

CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service

Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Introduction

CGIAR's Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES) provides operational support as the secretariat for:

- the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) ¹,
 - the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) ², and
- implements CGIAR's multi-year, independent evaluation plan as approved by the System Council ³.

The ISDC is a standing panel of impartial, world-class scientific experts providing rigorous, independent strategic advice to the CGIAR System Council and other stakeholders. The ISDC contributes to the strategic and portfolio planning and positioning of CGIAR. It produces foresight work and horizon scanning that informs CGIAR's longer-term research strategy. Emerging from the foresight and horizon scanning efforts, ISDC supplies System Council with advice on its priority setting exercises and provides guidance for periodic proposal assessment processes.

The SPIA is an external, impartial panel of experts in impact assessment that is responsible for providing rigorous, evidence-based, and independent strategic advice to the broader CGIAR System on efficient and effective impact assessment methods and practices, including those measuring impacts beyond contributions to science and economic performance, and on innovative ways to improve knowledge and capacity on how research contributes to development outcomes.

The evaluation function in the IAES manages and supports independent evaluations which aim to provide accountability, support to decision making, and lessons for improving quality and effectiveness of agricultural research for development outcomes.

To fulfill its mandate, the CGIAR's IAES and the two independent bodies it supports work with a wide range of partners inside and outside CGIAR. It is imperative that they are, and are seen to be, independent and objective. If the IAES, ISDC or SPIA independence and objectivity are compromised, the quality of their advice and evidence is reduced and trust in their advice and evaluative evidence is lost.

Conflicts of interest associated with IAES, ISDC and SPIA could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, their independence and objectivity.

The aim of this policy is therefore to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are made open and transparent, and that processes are managed to take declared interests into account. No policy can account for every eventuality; it is the responsibility of all individuals working for and with the CGIAR IAES and bodies it supports to declare any unforeseen associations which could be perceived as a conflict.

¹ https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2018/10/TOR-ISDC_Approved_04Oct2018.pdf

² <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2018/10/TOR-SPIA-Approved-4Oct2018.pdf>

³ <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2022/08/TOR-IAES-Approved-4Oct2018.pdf>

2. Conflict of interest

There are many types of conflicts of interest, including personal, institutional, scientific, political or ethical. In these, an individual is compromised by their loyalty to individuals (themselves, family members, or friends), institutions (former or current students or colleagues), scientific interests or political allegiance.

The potential benefit or gain accrued may be obvious, such as financial reward or employment, or more subtle, such as reputational gain or access to privileged knowledge. The 'benefit' might also be negative, in the sense that a grievance or dislike is reflected by a negative opinion.

In the specific CGIAR independent advisory and evaluation context, common examples of when conflict of interest may arise include:

- Commissioning work from family members, friends, colleagues, employers, former colleagues, former employers;
- Being involved in reviews or evaluations of projects/programs/proposals from, or including, family members, friends, colleagues, employers, former colleagues, former employers, competitors of current or former colleagues or employers;
- Considering family members, friends, former colleagues and former employers for appointment as ISDC/SPIA Council or consultants.

The appropriate time definition of "former" is given in the Annexes, in the Statements to be signed by ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members, IAES staff/consultants and Reviewers/Evaluators.

2.1 Chair/Member recruitment and conflicts of interest

When recruiting ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members, an important criterion to be considered is possible conflict of interest. For example, recent employment by or collaboration with a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR may be considered sufficient grounds for non-selection.

Annex 1 and 2 show the Statements to be completed by potential ISDC Chairs/ Vice Chairs/Members (Annex 1) and SPIA Chairs/Members (Annex 2) at the time of interview.

- The information is requested for the benefit of the System Council's appointed Selection and Nomination Committee for ISDC Chair/ Vice Chairs/Member and SPIA Chair in the first instance, but if recruitment is successful also for the IAES register of conflicts of interest. The bullets below categorize the degree of potential conflict.
- A 'yes' to question 1 would disqualify an applicant for membership of the Council. To maintain independence, current employees of the CGIAR cannot be Council members as recent affiliation to a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, research program or major Center collaborator could introduce biases.
- A 'yes' to questions 2 and/or 3 still represents a significant potential conflict of interest, but an applicant for the Council could be considered on the understanding that such conflict would have to be carefully managed. Managing such a conflict of interest may be considered worthwhile for the services of an otherwise strong candidate.
- A 'yes' to question 4 or 5 and/or response to question 6 or 7 would not disqualify an applicant for the Council, but there may be a low risk of conflict of interest which would have to be managed.

