

# IODP Conflict-of-Interest Policy

(Approved by the SPPOC, July 2004)

## A. INTRODUCTION

### *General statement:*

The objective of the conflict-of-interest (COI) policy for the Science Advisory Structure (SAS) of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) is to minimize both real and perceived conflicts of interest while maintaining the fullest possible involvement of knowledgeable scientists in providing scientific and technical advice to the program. The IODP SAS needs a comprehensive, effective, and, to the maximum extent possible, flexible COI policy that takes into account the differing international structures and histories of the funding agencies, other governmental agencies, implementing organizations, research organizations, and universities of its participating members. The statement presented in Appendix A builds upon the efforts of the predecessor scientific ocean drilling programs to determine and manage conflicts of interest within the SAS.

### *Definition:*

A conflict of interest is a situation in which the interests (for example: personal, familial, professional or commercial) of an IODP SAS member or designated alternate involved in proposal nurturing, evaluation, ranking, scheduling, or assessment processes, or in IODP-related financial or commercial enterprises, have a real or perceived impact, either positive or negative, on the results of the nurturing, evaluation, ranking, scheduling or assessment processes, or related contractual work. Conflict of interest depends on the situation, not the character or actions of the individual.

### *Principles:*

The COI policy is based on the following principles:

- An individual scientist can be a regular member of only one standing SAS committee or panel.
- Any representative of IODP Management International, Inc. (IODP-MI), IODP lead funding agencies, implementing organizations (IOs), and their subcontractors cannot serve as a member on standing SAS committees and panels, other than the IODP-MI Board of Governors members who also serve as Science Planning and Policy Oversight Committee (SPPOC) members.
- All potential conflicts of interest will be declared at the start of every meeting, or at an otherwise appropriate time during the meeting.
- Committee and panel members or other meeting attendees determined as having a conflict of interest regarding an IODP or IODP-related proposal should not be present when the relevant proposal is evaluated, considered for ranking, ranked, considered for scheduling, or scheduled. Proponents may be present for the general discussion of proposals (e.g., how proposals address long-range objectives).
- Committee and panel members or other meeting attendees determined as having a conflict of interest regarding IODP-related financial or commercial enterprises should not be present during discussions relevant to such financial or commercial enterprises.

## B. COI POLICY

The issues of conflict of interest have three foci: an understanding of who may serve on panels; procedures and safeguards with regard to proposal nurturing, evaluation, ranking, scheduling, and assessment processes; and procedures and safeguards with regard to IODP-related financial or commercial enterprises. The goal of the COI policy is to maintain the fullest involvement possible by knowledgeable scientists from across the spectrum of IODP members in providing scientific advice to the SAS, IODP-MI, and the IOs. Managing conflict

of interest effectively and efficiently within the IODP SAS will enable achievement of this goal. The SPPOC will receive a brief annual report from SAS committee and panel chairs noting how conflicts were dealt with in their respective meetings.

In regard to panel service, no employee of the IODP-MI, IODP funding agencies, IOs, or their subcontractors may serve as a member of a standing SAS committee or panel. (The exception to this is the IODP-MI board members who also serve on the SPPOC.) Such persons, however, may be proponents of IODP proposals (for example staff scientists).

SAS activities fall into two primary categories, a nurturing, evaluation, and technical advice component (SAS panels); and an evaluation, ranking, scheduling, and assessment part (SAS committees). Accordingly, the COI policy may allow for involvement of proponents in informative roles at appropriate panels and in general discussions, but not in any evaluations of their respective proposals leading directly to and including competitive proposal rankings and scheduling decisions.

In regard to SAS panels, the specific issues concern the participation of panel members and other meeting attendees who are proponents of active proposals. Panel members and other attendees who are proponents of active proposals are to be excluded from discussions of the specific proposal/s on which they are proponents. They may participate in the discussion of all other proposals, including serving as watchdogs. These panel members may participate in nurturing and evaluating all other proposals, with these members declaring their potential conflicts and the chair/s keeping a record of these conflicts. The chair/s should clearly announce and document all potential conflicts of interest and resulting recusals, including in the minutes. In a similar fashion, panel members who have a financial or commercial interest in tools, programs, etc, by means of their employment will be regarded as having a conflict of interest. The IODP-MI Sapporo Office retains any paper ballots from the grouping exercise to document adherence to the COI policy.

