

IPCC CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Approved at the Thirty-Fourth Session (Kampala, Uganda, 18-19 November 2011); amended at the Fortieth Session (Copenhagen, Denmark, 27–31 October 2014); the Forty-Fourth Session (Decision IPCC/XLIV-3, Bangkok, Thailand, 17-20 October 2016); and the Sixty-first Session (Decision IPCC-LXI-10, Sofia, Bulgaria, 26 July – 2 August 2024).

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 behavior 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 behavior. 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

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 33rd 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. 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.

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. Before a CLA, LA or RE can start working the relevant Working Group Bureau or Task Force Bureau will 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 IPCCCOI Committee.

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 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 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.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM (“COI FORM”)

CONFIDENTIAL

NAME:

ADDRESS:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

CURRENT EMPLOYER:

FUNCTION/ROLE IN IPCC:

PLEASE CONSULT THE ATTACHED GUIDANCE INFORMATION (SEE ANNEX 1) BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM BELOW

PLEASE FURTHER NOTE:

“Yes” responses do not necessarily affect or prevent your participation in IPCC activities. Answering “Yes” to a question on this form does not necessarily mean that a conflict is present or that you will be unable to perform your designated function/role in the IPCC. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to disclose that information.

1. APPOINTMENTS AND ACTIVITY

Do you hold any position or appointment, or any business or professional relationships (whether commercial or non-financial) with other bodies related to climate science, such as the UNFCCC or others?

Yes No

Details:

2. EMPLOYMENT AND CONSULTING

Do you receive any remuneration from employment or consulting, (including services as a technical or other adviser) from a commercial entity or other organization with an interest related to the subject of the IPCC work in which you are engaged?

Yes No

Details:

3. RESEARCH SUPPORT

Do you receive financial support (including but not limited to grants, consultancies, sponsorship, or honoraria for speaking or facilitating training) or non-financial support (including but not limited to premises, equipment, facilities, assistants, paid travel) from any commercial entity or other organization with an interest related to the subject of the IPCC work?

Yes No

Details:

4. INVESTMENT INTERESTS

Do you have investments (including but not limited to stocks, bonds, stock options, other securities such as short sales) or commercial business interests (including but not limited to ownership, partnership, joint ventures, board memberships, controlling interests), in any commercial entity with an interest related to the subject of the IPCC work? (Please also include indirect investments such as a trust or holding company. You may exclude mutual funds, pension funds or similar investments that are broadly diversified and over which you exercise no control.)

Yes No

Details:

5. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Do you own any intellectual property rights (including but not limited to patents, trademarks or commercial copyrights including pending applications) or proprietary knowledge in a technology or process being used for commercial purposes that might be affected by the IPCC work?

Yes No

Details:

6. PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND POSITIONS

As part of a regulatory, legislative or judicial process, are you providing any expert opinion or testimony related to the subject of the IPCC work for a commercial entity or other organization?

Yes No

Details:

7. NON-FINANCIAL INTERESTS

Are you engaged in any professional or other activities (including but not limited to editorial functions, official (paid or unpaid) function in a government agency or international organization, advisory committee associated with a public or private sector organization, board member of a public or private sector organization, board member of non-profit organization, board member of advocacy group), which outside parties could consider might represent or give rise to a conflict of interest, or the perception of a conflict of interest with regard the IPCC work with which you are engaged?

Yes No

Details:

8. FINANCIAL INTERESTS

Do you hold any additional financial interests which outside parties could consider might represent or give rise to a conflict of interest, or the perception of a conflict of interest with regard to the IPCC work with which you are engaged?

Yes No

Details:

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If not already disclosed above, are you aware of any aspect of your work for the IPCC that will enable you to obtain access to proprietary information or create for you a competitive advantage in your professional, financial or business dealings?

Yes No

Details:

To your knowledge, could the outcome of your work for the IPCC adversely affect the interests of any other persons or entities with whom you have substantial common personal, professional, financial or business interests (such as your adult children or siblings, close professional colleagues, administrative unit or department)?

Yes No

Details:

Which organisation is covering, partly or in full, your IPCC related travel costs?

Details:

Are you receiving any payments (other than for travel costs) or honoraria for speaking publicly on the subject of the IPCC work in which you are engaged?

Yes No

Details:

Is there any other aspect of your background or present circumstances not addressed above that you consider might be perceived as affecting your objectivity or independence?

Yes No

Details:

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the information in and accompanying this disclosure is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I declare that I have disclosed all associations required for disclosure under the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy; and that, except as declared, I do not consider that any of the associations present a conflict of interest.

Should there be any change to the above information and declaration, I will promptly notify the IPCC Secretariat and complete a new declaration of interest form that describes the changes. This includes any change that occurs before or during my work with the IPCC and through the period of my engagement up to finalization or publication of results, or completion of the activity concerned.

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.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR COMPLETION OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

You have been invited to serve on the IPCC because of your professional standing and expertise. As outlined in the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy, the role of the IPCC demands that it pay special attention to issues of independence and potential 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 the IPCC is not compromised by conflicts of interest. In filling out this form, therefore, we rely on your professionalism, common sense, and honesty.

These arrangements and disclosure of interests are required as a matter of due diligence, to ensure appropriate assurance for the IPCC in matters of conflict of interest, professional and scientific integrity, and to protect the IPCC and participants from reputational risk.

This declaration of interests, and disclosure of conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest, is required under the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy and Implementation Procedures.

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.

You must also declare any relevant interests of parties with whom you have current contractual relationships or substantial common interests and which could be perceived as unduly influencing, or likely to unduly influence, your judgement (for example your employer(s), close professional associates, your administrative unit or department, sponsoring or funding entities).

A **brief** description of details should be provided in relation to any question below. You should aim to provide sufficient and explicit information to allow the IPCC to form a view on whether the circumstances disclosed give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to disclose that information.

Please **sign** and **date** this form on the last page, and return the form to the Secretary of the IPCC with a **Curriculum Vitae** and information supporting these disclosures where applicable. **Retain a copy for your records.**

You must promptly inform the IPCC Secretariat if there is any change in this information prior to or during the course of your work or meetings for the IPCC. This form and the declarations contained therein must be completed before participation in the IPCC activity can be confirmed.

Answering “Yes” to a question on this form does not necessarily mean that a conflict is present or that you will be unable to perform your designated function/role in the IPCC. If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to disclose that information. This information will be assessed as a whole on the basis of the principles contained in the COI Policy (<https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/09/ipcc-conflict-of-interest-2016.pdf>). In particular, what constitutes or not a COI is defined in paragraphs 11 to 17 of that document (reproduced below). If in doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from IPCC Secretariat Legal Officer (please contact ipcc-sec@wmo.int for contact information).

Definition of «Conflict of Interest» (paragraphs 11 to 17 of the IPCC COI Policy <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/09/ipcc-conflict-of-interest-2016.pdf>).

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 behavior 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 behavior. 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.

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