disciples away from the disciples' established services to instead serve in the *dīkṣā-guru's* personally favored or "pet" project. Changes in service should be done in accordance with the principles and practices established in the GBC paper "Harmonizing Lines of Authority."

At the same time, if the disciple has no regular, steady engagement in ISKCON and the diksha guru encourages the disciple to take up a specific ISKCON service, then that is much appreciated. In such a case, this kind of direction and encouragement benefits both the disciple and ISKCON. Just to be clear, this applies to unengaged, “free-floating” congregational members. It is not intended as a rationale for a *dikṣā-guru* to pull those temple staff or congregational members who are already engaged in service at the local temple or project away from those services. As a general rule, the *dikṣā-guru* has a duty to connect the disciples to the local ISKCON temple, project, and or congregational sanga as far as possible.

No need for examples. This is a problem many ISKCON managers and devotees have experienced.

3. Dual Roles / Both as Manager & Dikṣā-Guru:

When engaging a disciple in service, a *dikṣā-guru* should keep in mind the duty to protect the disciple’s spiritual well-being. One should be careful not to use the position of *dikṣā-guru* to accomplish managerial purposes that result in the disciple’s being put into a prolonged situation that adversely affects the disciple’s *sādhana* and consciousness. From time to time, short-term pressing needs can be accommodated, but these should be the exception, not the norm.

Example: When a disciple is all alone in a preaching center or other project and is obviously struggling, the *dikṣā-guru* should not insist that the disciple must stay there all alone. The *dikṣā-guru* needs to address the situation and care for the disciple’s spiritual needs.

4. Favoritism toward one’s disciples:

In engaging devotees in service, *dikṣā-gurus* should be careful to avoid favoring their disciples over devotees not initiated by them. Also, one should avoid the mood of engaging only one’s own disciples in key management roles in a temple, project, zone, etc. This principle applies whether or not the *dikṣā-guru* is personally in a management role. After all, a *dikṣā-guru* can exert this influence even if the *dikṣā-guru* is not the local GBC or in a local management role.

This dynamic of only having disciples of a certain *dikṣā-guru* in key management roles may be generated by the disciples of the *dikṣā-guru* and not necessarily by the *dikṣā-guru* directly. *Dikṣā-gurus* should be aware of the potential for this problem to arise and thus train and monitor their disciples to avoid this.

- **Practical Examples**

1. Regularly recurring festivals, special events, etc.

Here we are not referring to one-time-only events but to those that recur regularly. *Dikṣā-gurus* and their assistants organizing these programs must work in harmony with the local, national, and regional *yātrā*’s long-term strategies. Also, such programs should not be held at a time that conflicts with the local, national, or regional *yātrā*’s major festivals or events. Major recurring programs should have a GBC member assigned to them to facilitate communication and cooperation.

2. One-off preaching programs (retreats, seminars, and other programs) that conflict with the local, national, or regional yātrā

Sometimes *dikṣā-gurus* visit a *yātrā* and schedule events to be held at the same time as a local, national, or regional ISKCON event. This can drain energy, support, and attendance from the latter. We are referring to programs held at the same time as major festival days like Gaurā-pūrnimā, Janmāṣṭamī, and Ratha-yātrā. Additionally, sometimes the local temple or national or regional *yātrā* schedules a significant event aside from the major Vaiṣṇava holiday and *dikṣā-gurus* schedule programs that conflict with the local temple's or yatra's event. The practice should be that *dikṣā-gurus* do not schedule programs that compete or conflict with the events of the local temple or yatra. Rather, the *dikṣā-gurus* should be flexible in scheduling their travel dates so that there is no such serious conflict. If there is a serious conflict, then the *dikṣā-gurus* should defer to the local, national, or regional authorities and change the dates of their visit or their programs.

3. Dikṣā-gurus' disciple databases

The GBC resolution on databases, approved in 2018 (as a re-affirmation of an earlier resolution from 1994), is very clear: *dikṣā-gurus* are expected to share their disciple databases with the GBC-appointed committee on databases. It is the duty of this paper to remind ISKCON's *dikṣā-gurus* of this GBC resolution and to underscore the obligation of the *dikṣā-gurus* to comply. The personal relationship between the *dikṣā-gurus* and their disciple is one of the essential and sacred principles of spiritual life. The GBC recognizes and deeply appreciates this. At the same time, those disciples are also members of ISKCON. Many of the members of ISKCON, long before they ever had any contact with their *dikṣā-guru*, received Srila Prabhupada's books and were cultivated in their spiritual life by the local temples. Even after initiation, it is often the local temple devotees who are the primary guides and significant sources of inspiration in the disciples' daily lives.

