

INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

Fourth session of the Assembly

Abu Dhabi, 18 – 19 January 2014

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

Note of the Director-General

1. The Assembly, in its decision A/2/DC/7 of 15 January 2012 adopted the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest 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, including the highest standard of ethical conduct in IRENA's affairs and the protection of the reputation and integrity of IRENA.
2. Pursuant to paragraph 9.1 of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest, the Ethics Officer on an annual basis prepares a report on the implementation of this Policy. The report is given to the Director-General to comment upon before delivery to the Assembly.
3. The present report of the Ethics Officer covers implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest and the Disclosure of Interest reporting for the period from **1 October 2012 to 31 October 2013**.
4. After the consideration of the report at the sixth meeting of the Council, the Director-General submits the present report to the Assembly for its consideration. The Director-General notes the successful implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest and the activities related to continuing training on ethics issues in the Agency. The Director-General will continue to support the Ethics Officer towards achieving the Officer's objectives and concurs with the recommendations made in this report.

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

I. Introduction

1. The Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest (“the Policy”) adopted by the Assembly in its decision A/2/DC/7 was promulgated on 14 February 2012 by directive ST/Directive/2012/4.
2. The Director-General on 28 May 2012 promulgated directive ST/Directive/2012/11, on Disclosure of Interest Forms, to implement staff regulation 2.7 (b) as well as directive ST/Directive/2012/10 to promulgate the revised text of the Code of Conduct.
3. On 30 August 2012, the Director-General appointed Mr. Armands Cakss, Chief Finance Officer as the Ethics Officer. Ms. Salma Khalid, Human Resources Officer, was appointed on 30 July 2013 as the Ethics Officer, replacing Mr. Cakss who left the Agency at the end of July 2013.

II. Areas of Responsibilities of the Ethics Officer

4. The areas of responsibility of the Ethics Officer are as follows:
 - a. Developing standards, training and education on ethics issues, in coordination with the Office of Human Resources and other offices as appropriate, including ensuring periodic ethics training for all Covered Individuals¹;
 - b. Providing confidential advice and guidance to Covered Individuals on ethical issues (such as conflicts of interest), including administering an ethics “helpline”;
 - c. Administering the disclosure of interest programme of the Agency;
 - d. Undertaking the responsibilities as assigned under the Agency’s provisions for the protection of Covered Individuals against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations;
 - e. Preparing on an annual basis a report on the implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for submission to the Assembly.
5. In assisting the Director-General, the Ethics Officer functions as a guardian of the standards of conduct for the Covered Individuals of the Agency. In that capacity, the Ethics Officer is to provide information and develop content for training on these standards.
6. The Ethics Officer is responsible for providing a secure confidential environment in which Covered Individuals can feel free to consult on ethical issues and seek protection against retaliation for the reporting of misconduct in good faith. To protect the confidentiality of sensitive information, the Ethics Officer has adopted stringent procedures for managing information and developed a secure filing and tracing system.

¹ Covered Individual means any individual subject to the Staff Regulations of IRENA, Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for the International Renewable Energy Agency, paragraph 2.1.

7. The present report provides overviews of the disclosure of interest reporting, as well as the implementation of the Policy.

III. Ethics Advisory Board

8. An important component of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest is the role played by the Ethics Advisory Board in the implementation of the Policy.

9. Paragraph 2.6 of the Policy defines the Ethics Advisory Board as “the standing board, composed of three members of the Council appointed by the Council for two-year terms, established to assist with the implementation of this Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest. The Ethics Advisory Board will assist in ethics matters involving the Director-General and on any matter that the Ethics Officer submits to it.”

10. The Assembly at its third session adopted the Terms of Reference of the Ethics Advisory Board set out in document A/3/17.

11. The Council at its fifth session appointed Grenada, the Republic of Korea, and the United States of America as members of the Ethics Advisory Board for a two-year term.

IV. Operations and Activities

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

12. During the reporting period, the Ethics Officer has received only one request for advice from a Covered Individual on an ethical issue, which was satisfactorily provided. No requests were received from Covered Individuals on other issues or any reports requesting protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct. No issues that require consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board, as stipulated in document A/3/17, have emerged during the reporting period.

13. Training for Covered Individuals on ethical issues was a priority activity for effective implementation of the Policy. In coordination with Human Resources, Ethics Training was conducted for all Covered Individuals based in Abu Dhabi. The mandatory training was for one full day and four training sessions were conducted from 13 May to 16 May 2013. Three training sessions were dedicated for all IRENA staff members and one training session was dedicated for staff members at P4 grade level and above. The training was customized in a way that was relevant to IRENA’s line of work and staff functions. The training sessions were highly interactive with integrated videos, scenarios and team discussions, and were well received.

B. Disclosure of Interest Procedure

14. The Disclosure of Interest Procedure is an important component of the Director-General's mission to maintain and enhance public trust in the integrity of the Agency.

15. Taking into consideration Covered Individuals already identified during the previous reporting period, the Ethics Officer, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources, identified those Covered Individuals who were required to undertake the disclosure of interest form for the 2013 reporting period and subsequently notified them individually on the deadline of submission.

16. For individuals included in the scope of application defined by Section 1 of ST/Directive/2012/11, the completed form must be submitted within 60 days from the date of issuance of that directive, while for individuals who enter on duty after the date of issuance of ST/Directive/2012/11 and are included in the scope of application of Section 1 of that directive, the completed form must be submitted within 60 days of the date of entry on duty.

17. A total of 28 Covered Individuals were required to file the disclosure of interest forms by the submission deadline of 31 March 2013. 7 additional Covered Individuals were required to file the disclosure of interest form after this date. By the time of preparing this report, all Covered Individuals have complied with the filing requirement. Review of the filed disclosure of interest forms did not reveal any actual or apparent conflicts of interest with the Agency.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

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

18. At this stage of the Policy implementation, it is envisaged that the newly appointed Ethics Officer should undergo appropriate training to enhance her knowledge and facilitate efficient discharging of functions and proper provision of ethics advice to all staff members.

19. To ensure effective implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest., systematic and regular training will be institutionalized to ensure all Covered Individuals are informed on the policy and aware of the various ethical issues in a timely manner.

B. Implementation of the Disclosure of Interest Procedure

20. During the reporting period, the Ethics Officer established procedures to ensure timely submission and in-depth verification of the Disclosure of Interest forms received. In order to respect the confidential nature of the exercise, measures have been taken to ensure the safekeeping of the completed Disclosure of Interest forms in a secure location.