2.2 Staff/Consultant recruitment and conflicts of interest

When recruiting IAES staff or consultants, an important criterion to be considered is possible conflict of interest. For example, recent employment by or collaboration with a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR may be considered sufficient grounds for non-selection.

Annex 3 shows the Statements to be completed by potential IAES staff members at the time of joining.

The information is requested for the benefit of the IAES register of conflict of interest. The bullet below categorizes the degree of potential conflict.

- A 'yes' to questions 1 and/or 2 and/or response to question 3 represents a significant potential conflict of interest, but an applicant for the IAES could be considered on the understanding that such conflict would have to be carefully managed. Managing such a conflict of interest may be considered worthwhile for the services of an otherwise strong candidate. The aim of asking for completion of this declaration is to enable the Director to make a decision on the appointability of the applicant and to manage the conflict with respect to the allocation of tasks between IAES staff.

2.3 Reviewers/Evaluators and conflicts of interest

A wide range of conflicts needs to be considered at the time of reviewing/evaluating projects /programs/proposals due to the large number of partners which may be involved. Care needs to be taken to ensure that reviewers/evaluators do not have institutional conflicts.

Reviewers/evaluators are expected to self-report any potential or real conflict of interest for the register of conflicts of interest, including measures taken to manage the risk. Attempts will be made to identify all conflicts described in the Statement in Annex 4 prior to allocation of review/evaluation tasks.

The bullets below categorize the degree of potential conflict.

- With respect to question 1: declaration of employment by a partner which is proposed to receive funds from a specific project/program/proposal would exclude a reviewer/evaluator from reviewing/evaluating the project/program/proposal.
- A 'yes' to question 2 would exclude a reviewer/evaluator from reviewing/evaluating the project/program/proposal.
- Where a project/program/proposal is known in advance to be incorporating aspects of published research (question 3) by a reviewer/evaluator, this should be declared, and detail provided to allow the Chairs and IAES Director to decide whether the individual is likely to benefit in any way and if so, they should not participate in the review/evaluation.
- It is not always possible to know in advance if a conflict with respect to question 4 exists and action should be taken as for the response to question 3.
- With respect to question 5 this is also unlikely to be known in advance but should be declared if the student has graduated within the last 5 years.

3. Managing conflicts of interest

Potential, perceived and real conflicts of interest will occur. Provided that these are handled transparently and managed appropriately, it should not be a problem.

Conflicts of interest must be identified, declared, recorded and managed.

- (i) **Identification of conflicts of interest.** Due to the nature of work and products produced for IAES, it is incumbent on the individual ISDC and SPIA Chairs/ Vice Chairs/Members, IAES staff/consultants and Reviewers/Evaluators to consider and volunteer any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Many potential and perceived COI can be mitigated and managed with prior knowledge and consideration. Council members and staff should always be on the alert for any possibility of conflict of interest, particularly potential or perceived conflicts, which may not always be immediately obvious.
- (ii) **Declaring conflicts of interest.** Once a conflict of interest is identified, to ensure transparency, it must be declared as soon as possible by the individuals concerned by bringing it to the attention of the ISDC and SPIA Chairs and the Director of the IAES.
- (iii) **Recording conflicts of interest.** Conflicts of interest should be recorded on the appropriate pro forma and filed by the IAES in a central conflict of interest register. In addition, a monitoring tool should be maintained (an excel table with information on the individual's name, institution, role for which individual is engaged, start/end date of service, date of conflict of interest statement, dates of subsequent, updated conflict of interest statements, indication of identified conflicts of interest and its management, allowing for random pro-active search by filtering). This will provide a record during the individual's collaboration with IAES, should any complaints or appeals arise. The register and monitoring tool are for internal IAES use only and will only be shared with the ISDC and SPIA Chairs.