Let us underline again the importance of ISKCON devotees and members of our congregations feeling that they are part of the "greater ISKCON", of knowing and feeling that they are part of Srila Prabhupada's worldwide mission. To achieve this worthy goal, it is vital that ISKCON's leadership is aware of who the members of ISKCON are and to be able to connect with them. Being able to do so will enhance the *dikṣā-gurus'* good work. By sharing their disciple databases, they can be confident that their good work will be enhanced and built upon through communication, devotee care, etc. that are provided by ISKCON and the GBC. Thus, everyone's interest in caring for devotees and spreading the Hare Krishna movement on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda will be served.

If we may be candid, sometimes *dikṣā-gurus* fall down or leave ISKCON. In such cases, ISKCON needs to be able reach out and console the disciples and help them stay connected to ISKCON.

Importantly, in order for *dikṣā-gurus* to trust their data bases to such a system, the GBC needs to put in place policies and practices to protect confidentiality and to avoid unwanted fund-raising appeals.

See Appendix 1 for the relevant GBC resolution.

See Appendix 4 for

See Appendix 5 / "Memo on ISKCON Data base (compliance with EURGDPR).

4. Finances and fund-raising of *dikṣā gurus*

As noted in the introduction, leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all represent Śrīla Prabhupāda. As such, they should be careful not to risk tarnishing his spotless reputation by accumulating and spending funds without accountability. After all, these are ultimately Srila Prabhupada's funds and should be managed properly and transparently.

As already mandated in ISKCON law, all *dikṣā-gurus* must file standard annual financial reports and comply with the principle of full disclosure.

See Appendix 2

5. Businesses managed or directed by *dikṣā-gurus*

Dikṣā-gurus doing business to support ISKCON need to be accountable. They should start a business only when it is absolutely necessary to support the preaching mission. Ideally, *dikṣā-gurus* should not be involved in business. Best if they can engage competent devotees to manage the business or, if they are currently involved, they should work to hand over the management to competent devotees as soon as possible. The aim should be to have the *dikṣā-gurus* remain at arm's length from the business.

For such businesses, there must be a clear, written statement with the following elements:

- a) The position of devotees working in the business must be defined. They must be doing so voluntarily and not under pressure of the order of their *dikṣā-guru*.
- b) There must be a clear disclosure of salary / devotee maintenance intended and received.
- c) Devotees working in the business must be provided a fair living wage / devotee maintenance.
- d) There must be a clear statement of the terms, conditions, and purpose of disciples' working in the business.

Risks to be avoided:

- a) Asking or pressuring disciples to invest in the business.
- b) Asking or pressuring disciples to refinance / mortgage their homes or to put their or their family's financial future at risk to fund the business.

Repeated in #9 below "Financial Pressure".

All such businesses must:

- a) Receive the written approval of the local GBC
- b) Receive the written approval of the local *yātrā*'s leadership
- c) Have a clear, written statement of intent, purposes, and practices (the items mentioned above). This statement must include potential conflicts of interest and how these will be resolved.

Additionally, ISKCON funds should be used only for ISKCON's nonprofit projects. The principle is that ISKCON's funds should not be used to start or to support a "for profit" business.

6. Creation of structures parallel to ISKCON

Here is the challenge. Some disciples come to think, "I have my *dīkṣā-guru*, I have *saṅga*, and I have *sevā*," and thus they become a world unto themselves, centered around their *dīkṣā-guru*. The disciples see no need to interact with the rest of ISKCON.

It is a natural tendency for disciples to feel "I have my spiritual family" (the community of disciples initiated by the same *dīkṣā-guru*). Such a community view is a valuable support for their spiritual lives. At the same time, disciples should be trained to also see the need and value of being part of the greater ISKCON family. The principles and practices of this proposal are intended to help devotees develop this sense of belonging to the worldwide ISKCON community. Implementing the principles outlined in this proposal will help ISKCON avoid becoming a loose confederation only, with each group centered solely around their *dīkṣā-guru*.

