

## IPCC 34<sup>th</sup> SESSION, 18-19 NOVEMBER 2011, KAMPALA, UGANDA

### DECISIONS TAKEN WITH RESPECT TO THE REVIEW OF IPCC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY \*

##### Decision

Recalling the Decision of the Panel at its 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 10-13 May 2011, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to adopt the "IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy" as annexed to this Decision;

Recalling the Decision of the Panel at its 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 10-13 May 2011, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to extend the mandate of the Task Group on Conflict of Interest Policy to develop proposals for Annexes to the Policy covering Implementation Procedures and the Disclosure Form with a view to adopting a Decision at the IPCC 34<sup>th</sup> Session;

Recalling that the Working Groups and Task Force Bureaux have adopted interim arrangements for dealing with conflict of interest issues and that those arrangements are broadly consistent with the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy;

##### At its 34<sup>th</sup> Session, the Panel:

1. *Adopted* the Conflict of Interest Implementation Procedures contained in the attached Annex A to the Conflict of Interest Policy and decided that those procedures will apply, as soon as they are adopted, to individuals who are subject to the Conflict of Interest Policy.
2. *Decided* to establish a Conflict of Interest Committee ("the COI Committee") comprising all elected members of the Executive Committee and two additional members with appropriate legal expertise from UNEP and WMO, appointed by those organisations.
3. *Also decided* to establish an Expert Advisory Group on Conflict of Interest.
4. *Noted* that the Working Groups and Task Force Bureaux have adopted interim arrangements for dealing with conflict of interest issues and that those arrangements are broadly consistent with the Conflict of Interest Policy.
5. *Decided* that, in order to ensure a smooth transition, the existing interim arrangements will continue to operate, in respect of individuals who are not Bureau members, until the Executive Committee decides that the implementation procedures apply to those individuals.
6. *Invited* the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to select members of the Expert Advisory Group on Conflict of Interest ("the COI Expert Advisory Group"), and to facilitate the establishment of the COI Committee as soon as possible.
7. *Requested* IPCC and Task Force Bureaux Members to submit to the Secretariat a Conflict of Interest Form (as contained in Annex B to the Conflict of Interest Policy) within three months after the adoption of the Implementation Procedures for consideration in accordance with the relevant parts of those procedures.

\* [The Conflict of Interest Policy was amended at the 44th Session of the IPCC \(Bangkok, 17-20 October 2016\)](#)

8. *Decided* to receive a report on the operation of the COI Expert Advisory Group and the COI Committee, within twelve months of their establishment, and to review their operations as appropriate, within twelve months after the next bureaux election(s).
9. *Noted* that the COI Committee will develop its own methods of working and apply those on an interim basis pending approval by the Panel and decided that the COI Committee should, within twelve months of its establishment, submit its methods of working to the Panel for its approval.

DECISIONS TAKEN WITH RESPECT TO THE REVIEW OF IPCC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

**Decision**

**Recalling** the recommendation of the InterAcademy Council (IAC) on IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy that the IPCC should “develop and adopt a rigorous conflict of interest policy that applies to all individuals directly involved in the preparation of IPCC reports, including senior IPCC leadership (IPCC Chair and Vice Chairs), authors with responsibilities for report content (i.e., Working Group Co-Chairs, Coordinating Lead Authors, and Lead Authors), Review Editors, and technical staff directly involved in report preparation (e.g., staff of the Technical Support Units and the IPCC Secretariat)” and recalling the decisions taken at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session.

**At its 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, the Panel:**

*Adopted* the “*IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy*” as provided in Appendix 1 to this decision;

*Extended* the mandate of the Task Group on Conflict of Interest Policy in order to develop proposals for Annexes to the COI Policy covering Implementation and the Disclosure Form with a view to adopting a decision at the IPCC 34<sup>th</sup> Session;

*Decided to work towards* early implementation of the COI Policy with a view to bringing all those covered by the COI Policy within its remit as early as possible during the Fifth Assessment cycle and no later than the IPCC 35<sup>th</sup> Session.

*Noting* that Working Groups I and II, and the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI), have implemented, and Working Group III is in the process of designing, interim Conflict of Interest Policies that are broadly consistent with the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy at Appendix 1, the Panel:

*invited* the Task Group to consult the Working Groups and the TFI in developing proposals for Annexes on Implementation and the Disclosure Form;

*invited* the Task Group to develop proposals for Implementation and smooth transition of all three Working Groups and the TFI to the approved IPCC conflict of interest policy designing the details to the needs of each.

