

## Guidance Note on the Mandatory Statement on Disclosure of Interests for the SREX

The WGI and WGII Co-Chairs have introduced a policy on the mandatory disclosure of interests and a declaration of compliance with IPCC Principles and Procedures for the IPCC Special Report on *Managing The Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (SREX). This policy applies to all the SREX Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs), Lead Authors (LAs) and Review Editors (REs), the WGI and WGII Bureaux as well as professional staff of the WGI and WGII Technical Support Units.

The InterAcademy Council (IAC) review of the processes and procedures of the IPCC (September 2010) emphasized the importance of implementing a robust policy on conflict of interest. It is the task of the respective WG Bureau to consider conflict of interest and biases when selecting a balanced team of authors and review editors; however, the IAC review makes it clear that this may not be sufficient. Following its acceptance of the recommendations of the IAC report in October 2010, the IPCC has been developing a conflict of interest policy with a view to implementation as early as possible during the Fifth Assessment (AR5) cycle. When the SREX process started with its scoping in March 2009 and the selection of authors in September 2009, the IPCC had not yet focused on the value of a formal conflict of interest policy.

The IPCC member countries adopted a conflict of interest policy at the 33rd IPCC Plenary in Abu Dhabi, 10-13 May 2011<sup>1</sup>. The disclosure forms and other infrastructure necessary to implement the new IPCC-wide policy are not yet complete. However, both Working Group I and Working Group II (WGI, WGII) proactively implemented interim conflict of interest policies for their respective AR5 First Lead Author Meetings in November 2010 and January 2011, in order to have a policy in place before work started on the assessment. In developing the IPCC-wide policy, the Panel determined that the WGI and WGII interim policies for AR5 are consistent with the IPCC-wide policy and that a smooth transition will be made.

Following the IPCC Panel's decision in May 2011 to adopt a conflict of interest policy for the AR5, the Co-Chairs of WGI and WGII decided to act for the SREX. The SREX is nearly complete, which means that a conflict of interest policy equivalent to those implemented by both WGs for their contributions to the AR5 cannot be introduced at this late stage, because such a policy requires proactive introduction before the assessment begins. However the Co-Chairs of WGI and WGII concluded that the immediate introduction and implementation of a policy on disclosure of interests, together with a declaration of compliance with IPCC Principles and Procedures for the SREX can still provide great value in three specific areas. First, the disclosure of relevant interests by the CLAs, LAs and REs to the Co-Chairs will ensure the credibility of the final report. Second, it will allow the CLAs, LAs and REs to put on record their compliance with the IPCC Principles and Procedures. Third, if a potential conflict of interest is identified, the WG Co-Chairs will be able to investigate the reasons and evaluate any sections of text that this may put into question.

Any real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest that you may have identified with respect to your function and responsibilities as a CLA, LA or RE in the SREX should be disclosed on the form provided to you. This form also requires you to declare your compliance with the existing IPCC Policies and Procedures in your work on the SREX. We rely on your professionalism, common sense and honesty in completing the form fully and accurately. The information that you submit is confidential, for the WG Co-Chairs only, and will be held securely at the WGI Technical Support Unit. In order to help you complete the form, an extract from the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy is provided in Annex A to this note.

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC decision on conflict of interest policy can be found at:  
[http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session33/ipcc\\_p33\\_decisions\\_taken\\_conflict\\_of\\_interest.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session33/ipcc_p33_decisions_taken_conflict_of_interest.pdf)

The Co-Chairs are available at any time to provide further guidance and to discuss specific cases. We are confident that this small amount of additional administrative burden will ensure transparency and avoid situations that could lead to questions about the integrity of our assessment work.



Prof. Christopher Field  
Co-Chair, WGII



Prof. Vicente Barros  
Co-Chair, WGII



Prof. Thomas Stocker  
Co-Chair, WGI



Prof. Qin Dahe  
Co-Chair, WGI

## **Annex A: Extract from the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy**

In order to help you complete the form, the definitions used in the IPCC Conflict of Interest Policy, which was adopted at the 33rd Session of the Panel in May 2011, are given below.

The IPCC Policy states that:

*"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."*

The Policy goes on to distinguish between Col and bias. *"Bias refers to a point of view or perspective that is strongly held regarding a particular issue or set of issues." ... "bias can and should be managed through the selection of a balance of perspectives"*. This has been the case for the SREX Chapter teams.

Regarding the disclosure of interests, the IPCC Policy specifies that *"interests need to be disclosed only if they are significant and relevant"*.

Professional and other non-financial 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"*.

Financial interests *"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"*.

Finally, the IPCC Policy states that, in order *"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."*