Additional challenges arise when the *dīkṣā-guru*'s organization becomes a structure separate from ISKCON—a legal entity entitled to hold property, etc. With this practice, in due course, valuable assets will be held outside ISKCON's purview or even without ISKCON's knowledge that they exist. Thus, the work of ISKCON's Global Property Office in developing standards, procedures, and monitoring is of key importance. *Dīkṣā-gurus*, like all leaders in ISKCON, are expected to follow the guidelines, standards, and procedures given by ISKCON's Global Property Office

7. Publishing and distribution of the *dīkṣā-gurus*' books

As with *dīkṣā-gurus*' databases, there is a GBC resolution on this point:

Whereas: There is a need for the GBC to ensure that ISKCON centers predominantly distribute the books of the BBT, rather than those of other publishers,

Resolved: No ISKCON temple or zone should do mass book distribution of non-BBT books in a proportion greater than, in total, 5% of the value of the BBT books distributed.

(Resolution 411 from 2004)

This resolution was put in place because disciples may become overly focused on distributing their *dīkṣā-guru*'s books, thus causing a significant decrease in the distribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the preeminent *śīkṣā-guru* for all ISKCON devotees, for now and for the future. His books have a special potency to turn the hearts of the conditioned souls toward Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service. Therefore, ISKCON's *dīkṣā-gurus* should instruct their disciples to appreciate the essential importance of both reading and of distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. ISKCON's *dīkṣā-gurus* should instruct their disciples to follow the above GBC resolution.

8. Canvassing by disciples

Diksha gurus need to be aware of the tendency of some of their disciples to steer new / young devotees towards taking initiation from the disciples' own diksha guru. Enthusiasm and affection for one's diksha guru is natural, but when it becomes repressive pressure, it creates a "diksha guru cult" atmosphere.

There is a variation of this. Sometime a disciple is in charge of temple or preaching center and pushes only their own diksha guru. They do not present or support the option of other diksha gurus for initiation.

Diksha gurus need to be aware of these tendencies and to correct their disciples when they see these patterns developing.

See Appendix 3 for existing GBC resolutions

9. Financial pressure on disciples

As mentioned earlier, diksha gurus should not pressure disciples to invest in businesses. Additionally, diksha gurus should not ask or pressure disciples to refinance / mortgage their homes or to put their or their family's financial situation at risk.

- **Principles for projects**

The following are general principles that should be practiced for all ISKCON projects, including all *dīkṣā-guru*-inspired projects. (Note: By "*guru inspired projects*" we mean ideas for a project that may come from a diksha guru, but that have been vetted and approved by the local leadership, regional council, and local GBC(s).)

- a) Projects should be undertaken in coordination with the local *yātrā*, regional body, and local GBC. They should not be "*islands unto themselves*".
- b) Projects should get approval / authorization *beforehand* from the local regional body and local GBC. The diksha guru should not push for the project before it is approved by the above listed local management.

- c) The *dikṣā-gurus* should not “fire up” their disciples about a project before the project is approved by the local regional body and local GBC. Otherwise, if the project is ultimately not approved, then the local regional body and local GBC may be seen by the disciples as going against the will and vision of their *dikṣā-guru*.
- d) As a general rule, projects should be in ISKCON’s name.
- e) There will be some situations where the local laws or special circumstances do not allow for a project to be in ISKCON’s name. There may be situations where having a project in ISKCON’s name would put the project and devotees at risk. In such cases, the *dikṣā-guru*, project’s management team, and the GBC assigned to the project should consult with the Global Property Office for approval and to craft the appropriate plan for such an exemption.
- f) A key to success is regular and open communication between the *dikṣā-gurus* and the local and regional ISKCON authorities and the appropriate ISKCON agencies.

- **Disclaimers**

- a) Affiliates and Associates

As mentioned previously in the “Notes” section, a question to be resolved by the GBC in the process of reviewing this proposal is what about associated and affiliated organizations and projects? Because the concept and structuring of affiliates and associates have not yet been established and implemented in ISKCON, it is not possible for this paper to address these issues. The GBC needs to resolve how it wants to proceed in these areas. As you will see, where affiliates and associates fit into ISKCON’s structure is a key issue that needs to be resolved.

Our committee has crafted the version of this proposal in hand so that the issue of affiliates and associates can be dealt with later on, while the balance of the proposal can move forward now. Let us at least get these basic principles approved and put in place. The GBC can then review and approve the issue of affiliates and associates when Devakinandana prabhu and the team working with him have their work ready for that review.