The Panel *invited* the Working Groups and the TFI, in taking forward their activities under the Fifth Assessment cycle, to take note of the Conflict of Interest Policy at Appendix 1 and ensure, as far as possible, that their actions are consistent with the Conflict of Interest Policy at Appendix 1.

## **IPCC CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

### **Purpose of the Policy**

1. The role of the IPCC as stated in paragraph 2 of the Principles Governing IPCC Work is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation. IPCC reports should be neutral with respect to policy, although they may need to deal objectively with scientific, technical and socio-economic factors relevant to the application of particular policies.
2. The role of the IPCC demands that it pay special attention to issues of independence and bias in order to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, its products and processes. It is essential that the work of the IPCC is not compromised by any conflict of interest for those who execute it.
3. The overall purpose of this policy is to protect the legitimacy, integrity, trust, and credibility of the IPCC and of those directly involved in the preparation of reports, and its activities. This policy is principles-based and does not provide an exhaustive list of criteria for the identification of such conflicts. The Panel recognizes the commitment and dedication of those who participate in IPCC activities. The policy should maintain the balance between the need to minimise the reporting burden, and to ensure the integrity of the IPCC process. In this way, it seeks to encourage participation and to ensure that the representativeness and geographic balance of the Panel is not impaired whilst continuing to build and maintain public trust.
4. The IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy is designed to ensure that conflicts of interest are identified, communicated to the relevant parties, and managed to avoid any adverse impact on IPCC balance, products and processes, thereby protecting the individual, the IPCC, and the public interest. The individual and the IPCC should not be placed in a situation that could lead a reasonable person to question, and perhaps discount or dismiss, the work of the IPCC simply because of the existence of a conflict of interest.
5. Identifying a potential conflict of interest does not automatically mean that a conflict of interest exists – the purpose of the policy is to enable individuals to provide the relevant information necessary for each particular situation to be evaluated.

### **Scope of the Policy**

6. This policy applies to senior IPCC leadership (the IPCC Chair, Vice Chairs, Working Group and Task Force Co-Chairs), other members of the IPCC Bureau and members of the Task Force Bureau, authors with responsibilities for report content (Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors), Review Editors and the professional staff of the Technical Support Units (TSUs).
7. The policy applies to the development of all IPCC products including but not limited to: assessment reports; special reports; methodology reports and technical papers.
8. The professional staff members of the IPCC Secretariat are employees of WMO and/or UNEP and are subject to their disclosure and ethics policies, which include conflict of interest.
9. The policy will be executed to reflect the various roles, responsibilities and levels of authority, of participants in the IPCC process. In particular, consideration should be given to whether responsibility is held at an individual level or shared within a team; to the level of influence held over the content of IPCC products.

10. The application of the conflict of interest policy to those elected to positions within the IPCC should reflect their specific responsibilities.

### Conflict of Interest

11. A “conflict of interest” refers to any current professional, financial or other interest which could: i) significantly impair the individual’s objectivity in carrying out his or her duties and responsibilities for the IPCC, or ii) create an unfair advantage for any person or organization. For the purposes of this policy, circumstances that could lead a reasonable person to question an individual’s objectivity, or whether an unfair advantage has been created, constitute a potential conflict of interest. These potential conflicts are subject to disclosure.

12. Conflict of interest policies in scientific assessment bodies typically make a distinction between “conflict of interest” and “bias,” which refers to a point of view or perspective that is strongly held regarding a particular issue or set of issues. In the case of author and review teams, bias can and should be managed through the selection of a balance of perspectives. For example, it is expected that IPCC author teams will include individuals with different perspectives and affiliations. Those involved in selecting authors will need to strive for an author team composition that reflects a balance of expertise and perspectives, such that IPCC products are comprehensive, objective, and neutral with respect to policy. In selecting these individuals, care must be taken to ensure that biases can be balanced where they exist. In contrast, conflict of interest exists where an individual could secure a direct and material gain through outcomes in an IPCC product. Holding a view that one believes to be correct, but that one does not stand to gain from personally is not a conflict of interest.

13. The conflict of interest requirements in this policy are not designed to include an assessment of one's behaviour or character or one's ability to act objectively despite the conflict of interest.

