



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

ICAR Conflict of Interest Policy for Sub Committee and Working Group Members

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PURPOSE

This SOP describes how ICAR handles potential conflicts of interest for members of Sub Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces.

SCOPE

Covers all Sub Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces.
For Board Conflict of Interest Policy see SOP 06_GRP_0006

TERMS & DEFINITIONS

COI: Conflict of Interest
QAMS: Quality Assurance Management System
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure: established or prescribed method to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or in designated situations' (Merriam-Webster.com).
SC – sub-committee of ICAR
WG – working group of ICAR
TF – task force of ICAR
EG – expert group of ICAR
ToR – terms of reference
CE – ICAR Chief Executive

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive: author and ultimate responsibility for ensuring policy is followed



Groups Coordinator: to ensure Chairs of various Board, Committees Groups follow this SOP
Chairs: Ensure all relevant COI forms for their members are on file with the secretariat.

PROCEDURE / POLICY

1. Background;

The main reasons that ICAR's membership structure makes a distinction between voting (full) and non-voting (associate) members are:

- a) To ensure that the interests of the organisations actively involved in animal recording operations predominate.
- b) To ensure decisions on recording guidelines are not biased by commercial interests and particularly those of the suppliers of devices used to facilitate animal recording.
- c) To ensure ICAR and Service-ICAR decisions relating to technical and commercial aspects of its services are free from self-interest of service providers, and service users.

The downside of the current approach is that the 'associate members' (manufacturers or technologists) may have considerable knowledge and expertise that can be very useful in designing guidelines. ICAR's Groups obtain access to this knowledge by including "associate" participation on a non-membership basis

The reason for introducing a conflict of interest policy for SC and WG members is so ICAR can include these valued people in our SCs and WGs without jeopardizing our 'greater good objectives' and our independence.

2. Conflict of Interest Policy for members of sub committees and working groups.

Conflict of interest arises when a person has (or could have) divided loyalties. Members of ICAR Sub-committees, Working Groups or Task Forces owe the organisation their undivided loyalty. Therefore, they need to be conscious of the potential for conflict of interest, and they need to act with candour and care in those situations.

Avoiding conflict of interest does not mean that a Sub-committee or Working Group or Task Force member will never be in a conflict of interest position. It means that when the person is (or could be) in a conflict of interest position, the situation is recognised and properly handled. Conflicts of interest only become problematic if the person fails to recognise the conflict of interest or fails to deal with the situation properly. Avoiding conflict of interest, in the narrow sense, means putting the duty to ICAR ahead of any other interest or duty. This means that the person must assess their views and proposals in light of their benefit to ICAR. Every person should contribute their unique skills and perspective, and their honest views, to any Board, sub-committee or WG discussion. However, when it comes to decision-making, the person's actions will be judged in terms of the benefit to ICAR as a whole.

There is also the need to avoid both actual and perceived conflicts of Interest. A conflict of interest may be actual and obvious. Most commonly, this will arise when the person has a material interest in a proposed activity under discussion to which ICAR may be involved. This material interest may arise directly because the person is directly involved with the activity, or it may arise more indirectly because the person has an employment or other similar relationship



with the entity dealing with ICAR.

Sometimes, even though there may be no legal conflict of interest, there is still potential for the reasonable perception of a conflict of interest, when viewed from the perspective of an objective outside observer. In that case, even if the person in fact has no actual bias, there is a potential for the perception of a conflict of interest.

For all of these reasons, the general policy below set out the guidelines for awareness, disclosure and options for handling any actual or perceived conflict of interest specific to members of the Sub Committees (SC), Working Groups (WG) or Task Forces (TF) of ICAR.

All SC/WG/TF members must have the awareness of their situation and be vigilant to identify:

- Whether they have any material interest in the activity or discussion topic on the agenda of any meeting of the Group ("direct conflict of interest").
- Whether, even if there is no direct or obvious conflict of interest, there is some other factor which does, or could, prevent them from exercising objective judgment ("potential conflict of interest").
- Whether, even if there is no potential conflict of interest, there is some other factor which might give an objective outside observer a reasonable basis to perceive that the person might not exercise objective judgment ("reasonably perceived conflict of interest").

In the event that a SC/WG/TF member identifies any of the above situations, they must disclose it as soon as possible to the Chairman and/or Executive Director or ICAR. Where a SC/WG/TF member has a potential conflict of interest, or there is some basis for a perceived conflict of interest, the person must at least disclose that interest to the SC/WG/TF Chairman, in sufficient detail to allow the Chairman, and potentially other members, to understand what the interest is and how far it goes.

Upon knowledge of any SC/WG/TF member's disclosure of direct, potential or perceived conflict of interest, the SC/WG/TF Chairman may handle the situation in one or more of the following ways:

- The member may contribute to the topic discussion and exercise their right to vote, as usual.
- The member may contribute to the topic discussion but not vote on any decision.
- The member may not contribute to the topic discussion or vote on any decision.
- The member will be excused from the meeting during all discussion on the topic.