Managing conflicts of interest. Having identified a conflict of interest, it must be managed appropriately. The conflict of interest should be discussed with the ISDC and SPIA Chairs (as appropriate) and the IAES Director, and agreement reached on the most appropriate way to manage it. If no agreement is reached, the conflict of interest should be sent to an ad hoc committee of three persons⁴ that will propose the most appropriate solution to manage the conflict of interest. Several options exist, including:

- If the risk is considered to be low, and the input of the relevant ISDC and SPIA Chair/ Vice Chairs/Member, IAES staff or Reviewer/Evaluator is required for other reasons (perhaps for their particular expertise or experience), then the individual could proceed as usual, the Chairs and Director having noted the possible (low risk) conflict of interest.
- In some situations, it may be deemed appropriate for the ISDC and SPIA Chair/ Vice Chair/Member, IAES staff or Reviewer/Evaluator to proceed with other related work (such as assessing other proposals), but to be recused from comment on the work with the conflict of interest.

⁴ The ad hoc committee will be composed by the IAES Director, the Director of Ethics in CGIAR and one external member, to be appointed. The committee will have a decision-making role and will work on the basis of unanimous consensus.

- For a high-risk conflict of interest, the safest approach is to recuse the ISDC and SPIA Chair/ Vice Chairs/Member, IAES staff or Reviewer/Evaluator from all work related to the conflict of interest, including other linked work. For example, if a conflict of interest has been declared with one applicant for a grant, the individual should not be involved in assessing that proposal, or any competing proposals. Staff members recruited directly from CGIAR Centers/One CGIAR or programs should not be involved in assessment of proposals from those Centers/programs for at least 2 years.

4. CAS procedures for managing conflicts of interest

Recruitment

When offered an engagement as ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members, IAES staff and Reviewers/Evaluators, individuals should be asked to complete the appropriate Statement in the Annex and to declare any additional conflicts not covered by the stated questions, so that any potential conflicts can be explored. Copies of the signed and dated form should be retained by the IAES, in the conflict of interest registry, including all risk mitigation measures, as outlined in section 3 (iii) above.

Ongoing/Renewal

Once appointed, ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members, IAES staff/consultants and Reviewers/Evaluators should bring to the attention of the Chairs and the IAES Director any new activity which they engage in, which relates to any of the questions in the original Statement (by updating and signing the Statement).

Besides the spontaneous declarations of new potential conflicts of interest:

- On an annual basis, in December, the ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members will be invited to declare new arising interests;
- IAES staff will be invited to declare new arising interests when their employment contracts are renewed;
- Consultants/reviewers/evaluators on a roster will receive an invitation to declare new interests at the beginning of any new engagement/task order for a particular piece of work.

On leaving the ISDC/SPIA or Secretariat

If ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members and IAES staff enter into negotiations on employment or a joint funding activity with a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, program or other System entity for post-contract activities, prior to closing their association with the ISDC/SPIA/ IAES or within 12 months of their end-date, they are expected to consider jointly with the Chairs and Director how best to manage associated potential conflicts of interest.

Responsibility

The implementation of these procedures depends on the good faith of the ISDC and SPIA Chairs/Vice Chairs/Members, IAES staff/consultants and Reviewers/Evaluators, and the balanced judgment of the Chairs and Director. This policy is a 'living document' and provides the principles for sound conflict of interest management without prescriptively describing every possible instance that might give rise to a conflict of interest.

Annex

Declaration of Interest Statements

- Annex 1 - ISDC Chair/Vice Chairs/Member Declaration of Interest Statement
- Annex 2 - SPIA Chair/Member Declaration of Interest Statement
- Annex 3 - IAES Staff/Consultant Declaration of Interest Statement
- Annex 4 - Reviewers and Evaluators' Declaration of Interest Statement

Annex 1

ISDC Chair/Vice Chair/Member Declaration of Interest Statement⁵

1. Are you now employed by a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or during the last two years, have you personally been employed as the DG or Head of Research of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, the Director of a research program or the CEO/DG of a significant public research institute which is a collaborator/competitor of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or served as a Board Chair or Chair of a Board Science Committee of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR.