14. This policy applies only to current conflicts of interest. It does not apply to past interests that have expired, no longer exist, and cannot reasonably affect current behaviour. Nor does it apply to possible interests that may arise in the future but that do not currently exist, as such interests are inherently speculative and uncertain. For example, a pending application for a particular job is a current interest, but the mere possibility that one might apply for such a job in the future is not a current interest.

15. Professional and other non-financial interests need to be disclosed only if they are significant and relevant. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from the appropriate IPCC body as defined in Annex A. Significant and relevant interests may include, but are not limited to, senior editorial roles, advisory committees associated with private sector organizations, and memberships on boards of non-profit or advocacy groups. However, not all such associations necessarily constitute a conflict of interest.

16. Financial interests need to be disclosed only if they are significant and relevant. These may include, but are not limited to, the following kinds of financial interests: employment relationships; consulting relationships; financial investments; intellectual property interests; and commercial interests and sources of private-sector research support. Individuals should also disclose significant and relevant financial interests of any person with whom the individual has a substantial business or relevant shared interest. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from the appropriate IPCC body as defined in Annex A “Implementation”.

17. To prevent situations in which a conflict of interest may arise, individuals directly involved in or leading the preparation of IPCC reports should avoid being in a position to approve, adopt, or accept on behalf of any government the text in which he/she was directly involved.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES PREPARED BY THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST TASK GROUP**

### **Annex A: Implementation Procedures**

This annex sets out the procedures for implementing the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy (“**the COI Policy**”) which is contained in Appendix 1 to the Decision in relation to Conflicts of Interest adopted by the IPCC Panel at the IPCC’s 33<sup>rd</sup> session.

1. These Implementation Procedures are designed to ensure that conflicts of interest are identified, communicated to the relevant parties and managed to avoid any adverse impact on IPCC balance, products and processes and also to protect the individual, the IPCC and the public interest.
2. These Implementation Procedures apply to all conflicts of interest as defined in paragraph 11 of the COI Policy and apply to the individuals listed in paragraph 6 of that policy. Compliance with the COI Policy and Implementation Procedures is mandatory. An individual cannot participate in the IPCC’s work where he or she has not complied with the COI Policy and Implementation Procedures. Where a conflict of interest is identified, a person may only proceed to participate in IPCC activities if action is undertaken that resolves the conflict or the individual is an IPCC author subject to the provisions in paragraph 6 of these procedures.

*IPCC and Task Force Bureaux Members: Review process prior to appointment*

3. The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form (“the COI Form”) contained in Annex B to the COI Policy will be submitted to the Secretariat in respect of each nominee for election to the IPCC Bureau or Task Force Bureau. The COI Committee (composed of the elected members of the Executive Committee and two additional members with appropriate legal expertise from UNEP and/or WMO, appointed by those organizations) will review the COI Forms and may request advice from the Expert Advisory Group on Conflicts of Interest (“the COI Expert Advisory Group”). Where the COI Committee determines that a nominee for Bureau membership has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved, the individual will not be eligible for election to the Bureau. The process above will also apply in respect of candidates for election to the IPCC or Task Force Bureaux who are nominated during the course of the IPCC session during which the relevant election is due to be held.

*IPCC and Task Force Bureaux Members: Review process after appointment*

4. All IPCC Bureau and Task Force Bureau members will inform the Secretariat annually of any changes in the information provided in their previously submitted COI Form. The COI Committee will review the updated information, determine whether the relevant IPCC or Task Force Bureau member has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved and determine what further action is necessary in accordance with the COI Policy. The COI Committee may seek advice from the COI Expert Advisory Group.

*CLAs, LAs and REs and TSUs: Review Process prior to appointment*

5. Before an individual is appointed as a Coordinating Lead Author (CLA), Lead Author (LA) and Review Editor (RE), the relevant Working Group Bureau or Task Force Bureau will request the individual to complete a COI Form which will be submitted to the relevant TSU. The relevant Working Group Bureau or Task Force Bureau will then evaluate the form to determine whether the individual has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved.

