

## **Conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure policy**

This code applies to the external reviewers, the Panel of experts (PoE) and the Group of Program Coordinators (GPC).

### **Conflict of Interest policy**

An important aspect of this policy is the avoidance of any conflicts between personal interests and the interests of the applicants.

Here is a summary of potential conflicts of interest and other circumstances that may raise questions about the impartiality of your expert evaluation. Before submitting any written reviews or before participating in any meeting in which proposals are discussed, please inform the Theme Program Office whether circumstances exist that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest.

**You cannot be a member of the GPC, PoE or serve as external reviewer if you are involved in a proposal submitted to the call.**

You have an **institutional conflict** with an applicant when you...

- Hold a position, such as professor, adjunct, visiting scientist, consultant or similar with a hierarchical or department relation
- Are serving in advisory bodies or similar body of the applicant's institution (current or past activity within the past 5 years)

You have a **financial conflict** with a proposal when you...

- Hold a fiduciary position (Officer, Governing Board, Councillor, Trustee...) in one of the institutions applying for funding
- Gain direct or indirect benefits if the proposal is accepted
- Have personal economist interest in the funding decisions

You have an **individual conflict** with a proposal which involves a...

- Relatives, spouse or family member, someone with which you have personal ties or conflicts
- Current business or professional partner
- Former employer (within one year)
- Someone with which you were involve in on-going or recently concluded professional appointment proceedings

- Present or past PhD advisor/student (unless independent scientific activity of more than 10 years exists)
- Someone with who you had close scientific collaboration within the past three years (e.g. preparation of an application, publication or exploitation of results, co-publication of articles, etc.)
- Co-editor within the past 36 months
- Someone with which you are in direct scientific competition with personal projects or plans

You may also have a conflict with a proposal involving ...

- A person living in your household or their employer
- Your parent's employer (except solely receipt of honoraria)
- "catch all"

"Catch All"

- Any other circumstances where your impartiality could be questioned

Use "**Reasonable Person Test**" – Would a reasonable person with all the relevant facts question your impartiality?

A conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict means that you will not be able to participate in deliberations on the proposal in question. You may not serve as a reviewer if you are included in a proposal submitted to this competition. You will be asked to leave the room during discussions of any proposals for which you have conflicts as identified in the above listing.

### **Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure policy**

The responsibilities of a reviewer may only be undertaken personally and may not be delegated to third parties. The scientific content of the proposal may not be exploited for personal or other scientific purposes.

Documentation provided to External Reviewers, members of the Panel of Experts and members of the GPC may contain personal information and confidential technical information. You must treat all documentation as strictly confidential.

1. Peer review documentation provided to External Reviewers and Panel of Experts members must be used only for the purpose for which it was originally collected, i.e., assessing applications and making funding recommendations. It must not be used for any other purpose or discussed with or disclosed to individuals who are not External Reviewers, members of the PoE or the Group of Program Coordinators.
2. All submitted proposals, the correspondence forwarded to you, the reviews and the identity of the reviewers must be treated confidentially.
3. External Reviewers and PoE members must ensure that proposals in their possession are stored in a secure manner to prevent unauthorized access.
4. Peer review deliberations are confidential. Comments made by individual PoE members during the meetings and during the rating of applications must never be discussed or disclosed. Panel summaries that reflect the consensus comments on applications will be provided by the Program Office to the Leading Principal Investigators. Until the call results are announced officially, they must remain confidential. The names of applicants whose applications were not recommended for support or who were declared ineligible will not be made public and must not be divulged by Panel of Experts members.
5. Enquiries received by PoE members from applicants about the review of their applications must be referred to the Theme Program Office. There must be no direct communication between

applicants and Panel of Experts members on matters arising out of peer review. A reviewer should not identify himself/herself to the applicant or any third party.

6. The identity of the external reviewers and the Panel of Experts must remain confidential, even after the end of the evaluation process.

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The external reviewers, the Panel of experts and the Group of Program Coordinators are requested to sign the following declaration:

## **Belmont Forum and BiodivERsA Call on Biodiversity Scenarios**

### **Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Declaration for Panel of Experts (PoE), External Reviewers, Group of Program Coordinators (GPC)**

#### **1. Your Potential Conflicts of Interests.**

Your participation in this joint call requires that you be aware of potential conflict situations that may arise. Read the examples of potentially biasing affiliations or relationships listed on the next page of this form. As a member of the Panel of Experts, an External Reviewer or member of the Group of Program Coordinators (GPC), you will be asked to evaluate and select applicant grant proposals. You might have a conflict or be perceived to have a conflict with one or more. Should any conflict arise during your term, or when asked to do a review, you must bring the matter to the attention of the Theme Program Office who will determine how the matter should be handled and will tell you what further steps, if any, to take.

#### **2. No Use of “Insider” Information.**

If your designation gives you access to information not generally available to the public, you must not use that information for your personal benefit or make it available for the personal benefit of any other individual or organization.

#### **3. Your Obligation to Maintain the Confidentiality of Proposals and Applicants.**

Proposals are received with the expectation of protection of the confidentiality of their contents. For this reason, you must not copy, quote, or otherwise use or disclose to anyone, including your graduate students or post-doctoral or research associates, any material from any proposal you are asked to review. If you believe a colleague can make a substantial contribution to the review, please obtain permission from the Theme Program Office who asked that you review the proposal *before* disclosing either the content of the proposal or the name of any applicant or principal investigator.

#### **4. Confidentiality of the Review Process and Reviewer Names.**

The names of external experts and Panel of Expert members won't be made public.

You must respect the confidentiality of all principal investigators and of other reviewers, as appropriate. You cannot disclose their identities, the relative assessments or rankings of proposals by a peer review panel, or other details about the peer review of proposals.

## **YOUR CERTIFICATION**

#### **Your Potential Conflicts.**

I have read the list of affiliations and relationships (on the next page of this form) that could prevent my participation in matters involving such individuals or institutions. To the best of my knowledge, I have no affiliation or relationship that would prevent me from performing my duties. I understand that I must contact the Theme Program Office if a conflict exists or arises during my service. I further understand that **I must sign and return this Conflict Statement to the Theme Program Office before I can review proposals.**

#### **Maintaining the Confidentiality of Others.**

I will not divulge or use any confidential information, described above, that I may become aware of during my service. I have read and understand the information on Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure and promise to take all necessary measures to fulfil my obligations in my role as Panel of Experts (PoE) member, as External Reviewer or member of the Group of Program Coordinators (GPC).

#### **Your Identity as a Reviewer will be Kept Confidential.**

I understand my identity as a reviewer of specific proposals will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible.

#### **Release of the names of the PoE (Apply only to PoE Members).**

Following the announcement of awards from each Call, the names of the Panel of Experts will be released.

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Function (PoE, External Reviewer, GPC) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_