In regard to the Science Planning Committee (SPC), a committee member or any other attendee who is a proponent on a proposal being considered for ranking or scheduling may not be present for the specific discussions of proposals leading to ranking, the ranking process itself, determination of which proposals to forward to the Operations Committee (OPCOM), or the scheduling process. Further, these conflicted members may not serve as watchdogs on other proposals. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to define when these specific discussions begin.

In regard to OPCOM, an SPC committee member who is a proponent on a proposal included in the group of proposals residing with or forwarded to OPCOM may not participate as an OPCOM member but is eligible to be called upon for advice as needed.

In regard to the SPPOC, a committee member or any other attendee who is a proponent on a proposal included in the annual program plan may not be present for the presentation, discussion, or approval of that annual program plan.

Conflicts of interest are unavoidable. Potential conflicts should be identified as early as possible, and the various national and consortia offices should identify alternates with suitable scientific and technical expertise for conflicted members. This will require due diligence by the IODP-MI Vice-President for Science Planning and Deliverables and the IODP SAS chairs to make such requests in advance of meetings. Sufficient time must be given for the national and consortia offices to nominate alternates, if standing alternates have not been identified in advance, and for the alternates to be fully informed of relevant business in time to be prepared for meetings. Whether or not alternates are appointed for conflicted members, quorum rules as specified in the SAS terms of reference for that committee or panel will apply.

## **Appendix A. SAS Conflict-of-Interest Statement**

### ***I. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest by SAS Members***

If any SAS panel or committee member, alternate, or any other attendee of a panel or committee meeting, has any direct interest that might be affected by, or might reasonably be perceived to be affected by, any action under consideration by the panel or committee, that member or attendee is required to make a public declaration of the existence of such interest to the chair. The possible existence of such interest may also be proposed to the chair by a member or attendee other than the member having the interest.

All declared or proposed possible conflicts of interest, and the actions taken, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the interest was considered and the annual conflict of interest report prepared for the SPPOC. With respect to any such declared interest or proposed possible interest, the chair will make an initial determination regarding whether the circumstances constitute a conflict of interest. In determining whether the circumstances constitute a conflict of interest, the chair may, at his or her discretion, consult with other members of the panel or committee. The chair's decision will be subject to review in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

### ***II. Policies for Conflicted SAS Members or Other Attendees***

- a) Panel or committee members, or other attendees, who are determined by the chair to have a conflict of interest with respect to a drilling proposal will not be present during any part of a panel or committee meeting when that proposal is nurtured, evaluated, ranked, scheduled, or assessed. However, a conflicted panel or committee member may participate in general discussions that do not lead directly to voting, regarding proposals in general, including discussion of his or her own proposal. Such members must restrict their comments and discussion to the scientific objectives of proposals being discussed and shall not make comparisons with their own proposals.
- b) Panel or committee members who are in conflict of interest because of IODP-related financial or commercial enterprises will not be present during any part of a panel or committee meeting during discussions relevant to those financial or commercial enterprises.
- c) SPC members or alternates determined as having a conflict of interest will not be present during deliberations leading directly to a vote and will not vote with respect to the inclusion in, or exclusion from, the upcoming recommended science plan of a proposal affected by such conflict of interest.
- d) SPPOC members or alternates who are proponents on proposals included in the annual program plan will not be present for the presentation, discussion, or approval of that annual program plan.
- e) During panel or committee discussions that do not lead directly to a vote or that do not involve competitive ranking of proposals (e.g., discussion of long-term platform plans by the SPC or evaluation of proposals by the panels), all members may participate in general discussions in order to provide a full range of expertise to the decision-making process. A member having a proposal under active consideration by the SSEPs or the SPC that may form part of the long-term platform plans will not be present during final deliberations and voting related to those long-term plans.
- f) Panel or committee members or other attendees who are determined to have a conflict of interest will not be present during deliberations leading directly to a vote and will not vote with respect to any other matters affected by such conflict of interest.