6. In exceptional circumstances, a conflict of interest on the part of an IPCC author which cannot be resolved may be tolerated where the individual is deemed to provide a unique contribution to an IPCC product and where it is determined that the conflict can be managed such that it will not have an adverse impact on the relevant IPCC report. The relevant Working Group Bureau or Task Force Bureau should refer such cases to the COI Committee for it to determine. In such cases, the COI Committee will publicly disclose the conflict and the reasons for determining that the individual may continue to contribute to the IPCC's work in spite of the conflict.
7. Candidates for the professional staff of TSUs should, prior to their appointment, submit a COI Form to the relevant Working Group or Task Force Co-Chairs for evaluation by the relevant Working Group or Task Force Bureaux. In the case of the professional staff of the TSU for the Synthesis Report, the COI Form should be submitted to the IPCC Chair and evaluated by the IPCC Bureau.

*CLAs, LAs and REs and TSUs: Review process after appointment*

8. All CLAs, LAs and REs will inform the relevant TSU annually of any changes in the information provided in their previously submitted COI Form. The professional staff of TSUs inform the relevant Working Group or Task Force Co-Chairs, or in the case of the Synthesis Report the IPCC Chair, of any changes. The relevant Working Group or Task Force Bureau will evaluate the revised information in accordance with the procedure for reviewing conflicts of interest issues prior to appointment.
9. CLAs, LAs and REs may request that the COI Committee reviews the determination by the Working Group Bureau or Task Force Bureaux. They will be bound by the relevant Bureaux decision pending the outcome of the review.
10. The Working Group and Task Force Bureau may seek advice on conflict of interest issues from the COI Expert Advisory Group and may refer issues to the COI Committee for it to determine.
11. The Working Group and Task Force Bureau should submit an annual report to the COI Committee in relation to its consideration of conflict of interest issues.

*Principles for Considering Conflict of Interest Issues*

12. All of the bodies involved in advising on and deciding conflict of interest issues in respect of individuals under the COI Policy should consult the relevant individual where the body has concerns about a potential conflict of interest and/or where it requires clarification of any matters arising out of a COI Form and should ensure that the relevant individuals and, where appropriate the IPCC Panel member which nominated the relevant individual, have an opportunity to discuss any concerns about a potential conflict of interest.
13. Where the COI Committee has determined that an individual has a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved, the relevant individual may request an IPCC Bureau review of the COI Committee's determination. The IPCC Bureau will review the determination at the first session following the request. The individual will be bound by the determination of the COI Committee pending the outcome of the review.
14. When considering whether an individual has a conflict of interest, the relevant body will, in consultation with the individual, explore options for resolving the conflict. Individuals might, for example, resolve a conflict of interest by divesting themselves of the particular financial or other interests which gave rise to the potential conflict or by recusing themselves from discussions or decision-making processes in respect of which they have a relevant conflict.

15. Members of the bodies which are involved in considering conflict of interest issues may not consider cases involving themselves and will recuse themselves in the event that the relevant body considers a potential conflict of interest concerning themselves.

#### *Processing and Storage of Information*

16. All COI Forms in respect of IPCC and Task Force Bureau members will be submitted to the Secretariat. All other COI Forms will be submitted to the relevant TSU, or for the TSU professional staff, to the relevant Working Group or Task Force Co-Chairs or to the IPCC Chair in the case of the Synthesis Report.
17. All COI Forms and any records of the deliberations of the COI Expert Advisory Group, deliberations and/or decisions of the COI Committee in relation to conflict of interest issues in respect of specific individuals and any information disclosed by individuals for the purposes of the COI Policy will be transferred to the Secretariat after they have been reviewed and will be securely archived by the Secretariat and retained for a period of five years after the end of the assessment cycle during which the relevant individual contributed, after which the information will be destroyed. Subject to requirement to notify the existence of a conflict of interest to others under paragraph 6 above, the information referred to above will be considered confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than consideration of conflict of interest issues under these Implementation Procedures without the express consent of the individual providing the information.

#### *The COI Committee*

18. A Committee on Conflicts of Interest (“the COI Committee”) will be established for the purpose of:-
  - a) determining whether members of the IPCC Bureau, and Task Force Bureau have conflicts of interest;
  - b) determining conflict of interests cases referred to it by the Working Group or Task Force Bureaux;
  - c) reviewing the Working Group or Task Force Bureaux decisions in respect of conflict of interest issues.
19. The COI Committee will comprise of all elected members of the Executive Committee and two additional members with appropriate legal expertise from UNEP and WMO, appointed by those organizations.
20. The COI Committee will elect a Chair at its first meeting.
21. The members of the COI Committee are expected to reach consensus. If, exceptionally on matters of particular urgency, consensus is not possible, the COI Committee Chair may take the final decision, having regard to the weight of opinion in the COI Committee. The Committee will decide upon its method of working and apply it on an interim basis until the IPCC Panel agrees it.
22. The COI Committee should submit a report on its activities to the IPCC Panel at least four weeks before each session. Issues of confidentiality will be addressed by the COI Committee as early as possible.

*The COI Expert Advisory Group*

23. An Expert Advisory Group on Conflicts of Interest is established. It will have the following functions on request:
- a) review COI Forms and advise on COI issues in respect of current IPCC Bureau Members and individuals who have been nominated for election to the IPCC Bureau;
  - b) provide advice on conflict of interest issues to the Working Group and Task Force Bureaux and the COI Committee;
  - c) provide guidance in relation to conflict of interest issues to individuals who are currently subject to the COI Policy or are likely to become subject to it.
24. The COI Expert Advisory Group will consist of three individuals with experience in matters related to conflict of interest issues, including one or more individuals with expertise related to expert assessments. Members of the Group will be jointly selected by the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

**Annex B: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form (“COI Form”)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

FUNCTION IN IPCC: \_\_\_\_\_

Please **sign** and **date** this form on the last page, and return the form to the Secretary of the IPCC.  
**Retain a copy for your records.**

## IPCC Disclosure of Relevant Interests Form

**NOTE:** You have been invited to serve on the IPCC because of your professional standing and expertise. As outlined in the IPCC's Conflict of Interest policy, the role of the IPCC demands that it pay special attention to issues of independence and bias in order to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, its products and processes. It is essential that the work of the IPCC is not compromised by any conflict of interest for those who execute it. In view of this, disclosure of certain circumstances is necessary to ensure that the work of IPCC is not compromised by conflicts of interest. In filling out this form, we rely on your professionalism, common sense, and honesty.

The IPCC is not asking for comprehensive lists of activities under each heading below, only current interests that are significant and relevant to your role within the IPCC. You should disclose interests that could: i) significantly impair your objectivity in carrying out your duties and responsibilities for the IPCC, or ii) create an unfair advantage for you or any person or organization; and which could result in your securing a direct and material gain through outcomes in an IPCC product. For the purposes of this policy, circumstances that could lead a reasonable person to question your objectivity, or whether an unfair advantage has been created, constitute a potential conflict of interest and should be disclosed in this form. Disclosure of an interest on this form does not automatically mean that a conflict is present or that you will be unable to perform your designated role with the IPCC. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to disclose that information.

**Name:**

**Role in IPCC:**

**Do you have any significant and relevant professional activities that might be considered conflicts of interest?  Yes  No (if yes, give details below)**

(Please list current, significant, and relevant professional and other non-financial interests which could be interpreted as i) significantly impairing your objectivity in carrying out your duties and responsibilities for the IPCC, or ii) creating an unfair advantage for you or any person or organisation. This might include, but is not limited to, membership on the boards of advocacy groups.

**Do you have any significant and relevant financial interests in the subject matter of the work in which you will be involved, which might be considered conflicts of interest?  Yes  No (if yes, give details below)**

(Please list current, significant, and relevant financial interests which could be interpreted as i) significantly impairing your objectivity in carrying out your duties and responsibilities for the IPCC, or ii) creating an unfair advantage for you or any person or organization. These may include employment relationships, consulting relationships, financial investments, intellectual property interests and commercial interests and sources of private-sector research support.

*Nota bene:* typically, financial interests under US\$10,000 would not be considered significant).

**Is there anything else that could affect your objectivity or independence in the work in which you will be involved?  Yes  No (if yes give details below)**

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that the disclosed information is complete and correct. During the course of work on the AR5, I will inform you immediately of any change in my circumstances.

I understand that information about my interests will be held by the IPCC for a period of five years after the end of the assessment cycle during which I contributed, after which the information will be destroyed. Subject to requirement to notify the existence of a conflict of interest to others under paragraph 6 of the Implementation Procedures, I understand that these forms will be considered confidential and will be reviewed in accordance with the COI Implementation Procedures.

I hereby declare that I will comply with the IPCC COI Policy and the Implementation Procedures.

**Signature:**

**Date:**