- b) Retroactive?

Is the application of these principles and expected practices retroactive? That will be determined in Part Two / Implementation. They are certainly expected hence forward (from August 31st 2024.

- c) Online platforms: websites, social media, etc.

The following situation is not addressed in this paper. This is because these are areas that as of yet are not clearly defined by the GBC .How does the GBC want to deal with on-line platforms, websites, and social media and their connection to ISKCON and the GBC? Our committee determined that these areas are beyond the scope of this paper. They should be dealt with by another committee, focused exclusively on these issues.

d) Grihastha projects inspired by their *dikṣā-guru*

What about projects started by grihastha devotees by the inspiration of their *dikṣā-guru*? If it is their private affair, fine. But what about when such a project starts fund raising in ISKCON's name, promoting itself as an ISKCON project, and or draws ISKCON devotees to serve in such a project? As mentioned earlier, this is another example of the need for the GBC to develop principles and practices for "affiliated" and "associated" projects. Devakinandana prabhu and Nanda Kisore prabhu are working on this.

e) Definition of an ISKCON Project

Someone suggested that we need a definition of what an ISKCON project is first. It was decided that the GBC needs to assign a separate committee focused on drafting this definition. The work is going to need much input, including legal review. We do not want to hold up this Guru Projects proposal while the definition of an ISKCON project is drafted and approve.

f) The guidelines in this paper may be modified as needed by a 2/3 vote of the international GBC.

- **Conclusion**

The motivations for this proposal are several:

This proposal is offered as a service to ISKCON's *dikṣā-gurus*, the GBC, and other ISKCON leaders. Currently, there are no clear standards regarding *guru-dakṣiṇā* and "*guru inspired projects*." This proposal is intended to provide standards and guidelines to help *dikṣā-gurus* know if they are acting according to established best practices.

By implementing this proposal, the GBC will help protect the reputation of ISKCON and its leaders.

The intent of this proposal is to further harmonious working relationships between ISKCON's *dikṣā-gurus*, other ISKCON leaders, and the local *yātrās* and temples.

By defining a process of approval and review for large projects, it will help ensure that ISKCON resources are used strategically and with the enthusiastic support of local leaders and *yātrās*.

Without the unifying factors of approval, monitoring, reporting, and accountability, there is every chance that ISKCON will eventually devolve into an organization where the *dikṣā-gurus* hold sway and the GBC and other ISKCON leaders are disempowered and disregarded.

This proposal is intended to help address the occasional phenomena of *dikṣā-gurus* falling down and or leaving ISKCON. In this sad event, there is then the subsequent result of ISKCON losing a number of the disciples initiated by such *dikṣā-gurus*, sometimes along with property, local congregations, and other assets.

Thus, considering the benefits and concerns above, this proposal is of deep importance. It deals with core issues that are key to ISKCON's successful future.

(end)

APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1**
Initiated Devotee Database Resolution

Resolution 2018

303: Creation of the ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database:

Whereas there is a need for a global repository of information on ISKCON initiated devotees for purposes of communication, care, legacy concerns, and unity of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s family;

Whereas there are precedents in which the GBC called for such a repository to be created; for example, in the following GBC resolutions:

“That all devotees currently having databases of disciples (for reunions, disciples records, etc.) should provide a copy for the Database Manager.” (1994)

“That all initiating spiritual masters of ISKCON shall provide biographical information on all their disciples to the Global Database manager . . . a report on new disciples will be provided to the Global Database at least once a year at the time of the Mayapur festival.” (1996);

Resolved: The ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database is hereby established; all ISKCON initiating spiritual masters (and others who might be managing databases of departed diksa-gurus) shall share their disciple database with this repository upon request and on a regular basis.

The ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database will provide a secure platform for storage, collation, information processing and management reporting, and should regularly update the database for meaningful data analysis and data mining.

The database shall be owned by the Governing Body Commission and shall not be used for any other purpose without the written authorization of the Governing Body Commission.

The ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database shall provide all initiating spiritual masters with the technical platform and relevant training for effectively maintaining and operating their individual disciples’ database (within the Initiated Devotees Global Database).

The Manager of the ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database shall develop systems for handling information requests. Caitanya Avatari Das is appointed as the Manager of the ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database.

