
Thirteenth session of the Assembly
Abu Dhabi, 14-15 January 2023

Note of the Director-General

Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

1. The Assembly, in its decision A/2/DC/7, adopted the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) to ensure that conflicts of interest are identified and managed in a way that ensures broad public trust and confidence in the decision-making and operations of IRENA, and the highest standard of ethical conduct in IRENA's affairs and the protection of its reputation and integrity.
2. Pursuant to paragraph 9.1 of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest contained in A/2/13, the Ethics Officer prepares an annual report on the implementation of this Policy and presents it to the Director-General to comment upon before delivery to the Council, and subsequently to the Assembly. The present report covers the period from **26 September 2021** to **30 September 2022**.
3. The Director-General notes the successful implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest and concurs with the conclusion contained therein.
4. The Director-General submits the present report, through the Council, to the Assembly for its consideration.

Report of the Ethics Officer
Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

I. Introduction

1. The Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest (“the Policy”) was adopted by the Assembly at its second session through decision A/2/DC/7 and was subsequently promulgated by the Director-General through directive ST/Directive/2012/4.
2. In 2012, the Director-General also promulgated a directive on the Disclosure of Interest Forms (ST/Directive/2012/11) to implement Staff Regulation 2.7 (b), the Policy and the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct annexed to the Staff Rules.
3. The Ethics Officer is responsible for provision of confidential advice on ethics and standards of conduct to the Agency and all its employees, with the aim of preventing and resolving potential or actual unethical behavior through training and general outreach activities. In addition, the Ethics Officer is responsible for administration, review, and implementation of the Disclosure of Interest at IRENA.
4. This report provides an overview of the activities related to the implementation of the Policy during the period from **26 September 2021** to **30 September 2022**.

II. Operations and Activities

A. Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

5. During the reporting period, the Ethics Officer was consulted on 11 cases relating to outside activities or employment, and conflict of interest, providing confidential guidance and advice on the permissibility of outside activities and the Disclosure of Interest Procedure. Eight formal requests were received for outside activities and reviewed.
6. No requests for clarification on matters ranging from the policy on ethical behavior, code of conduct, supervisory relations or performance issues were received during the reporting period.
7. Furthermore, no requests on other issues or any reports requesting protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct from Covered Individuals during the reporting period have been lodged with the Ethics Office. No issues requiring consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board have emerged during the reporting period either.

B. Implementation of the Disclosure of Interest Procedure

8. The aim of the Disclosure of Interest Procedure, as administered by the Ethics Officer, is to prevent or manage conflicts of interest and to maintain the public trust in the integrity of the Agency.
9. During the reporting period, the Ethics Officer issued detailed instructions and a list of frequently asked questions that arise during the preparation and review of Disclosure of Interest forms, to further enhance clarity of the process and requirements.
10. At the time of preparing this report, a total of 33 Covered Individuals were required to file the Disclosure of Interest Forms and 100 per cent have complied with the filing requirement. The Review of the filed Disclosures of Interest Forms did not reveal any actual or apparent conflicts of interest with the Agency.

11. All submissions are retained by the Agency in a secure location and may be made available for inspection as promulgated in the directive on Disclosure of Interest Forms (ST/Directive/2012/11).

C. Training and Outreach

12. Education is essential in building a culture of ethics within IRENA. The training course on “Ethics and integrity at IRENA”, mandatory for IRENA staff, continues to be key in promoting ethical awareness and staff conduct. The course provides staff with the understanding of their rights and obligations on how to apply ethical standards at the workplace, how to identify and handle potential ethical challenges and make decisions in an ethical manner. The training is available online for all staff, and course materials remain accessible after the certification. Providing online training is a deliberate choice of the training format, as it allows staff to take it at any time around their work schedule, to be trained and to reflect on ethical standards.
13. All newly appointed staff members are informed of the requirement to complete and successfully pass the course, as a matter of their induction programme. At the time of preparing this report, 95 per cent of active staff completed the online training course. The Ethics Officer continues liaising with staff to ensure full compliance.
14. The Ethics Office uses e-mails to disseminate important information, templates, policies, and alerts, including newly developed supplementary guidance for the completion of Disclosure of Interest forms.
15. In addition, a dedicated webpage on the Agency’s intranet, as well as alerts and reminders on the main intranet page are used as fundamental tools for providing relevant information and resources, on the role of the Ethics Officer, ethical values, and standards. Online platforms are primarily used for communication with staff in all IRENA offices due to the ease of accessibility and time differences. Further enhancements to the dedicated internal webpage have been planned over next few months.

D. Ethics Advisory Board

16. The Council, at its twenty-first meeting in May 2021, appointed Algeria, Germany, and the United Arab Emirates as members of the Ethics Advisory Board for a two-year term, ending at the twenty-fifth Council meeting in 2023.

III. Conclusion

17. To ensure effective implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest, continuous efforts are made to ensure that all staff members perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity, efficiency, accountability and transparency.
18. The Agency is committed to strengthening ethical practices and enforcing ethical management. The issue of ethical standards, values and practices is central to the development and success of its human resources strategy plan, ensuring adherence to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior.