

## **Independent Archive Advisory Group (IAAG) Draft Code of Practice: Core Principles**

The IAAG aims to fully comply with the guidance laid out in the Government Office for Science 'Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils: CoPSAC 2021'<sup>(1)</sup> and 'The Government Chief Scientific Adviser's Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making'<sup>(2)</sup>. In addition, the Group should adhere to the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (see Annex 1) set out in the Cabinet Office guidance 'Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies' (2019)<sup>(3)</sup>

The principles laid out in these publications cover the basis on which IAAG members are expected to discharge their responsibilities.

### ***Committee Member's Responsibilities***

Defra requires that, as a member of IAAG, you should:

- Be clear why you have been appointed and in what capacity, the role you are expected to play and the role of others.
- Bring an independent judgement to bear on all issues that the committee considers.
- Act in good faith and in the best interests of Defra.
- Not misuse information gained in the course of your work for Defra for personal gain or for political purposes, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote your private interests, or those of connected organisations, persons, or firms.

The Group's chairman has responsibility for ensuring that the committee is an effective and accountable body and has responsibility for:

- The operation and outputs of the committee.
- Ensuring every member of the committee is heard and no view is ignored or overlooked, using an appropriately structured process.
- Ensuring unorthodox and contrary views are considered.
- Ensuring that the proceedings of the committee are properly documented.
- Ensuring that any significant diversity of opinion among members is properly and appropriately reflected in the committee outputs.

### ***Responsibilities of Officials***

The IAAG will be comprised of independent experts, Defra officials and, if applicable, representatives from other UK funders of TSE research who contribute to the archive. The Biological Archive Group at the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) will provide the Group's secretariat and will act to ensure that decisions made by the group address Defra's policy requirements.

In consultation with the chairman the secretariat will develop the overall workplan and processes, and the agenda for individual meetings.

The secretariat will support the committee by assembling information and recording the process, ensuring there is an audit trail for conclusions and recommendations, and where the committee has the authority, for its decisions. It will bring to the committee's attention relevant emerging issues and information about the work or findings of other committees and bodies.

### ***Conflicts of interest***

It is essential that Group members avoid any danger of being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. All group members should therefore declare any personal or business interest which may, or may be perceived to, influence their judgement. This should include, as a minimum, personal direct and indirect financial interests, and should normally include such interests of close family members and of people living in the same household. The register of interests will be open to the public and should be kept up-to-date. Members should inform the secretariat of changes to their interests as they occur. A declaration of interest should also be made at meetings of the group, so that this may be recorded in the minutes, whether or not the Member is requested by the Chairman to withdraw from the meeting.

Examples of potential conflicts include:

- Close links with, or an interest in, proposals where the institution that the individual is associated with (e.g., their university) stands to gain (e.g. research funding) from a Defra decision.
- Commercial or financial interest in any matter under consideration.
- Personal or family interest.

A pro forma for the declaration of interests is provided in Annex 2.

### ***Confidentiality***

Defra is committed to openness in its processes and key decisions, and the aim of IAAG is to provide open, fair, and transparent advice to the TSE Archive at APHA. However, where information is provided to the Group in the expectation that it is not revealed to third parties (e.g., project information) these must remain confidential. Such papers will be marked 'In confidence'.

The chairman and office staff that support the Group are responsible for communicating the recommendations and advice of the Group.

## References

- (1) The 'Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils: CoPSAC 2021' is accessible at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-advisory-committees-code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-scientific-advisory-committees-and-councils-copsac-2021>
- (2) 'The Government Chief Scientific Adviser's Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making' are accessible at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/293037/10-669-gcsa-guidelines-scientific-engineering-advice-policy-making.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/293037/10-669-gcsa-guidelines-scientific-engineering-advice-policy-making.pdf)
- (3) The 'Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies' (2019) is accessible at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies-june-2019>

***Annex 1: The Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies June 2019.***

***Selflessness***

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

***Integrity***

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

***Objectivity***

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

***Accountability***

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

***Openness***

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

***Honesty***

Holders of public office should be truthful.

***Leadership***

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behavior. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behavior wherever it occurs.

## ***Annex 2: Management of Potential Conflicts of Interest.***

This annex offers a brief guide to the kinds of interests that should be declared. These are as follows:

- Personal connections with organisations that fund, or lobby for research into TSEs. You may be asked to give details of:
- Specific research priorities of the organisation (e.g., education, environmental exposure etc.)
- A list of members of the scientific advisory committee, or equivalent body, that decided on research priorities and funding.
- Defra funding for research into TSEs or plans or actual proposals being developed for such research.
- Employment by Defra.
- Employment by, consultancy for, directorships or shares in a company with an interest in developing diagnostics or in TSE research, or in a company that could be perceived to gain from any information that is shared at IAAG.
- Personal or family interest in an organisation or issue that could be perceived to be of relevance to IAAG.

Defra needs to make publicly available a register of declarations of interest of those members appointed to IAAG. To ensure business is seen to be conducted fairly and impartially and that all possible conflicts have been addressed ahead of decision making it is important to keep the register up-to-date as well as record additional issues when they arise.

IAAG members should, on taking up their appointments, declare any private, professional or commercial interests that might conceivably conflict with the interests of Defra, or which might be perceived by others as creating a conflict of interest. Members should also notify the secretariat of changes as these occur. At the beginning of each item, the Chairman will draw attention to any potential conflicts of interest and will invite the Group to agree what action to take ( e.g., whether a member should be required to leave the meeting for that item). If the Chairman has a conflict of interest, then he/she will withdraw and a deputy will chair that item.

A member may disclose a previously undisclosed interest to the secretariat or Chairman at any time, once it is recognised there is a potential for conflict (or a perception that there could be conflict).

**REGISTER OF PRIVATE, PROFESSIONAL, COMMERCIAL AND OTHER INTERESTS**

Name

Name of employing body

**1. Please indicate ( ✓ ) and give details of any potential conflicts of interest arising out of the following:**

- Company Appointments
- Honorary Appointments
- Major Academic Collaborations
- Directorships
- Shareholdings
- Consultancies
- Political/pressure Group Associations
- Other

***Please print details***

**2. Please give details of any conflicts of interest that may arise out of family involvement in any of the above**

I have read the Code of Practice for the Independent Archive Advisory Group and agree to abide by the Code. I undertake to declare at IAAG meetings any private, professional, political, commercial or other interests that may be perceived to

conflict with Defra interests and which have not been listed above. I accordingly agree to update this written declaration as circumstances arise.

Signature

Date