- **Appendix 2**

Financial disclosure for all ISKCON leaders including dikṣā-gurus

Resolution 1

614/2000 Financial Disclosure of Leaders Including Guru-daksina (as subsequently amended)

WHEREAS, financial disclosure for ISKCON leaders requires that "all GBC members, gurus, sannyasis and international project directors" file annual financial reports;

WHEREAS, there is a need to expand the financial reporting of ISKCON leaders and this should be done prior to any further discussion of specific regulation of guru-daksina;

IT IS RESOLVED THAT:

614 [LAW]

1. All GBC Body members, gurus, and sannyasis, as well as GBC-appointed Ministers, International Project Directors, and anyone else who receives funds for activities that are directly authorized by the GBC Body, regardless of the source of those funds, are required to file annual personal financial reports to the Executive Committee of the GBC Body and, where requested, their national executive body. These reports shall contain a standard Income Statement and Balance Sheet (to be reported in Quickbooks or other standard software format). The report should also include a list of all ISKCON-related bank accounts (including account names, signers and balance) for which these individuals are a signer or have some control. All guru-daksina must be included in this report.

2. Within the definition of the previous resolution regarding reportable income, all income and non-monetary gifts over USD \$1,000 must be itemized according to source.

[NOTE: US-based preachers are reminded that all gifts over US\$10,000 and income from inheritance or family trusts must be reported to the IRS.]

3. All annual reports must be submitted by January 31st of each year and be signed with the following statement:

I solemnly swear that this report represents a true and accurate statement of my financial activity and status for the previous year.

Name _____ Date _____

Resolution 2

305/2007. Financial Reports of Trusts

[Action Order]

WHEREAS ISKCON Law states that "all GBC Body members, gurus, sannyasis and international project directors are required to file annual personal financial reports to the Executive Committee of the GBC Body and, where requested, their national executive body";

AND WHEREAS personal financial reports alone may not give a complete picture of the financial dealings of a leader;

RESOLVED:

Any ISKCON leader required to submit an annual personal financial report will include in that report a list of all trusts or other legal entities, except for ISKCON entities, for which they have some measure of direct or indirect control. Reports will include the entity's purpose and their relationship to it. Trusts or other legal entities whose assets come entirely from activities in householder life or family sources - - for example an inheritance -- need not be reported. The GBC secretary will make the necessary adjustments to the financial reporting form.

- **Appendix 3**

Canvassing / Pressuring for a specific diksha guru

Relevant existing GBC resolutions

Under TP's role:

5.6.2.5.6.4 Guru-Disciple Relationships

1. Must encourage all devotees to establish a relationship with an ISKCON guru.
2. Must not canvas for a particular guru.

Under standards for guru:

7.4.4.1 General Standards

1. Must always set the highest example for all devotees.
2. Must guide disciples to follow Srila Prabhupada's instructions.
3. Must protect and nourish the faith of all ISKCON devotees in their gurus, in Srila Prabhupada, and in Sri Krsna.
4. Must encourage newcomers' faith in ISKCON and protect the faith of existing members.
5. Must not give initiation until the process as detailed in 7.4.1 has been fully completed.
6. Must not canvass for disciples.
7. Must allow all uninitiated devotees full freedom to exercise their right to accept initiation from the guru of their choice.
8. Must allow uninitiated devotees who have preliminarily taken shelter of him the full freedom to change their minds on their choice of initiating guru.
9. Since the guru-daksina received by an ISKCON guru is the property of ISKCON, it must be used for the benefit of the Krsna consciousness movement.

All guru-daksina must be kept in a special account, preferably an ISKCON account, with at least two signatures, and accurate account records must be kept.

Under Reasons to discipline gurus:

Misconduct and Failure to Follow Religious Principles or Higher Spiritual Authority

1. Wilful violation of GBC resolutions, in particular, but not limited to, deviating from ISKCON's procedural requirements, such as canvassing for disciples, or not obtaining permission from local authorities before initiating someone, or being neglectful in the standard spiritual practices.