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

2. During the last five years, have you personally been involved in the activities of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or a research program, as an employee, consultant, adviser, Board or Advisory Committee member (i.e. in receipt of financial remuneration beyond expenses) or in receipt of significant funding from a financial contributor to the CGIAR?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

3. Are you now, or during the last two years have you personally been employed by a partner organization which is either a significant collaborator with a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or research program, a significant competitor for donor funding or in receipt of donor funding?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

4. During the last five years, has a family member or someone with whom you have a strong personal or professional relationship, been involved in the activities of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, CGIAR Advisory Body or research program, as an employee, consultant, adviser, Board or Advisory Committee member (i.e. in receipt of financial remuneration beyond expenses) or as a financial contributor to the CGIAR?

YES NO

⁵ When offered an engagement as ISDC Chair/ Vice Chairs/Member, you are expected to complete this Declaration of Interest Statement. Once appointed, you should bring to the attention of the Chair and the IAES Director any new activity you engage in, which relates to any of the questions in the original Statement (by updating and signing the Statement). Furthermore, on an annual basis, in December, you will be invited to declare new arising interests.

If Yes, please provide brief details:

5. Are you (your organization or institutional department) a recipient of CGIAR funding (including SPIA grants)?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

6. Please give details of any other activity, engagement or relationship with the CGIAR during the **last ten years:**

7. Please give details of any ongoing grants you are receiving or consultancies relevant to CGIAR impact areas that you are carrying out for the private sector/industry⁶:

8. Due to the nature of work and products for ISDC, it is incumbent on the individual to consider and volunteer any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Please use this space to declare any other information needed for IAES, operating as secretariat to ISDC, to assess and manage real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that have not been covered in the preceding questions:

Declaration: I declare that the information provided on this Statement is true and complete.

Full Name: _____

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Signed _____
insert digital signature, or print and sign

⁶If you are working or start working with another client under a non-disclosure or similar commercial-in-confidence arrangement, and if that work is relevant to CGIAR and may present a perceived or real COI, then careful consideration must be given as to whether it is appropriate, per the stated IAES COI policy, to enter into or continue an appointment with CGIAR IAES on behalf of ISDC.

ISDC Specific Conflict of Interest Declaration

Name:

Date (DD/MM/YYYY) :

Summary/title of conflict of interest declared:

Description of conflict of interest declared:

Agreed action to manage conflict of interest:

Signed by ISDC Chair/Member:

Signed by Director, CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service:

Annex 2

SPIA Chair/Member Declaration of Interest Statement⁷

1. Are you now employed by a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or during the last two years, have you personally been employed as the DG or Head of Research of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, the Director of a research program or the CEO/DG of a significant public research institute which is a collaborator/competitor of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or served as a Board Chair or Chair of a Board Science Committee of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR.

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

2. During the last five years, have you personally been involved in the activities of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or a research program, as an employee, consultant, adviser, Board or Advisory Committee member (i.e. in receipt of financial remuneration beyond expenses) or in receipt of significant funding from a financial contributor to the CGIAR?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

3. Are you now, or during the last two years have you personally been employed by a partner organization which is either a significant collaborator with a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR or research program, a significant competitor for donor funding or in receipt of donor funding?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

4. During the last five years, has a family member or someone with whom you have a strong personal or professional relationship, been involved in the activities of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, CGIAR Advisory Body or research program, as an employee, consultant, adviser, Board or Advisory Committee member (i.e. in receipt of financial remuneration beyond expenses) or as a financial contributor to the CGIAR?

YES NO

⁷ When offered an engagement as SPIA Chair/Members, you are expected to complete this Declaration of Interest Statement. Once appointed, you should bring to the attention of the Chair and the IAES Director any new activity you engage in, which relates to any of the questions in the original Statement (by updating and signing the Statement). Furthermore, on an annual basis, in December, you will be invited to declare new arising interests.

