

INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

Fifth session of the Assembly

Abu Dhabi, 17 – 18 January 2015

**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 2013 to 1 October 2014**.
4. The present report has been noted by the Council at its eighth meeting and is hereby submitted to the Assembly for its consideration. The Director-General notes the successful implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest. The Director-General will continue to support the Ethics Officer towards achieving the highest level of ethical standards in the Agency 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. This report provides a summary of the activities related to the implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest during the period from **1 October 2013** to **1 October 2014**. The report also provides recommendation on strengthening and promoting a culture of integrity and ethical conduct.

II. Operations and Activities

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

4. During the reporting period, the Ethics Officer received two requests for advice from Covered Individuals¹ on ethical issues, which were satisfactorily responded to. No request was received from Covered Individuals on other issues or any reports requesting protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct. No issue that requires consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board, as stipulated in document A/3/17, has emerged during the reporting period.

B. Implementation of the Disclosure of Interest Procedure

5. 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.
6. 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 2014 reporting period and subsequently notified them individually on the deadline of submission.
7. A total of 27 Covered Individuals were required to file the disclosure of interest forms by the submission deadline of 31 March 2014. Five 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

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.

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.

C. Training and Education

8. Training for Covered Individuals on ethical issues remains a priority for effective implementation of the Policy. In coordination with the Human Resources Office, an Ethics training course is currently being developed, which will include practical examples and real-life scenarios. The training will be made available for all staff and mandatory for all new joiners.

D. Ethics Advisory Board

9. The current Ethics Advisory Board includes Grenada, the Republic of Korea, and the United States of America. The Board was appointed by the Council at its fifth meeting for a two-year term (see paragraph 78 of C/5/SR/1).

III. Protection for Covered Individuals who report possible cases of misconduct

10. During the consideration of the Ethics Officer report at the sixth meeting of the Council, one delegation proposed to explore the idea of establishing a whistleblower function in order to increase the credibility of the organisation externally.

11. The Ethics Officer in consultation with the Secretariat has looked into this proposal and concluded that the Code of Conduct (A/3/15) in force since the third session of the Assembly provides a sufficient framework for this function through its provisions under “Protection for Covered Individuals who report possible cases of misconduct” (paragraphs 59 to 62). It has been found that through these provisions, staff would be adequately protected from being punished for reporting misconduct or for cooperating with an official audit or investigation.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

12. 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.

13. In addition to the above, management support in including workplace discussions about putting ethical standards into every day’s work activities and decision-making is key for promoting compliance of all staff with the ethical standards.