- **Appendix 4**

Disciple Data Base Consent Form

For use when collecting personal data in/from the European Union

Required by European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 ("EUGDPR")

To Be Signed By Individual Providing Personal Data

Dear _____ (name of disciple you are collecting data from),

Hare Krishna,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

1. We are collecting personal data from you for purposes of collating a disciples' database that will be helpful for communication, care, legacy and unity of Srila Prabhupada's family. In this connection, please see attached a copy of the Resolution for your kind attention.
2. ISKCON's Governing Body Commission ("the GBC") through its Zonal Secretaries [Name the entity or person managing this database] is the controller of your personal data. You may contact _____ at _____ or by phone and email at: [Insert Name and Contact Info of Person Requesting Personal Data].
3. Your personal data will be used for the following purposes by the GBC:
 - To determine an accurate number of initiated devotees in ISKCON
 - To improve communication channels with initiated devotees in ISKCON
 - To better serve the needs of initiated devotees in ISKCON
4. The categories of personal data that you are being asked to consent to the GBC's collection and use of are your name, address, email address, telephone number and [include description of any other personal data to be collected].
5. The GBC will share your personal data with third party software providers who collect, store and process your personal data on behalf of the GBC and who are contractually obligated to

keep your personal data confidential subject to appropriate safeguards to prevent it from unauthorized disclosure. The GBC also intends to share your personal data with: **[identify all units and third parties that will receive personal data]**.

6. Your personal data will be stored in accordance with the record retention requirements applicable to _____ as a public institution of _____, and any other applicable _____ laws. Under the EUGDPR, you have the right to request access to, rectify, erase and restrict the processing of your personal data. You also have the right to revoke this consent to use your personal data. If you feel the GBC has violated the EUGDPR, you have the right to file a complaint with the appropriate EU supervisory authority.

Please [sign/electronically sign], date and return by [email/submit] the below:

I consent to the GBC using my personal data for the purposes described in this notice and understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

Name of Individual providing Consent:

Address of Individual providing Consent:

Signature:

Date of Signature: _____

End of template for Appendix 4

- **Appendix 5**

Memo on ISKCON Disciple Data Base

A. Background

1. That ISKCON has resolved to develop a global database containing information on ISKCON initiated devotees (formally termed the 'ISKCON Initiated Devotees Global Database', referred to hereinafter as "**the Database**").
2. The Database shall be owned by the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON.

3. The Database shall contain the information of devotees from all around the world. Accordingly, ISKCON is concerned with ensuring that data collection, use and processing comply with applicable law, in particular, data protection laws of the European Union.

B. Scope

4. This memo addresses the following: -
 - a. General principles underlying the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);
 - b. Requirements for collection of personal data under the GDPR; and
 - c. Applicable rules on sharing/transfer of personal data outside of the EU

C. General Principles

5. The GDPR sets out the following general principles underlying data protection laws in the EU:
 - a. Lawfulness, fairness and transparency;
 - b. Purpose Limitation;
 - c. Data Minimisation;
 - d. Accuracy;
 - e. Storage Limitation;
 - f. Integrity and Confidentiality; and
 - g. Accountability
6. These principles are significant to note as they permeate the entirety of the GDPR. Generally, ISKCON's data policy and/or any development of the Database should be done against the backdrop of the abovementioned principles.
7. Apart from this, ISKCON's GBC, as the owner and controller of the data, must implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to **ensure** and to **be able to demonstrate** that data processing is complied with the GDPR. The measures adopted, including data protection policies, shall be reviewed and updated where necessary.
8. The GBC operating in EU should designate in writing a representative in the EU that shall be responsible for compliance with the GDPR as long as the Database contains monitoring of behaviour of data subjects within the EU and/or offering services to data subjects in the EU.

D. Rules on Sharing/Transfer of Personal Data (within and across jurisdictions)

Where personal data is to be transferred outside the EU, the provisions of the GDPR continue to apply to the data controller and/or data processor to ensure that the personal data is protected.

See Art 44 & Recital 101 GDPR

A transfer of personal data to another country or to an international organisation may take place if the Data Protection Commission has found that the country/international organisation **ensures an adequate level of data protection**.

See Art 45(1) GDPR

Alternatively, data may be transferred to a foreign jurisdiction or international organisation if ISKCON has provided **appropriate safeguards** and where (1) enforceable data subjects rights and (2) effective legal remedies for data subjects are available.

See Art 46(1) GDPR

- **Appendix 6**

Affiliates and Associates

Due to legal and other considerations, in some cases it might be necessary or beneficial for the mission of ISKCON to establish entities that are not directly, legally, or formally ISKCON Organizations, and which operate independently of ISKCON, but which pursue and/or support all or part of ISKCON's purposes.

Policies regarding the relationship and interaction between ISKCON and such entities, including possible recognition by ISKCON in some form, may from time to time be established by the GBC.

(end)