

## **Rules for handling the Conflict of Interest in the Calls launched by the BONUS EEIG**

for the Members of the BONUS EEIG Steering Committee, Call Advisory Board, Call Task Forces and Evaluation Panels, hereinafter "Members"

### **1. Preamble**

The *Steering Committee* is composed of one representative from each partner of the BONUS EEIG. It supervises the Call and makes recommendations concerning the projects to be funded to the national funding bodies. It makes decisions concerning the EU funds. It also steers the scientific coordination and monitoring of the funded projects.

The *Call Task Force* is composed of national programme managers appointed by the BONUS EEIG Members or participating funding agencies. It assists the Secretariat with technical matters concerning processing of the proposals as well as takes care of all local matters in each country/organisation. The Call Task Force is chaired by the Executive Director of the BONUS EEIG.

The *Call Advisory Board* is a panel of stakeholders and scientific experts appointed by the BONUS EEIG Steering Committee. It gives a recommendation of projects to be funded on the basis on their relevance in relation to the management of the environmental issues in the Baltic Sea. The Advisory Board selects its own chair.

The *Call Evaluation Panel* consists of scientific experts, appointed by the BONUS EEIG Steering Committee. Its/their composition should cover all relevant fields of expertise related to the Themes of the Call. It should also be unbiased geographically, nationally and in respect to gender or conflict of interest. The chair of the Call Evaluation Panel is appointed by the BONUS EEIG Steering Committee

The general principles of handling the Conflict of Interest have been agreed by the BONUS EEIG Members in Article 14 of the Statutes and Article 1(9) of the Internal Regulations. The Members of the Call Advisory Board, Call Evaluation Panel and possible observers guarantee the impartiality and confidentiality according to these rules in a separate signed declaration.

These rules set out the principles and procedures of the common action of the Members in participating in the Call Letters of Intent and Full Proposals application, evaluation and decision making process, hereinafter "Call process".

For each Member, these rules will come into force on the date of their approval by the BONUS EEIG Steering Committee. These rules may be amended or modified by the decision of the BONUS EEIG Steering Committee.

These rules are a mutual statement of intent among the Members, who agree to make every reasonable effort to fulfil the intents expressed herein.

### **2. The purpose of the rules**

The purpose of these rules is to ensure the objectivity and transparency of the Call process and to guarantee an equal and fair treatment of the applicants.

### **3. Participation in the Call process**

Members are allowed to participate the Call process, if they do not have any Conflict of Interest and keep the confidentiality as follows. If the Member is disqualified according to the criteria set out in Chapter 4 he/she cannot participate or otherwise assist in the Call process as regards handling his/her own or intimate's applications or competitors' applications. It has to be ensured that none of the applicants shall get access to the others competing proposals.

### **4. Disqualification of the Members**

The Call process is based on the fundamental principles of transparency, objectivity and equality of treatment. The BONUS EEIG Steering Committee may appoint an independent expert to monitor, and report the Call process.

A Member shall be disqualified if he/she in any way benefits or will be disfavoured from the approval or rejection of a proposal in the Call process. A Member shall also be disqualified in the following circumstances:

The Member:

- is applying for funding from the Call
- has close collaboration with the applicant (e.g. has co-authored and published an article with the applicant during the past three years, has been involved in the preparation of the application, or is involved in the publication or application of the results)
- has been a superior, subordinate or instructor of the applicant during the past three years
- is currently applying for the same post as the applicant
- is a Member of the Board, Council or corresponding governing body of an organisation, which has submitted an application to the Call
- is a close person to the applicant. A close person is:
  - 1) the spouse (also de facto), child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent or a person otherwise especially close to the Member (e.g. fiancé/e or a close friend), as well as their spouses (also de facto),
  - 2) a sibling of the Member's parent or his/her spouse (also de facto), a child of a sibling, or previous spouse (also de facto),
  - 3) a child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of the Member's spouse as well as their spouses (also de facto), a child of a sibling of the member's spouse,
  - 4) or a half-relative comparable to the above mentioned.

The Member is also disqualified if his/her impartiality may otherwise be endangered, or if he/she feels that there is a Conflict of Interest and therefore is disqualified to participate in the Call process.

In the case of two stage Call process, the disqualification, which was identified in the first stage, expires if the application does not proceed to the second phase.

All cases of Conflict of Interest, must be notified to the BONUS EEIG Secretariat as soon as possible they are revealed.

## **5. Duty to inform**

Members are required to declare any personal interests according to the criteria named above. All cases of Conflict of Interest, must be notified to the BONUS EEIG Secretariat and the Steering Committee as soon as they are revealed. Such information shall be disclosed before the relevant meeting is held.

## **6. Confidentiality**

All material related to the Call process, such as research plans, abstracts, summary reports and evaluation statements, are confidential documents. The documents should therefore be handled and stored with due care and confidentiality.

The Members are not allowed to disclose any information concerning the documents, evaluations, or discussions to outsiders, nor are they allowed to use this confidential information to their own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage. In addition, they may not reveal to outsiders that they are assessing the research plan of a particular researcher. Any specific questions about the Call process, documents or evaluation statements addressed by persons with no authorization to be involved in the Call process, should be forwarded to the BONUS EEIG Secretariat.

Once the whole Call process has been completed, the Member is required to destroy all the application documents and any copies made of them, or return them, unless regulated otherwise according to e.g. archiving rules of the funding organisation. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the Call process has been completed.

## **7. Decisions concerning Members disqualifications**

It is preferred that the Members individually by themselves will consider their Conflict of Interest to avoid possible conflicts during the Call process. If needed the Steering Committee decides on the presence or absence of Conflict of Interest and the further procedure as stated above.

## **8. Substitutes**

In order to guarantee the quorum of the decision making and a sufficient national expertise in the Call management, the BONUS EEIG Member may in the case of the Conflict of Interest mentioned earlier (see Disqualification of the Members), appoint a substitute to represent the Member in the Steering Committee or in the Call Task Force.