SOP: Fact-finding and Information Gathering Procedures

This SOP describes the **fact-finding and information gathering procedures** essential for accurately collecting, verifying, and documenting relevant data. It covers systematic techniques for identifying sources, conducting interviews, organizing evidence, and maintaining confidentiality. The goal is to ensure the integrity and reliability of information used for decision-making, investigations, or analysis by applying structured and ethical approaches throughout the process.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized methods for gathering, verifying, and documenting factual information relevant to organizational investigations, analysis, or decision-making.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees or team members engaged in fact-finding or data collection processes within the organization.

3. Responsibilities

- **Fact-Finding Team/Investigator:** Conducts data collection and documentation as per procedure.
- **Supervisor/Manager:** Reviews collected information and ensures process compliance.
- **Confidentiality Officer/Data Protection Lead:** Advises on protection of sensitive data.

4. Procedure

Step	Description	Responsible	Documentation
4.1	Define objective and scope of fact-finding.	Fact-Finding Team	Fact-finding Brief/Terms of Reference
4.2	Identify and list potential sources of information (documents, people, digital records, sites, etc.).	Fact-Finding Team	Source List
4.3	Develop a fact-finding plan, including methods and timelines.	Fact-Finding Team	Fact-finding Plan
4.4	Collect information using approved methods (interviews, document review, observation, etc.).	Fact-Finding Team	Interview Notes, Evidence Logs
4.5	Evaluate and verify information for accuracy and reliability (cross-reference, corroborate sources).	Fact-Finding Team	Verification Records
4.6	Organize and catalog evidence and data securely.	Fact-Finding Team	Evidence Catalog, Secure Storage
4.7	Maintain confidentiality and secure all sensitive information per policy.	Fact-Finding Team, Confidentiality Officer	Access Logs, Confidentiality Agreements
4.8	Document findings in a clear, factual report, citing all sources and methods.	Fact-Finding Team	Fact-finding Report
4.9	Submit report for supervisory review and archiving per retention policy.	Fact-Finding Team, Supervisor	Submission Records, Archived Reports

5. Confidentiality and Ethics

- All information must be handled in accordance with legal, regulatory, and organizational requirements.

- Sources and subjects must be informed about confidentiality and data protection as appropriate.
- Bias must be avoided in collection, interpretation, and reporting of information.

6. Records Management

- All records, notes, and reports must be securely stored for the period specified in the organization's retention policy.
- Access to records must be limited to authorized personnel only.

7. References

- Organization's Code of Conduct
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Investigation Guidelines/Manual (if applicable)

8. Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
2024-06-08	1.0	Initial SOP release	[Author Name]