If Yes, please provide brief details:

5. Are you (your organization or institutional department) a recipient of CGIAR funding (including SPIA grants)?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

6. Please give details of any other activity, engagement or relationship with the CGIAR during the last ten years:

7. Please give details of any ongoing grants you are receiving or consultancies relevant to CGIAR impact areas that you are carrying out for the private sector/industry ⁸:

8. Due to the nature of work and products for SPIA, it is incumbent on the individual to consider and volunteer any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Please use this space to declare any other information needed for IAES operating as secretariat to SPIA to assess and manage real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that have not been covered in the preceding questions:

Declaration: I declare that the information provided on this Statement is true and complete.

Full Name: _____

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Signed _____

insert digital signature, or print and sign

⁸ If you are working or start working with another client under a non-disclosure or similar commercial-in-confidence arrangement, and if that work is relevant to CGIAR and may present a perceived or real COI, then careful consideration must be given as to whether it is appropriate, per the stated IAES COI policy, to enter into or continue an appointment with CGIAR IAES on behalf of SPIA.

SPIA Specific Conflict of Interest Declaration

Name:

Date (DD/MM/YYYY) :

Summary/title of conflict of interest declared:

Description of conflict of interest declared:

Agreed action to manage conflict of interest:

Signed by SPIA Chair/Member:

Signed by Director, CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service:

Annex 3

IAES Staff/Consultant Declaration of Interest Statement⁹

1. During the last five years, have you personally been involved in the activities of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, research program or partner receiving funds for a program, as an employee, consultant, adviser, Board or Advisory Committee member (i.e. in receipt of financial remuneration beyond expenses) or as a financial contributor to the CGIAR?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

2. During the last five years, has a family member or someone with whom you have a strong personal or professional relationship, been involved in the activities of a CGIAR Center/One CGIAR, CGIAR Advisory Body or research program, or partner receiving funds from a program as an employee, consultant, adviser, Board member?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

3. Please give details of any other activity, engagement or relationship with the CGIAR during the last ten years:

4. Due to the nature of work and products for CGIAR IAES, it is incumbent on the individual to consider and volunteer any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Please use this space to declare any other information needed for IAES to assess and manage real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that have not been covered in the preceding questions:

⁹ When hired as a IAES staff or consultant, you are expected to complete this Declaration of Interest Statement. Once appointed, you should bring to the attention of the IAES Director any new activity you engage in, which relates to any of the questions in the original Statement (by updating and signing the Statement). Furthermore, you will be invited to declare new arising interests when your employment contract is renewed.

Declaration: I declare that the information provided on this Statement is true and complete.

Full Name: _____

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Signed _____
insert digital signature, or print and sign

Annex 4

Reviewers and Evaluators' Declaration of Interest Statement¹⁰

1. Please provide brief details of main employer and any other organization that provides you with remuneration:

2. Are you aware whether a relative, close friend, close colleague or someone with whom you have financial ties is receiving funding from or giving advice to a project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

3. Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate cite any of your own current research?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

4. Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate name researchers with whom you have active collaborations, recently published joint papers or are in regular email correspondence? Conversely, are you being asked to review/evaluate work with which you are actively competing, or could be perceived to be competing, for limited funding?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

5. Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate name any of your past or current students as active participants?

YES NO

If Yes, please provide brief details:

6. Due to the nature of work and products for CGIAR IAES, it is incumbent on the individual to consider and volunteer any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Please use this

¹⁰ When hired as a reviewers/evaluator to complete ISDC, SPIA or IAES products, you are expected to complete this Declaration of Interest Statement. Once appointed, you should bring to the attention of the IAES Director any new activity you engage in, which relates to any of the questions in the original Statement (by updating and signing the Statement). Furthermore, you will be invited to declare new arising interests at the beginning of any new engagement/task order for a particular piece of work.

space to declare any other information needed for IAES on its behalf and on behalf of the independent bodies it supports to assess and manage real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that have not been covered in the preceding questions:

Declaration: I declare that the information provided on this Statement is true and complete.

Full Name: _____

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Signed _____
insert digital signature, or print and sign