

# Market Research Society of India

## Professional Standards Committee

### Mission and Background

The purpose of the MRSI Professional Standards Committee (PSC) is to strengthen the professional self-regulation and promote high standards of research and ethics in marketing research through the adoption of the MRSI and ICC/ESOMAR codes, guidelines and standards as well as through disciplinary action for members found in violation of the aforementioned. Having an active PSC whose functioning is transparent will add to the stature of the MRSI and would increase the credibility of its members forming the basis for greater trust between MRSI members, their clients, partners, and the general public.

### Scope of the PSC

The PSC will look into complaints raised by research agencies, research buyers, and service providers against current MRSI members. These complaints can be from members of the general public, research organizations with or without MRSI membership, employees of research organizations with or without MRSI membership, or other sources. Complaints reviewed by the PSC will be those of a nature regarding a potential violation of the adopted and applicable MRSI Code or ICC/ESOMAR codes, guidelines and standards. All other complaints should be deemed out of scope for the PSC. In supporting these responsibilities, the PSC will also create a framework to record and review complaints regarding the profession from members of the general public and other stakeholders. *Note.* In the case that a complaint is against a member of the PSC or their organization, they will recuse themselves from the review process – in consultation with the Chair of the PSC, the Managing Committee may appoint an alternative representative from the Managing Committee to sit in their place for the process.

The PSC and Managing Committee (through the PSC) can also take suo moto cognizance of a violation of the applicable MRSI or ICC/ESOMAR code of conduct and guidelines, especially with respect to the publication of research findings which puts the violation in the public domain and can impact the reputation of the profession.

Members of the MRSI may also consult the PSC about the provisions of the MRSI code and its interpretation and standards of best practice.

### Composition of the PSC

The PSC should have representation from all segments of corporate membership. The total strength of the PSC will be five nominated members, with not more than two members from each of the three membership types viz:

1. Full-service research agencies;
2. Research buyers; and
3. Service providers.

One member of the Managing Committee will serve as Chair of the PSC. The Director General of the MRSI will serve on the committee in an ex officio capacity. The committee will therefore have the following composition:

- Chair;
- Four members;
- Director General of the MRSI; .

The members of the PSC shall be appointed for a term of two years by the MRSI Managing Committee. The office term shall be renewable. Upon retirement of the Chair of the PSC, a replacement shall be nominated by the President of the MRSI Managing Committee with said nomination being subject to approval by the Managing Committee.

The committee may call on others for opinion for their domain specific expertise to provide advice from among members as well as other organizations (e.g., security, audit). These individuals will only provide expert opinion but will not have any voting rights on the matter of interest.

### Investigative Powers

The PSC is empowered to investigate on the complaint against a member either by themselves or through external partners and associates. All MRSI members will provide reasonable support to the investigation by the PSC.

### Cost of an Investigation

The cost of an investigation shall be borne by the complainant to which the complainant may to recover from the complaine should the PSC uphold the complaint. In the case that there is no external complaint and the investigation has resulted from the PSC taking suo moto cognizance of a potential violation, the investigation costs will be borne by the MRSI through the MRSI annual operating budget. If the PSC finds that there has indeed been a violation from the member, this investigative cost shall be recovered from the member.

### Adjudication

Following the investigation process, the PSC shall determine if there has indeed been a violation from the member through means of a majority vote. Any dissenting views will be captured and provided to the Managing Committee. Results of the adjudication process will be provided to the Managing Committee, along with recommended disciplinary action, within 30 days of the adjudication for ratification.

In the case of the recommendation of Disciplinary action, the PSC may engage the retained MRSI lawyer, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure all communication of the decision and disciplinary action is legally sound.

The member will be notified of the adjudication result and the disciplinary action within 14-days of the adjudication.

Given the sensitive nature of complaints, only the designated personnel of Managing Committee and PSC will have access to the information supporting the investigation as well as the process.

## Appeals Process

The MRSI Managing Committee will serve as the final body for appeal, in case the PSC decision is not acceptable to either party. An appeal must be received within thirty days of the member being notified of the adjudication results via means of a formal letter from the complainee. The formal request for appeal must be sent to the MRSI office either in hard or soft copy. Post that time period, the ratified decision will be considered final and the decision would no longer be open to review or appeal against the decision.

## Disciplinary Actions Available to the PSC

The following disciplinary actions are available to the PSC, at its sole discretion, for recommendation:

1. Termination of MRSI membership;
2. Informing public at large about the termination of membership via website, newsletters, and/or press releases; and/or
3. The PSC decision may be submitted as supporting evidence for the complainant in the case in which the complaint has been taken to a court of law or for arbitration.

In determining the appropriate action, the PSC will consider the severity of the issue as well as the frequency, if any, of issues by the complainee.