



**GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND**

**Meeting of the Board**  
5-6 July 2017  
Songdo, Incheon, Republic of Korea  
Provisional agenda item 24

**GCF/B.17/17**  
3 July 2017

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# Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers of the Green Climate Fund

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## **Summary**

This document provides information on the proposed Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers of the Green Climate Fund in accordance with decisions B.09/03, B.10/13 and B.13/27, paragraph (b).

## I. Introduction

1. At its ninth meeting, the Board adopted a Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for the Board of the Green Climate Fund.<sup>1</sup> The development of that policy was overseen by the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC) pursuant to the mandate given to it by the Board by decision B.05/13 and paragraphs 3(a) and 3(b) of the EAC's terms of reference.<sup>2</sup>
2. By decision B.09/03, the Board, while adopting the policy for the Board requested the Secretariat to draft policies on ethics and conflicts of interest for the Executive Director, other Board-appointed officials, active observers and external members of panels established by the Board, to be considered by the EAC and recommended to the Board for adoption. The Board, on the recommendations of the EAC, has since adopted policies on ethics and conflicts of interest for the Executive Director, other Board appointed officials and external members of panels established by the Board.
3. The Board, by decision B.13/27, paragraph (b), requested the EAC, with the support of the Secretariat, to continue its work on recommended policies on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers.
4. The EAC has since the sixteenth meeting of the Board discussed and reached a consensus on the Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers (hereinafter referred to as "the Policy").
5. This document will briefly describe the main areas of discussion covered by the EAC with regard to the Policy.

## II. Background and rationale for the Policy

6. The Policy is based on the adopted Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for the Board of the Green Climate Fund, with suitable modifications and specific provisions applicable to active observers to provide guidance on matters of professional and personal behaviour of active observers, in connection with their participation in the meetings of the Board.
7. The EAC acknowledges that the following important principles and elements must form part of the policy under which active observers (Covered Individuals) are covered:
  - (a) As a general obligation of active observers pursuant to the Policy, paragraph 5 thereof states that it is the duty of each Covered Individual to maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethics in their personal and professional conduct and to comply with the Policy and all current and future policies of the GCF and all laws, rules and regulations to which she/he is subject;
  - (b) It prescribes the standards of conduct required of active observers during participation in meetings of the Board (section IV of the Policy);
  - (c) Conflicts of interest: A conflict of interest is defined in paragraph 17 of the Policy. Covered Individuals are under an obligation to disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they arise and to recuse themselves from participating in the discussion of any such item that is on the agenda of the meeting of the Board. All actual or potential conflicts of interest that are not addressed through the recusal shall be immediately disclosed in writing to the EAC (see para. 24 of the Policy). The Policy also provides that any conflict of interest that exists, and the measures by which it is resolved, must be properly documented (see para. 27 of the Policy);

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<sup>1</sup> Decision B.09/03, paragraph (a).

<sup>2</sup> Annex XVIII to decision B.05/13 (annex XVIII to document GCF/B.05/23).

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- (d) Other important elements that are dealt with in the Policy cover future employment with the GCF of the Covered Individual and their immediate family members and the acceptance of gifts and entertainment;
  - (e) Covered Individuals will have access to the confidential information of the GCF and its operations that is deemed confidential according to the Information disclosure policy of the GCF.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, as a general rule under the Policy, all the information that is deemed confidential should remain so not only during but also after their term of office with the GCF comes to an end; and
  - (f) The mandate for ensuring compliance with the Policy and handling breaches of the Policy has been entrusted to the EAC.

### **III. Recommended action**

- 8. It is recommended that the Board adopt the draft decision as set out in annex I.

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<sup>3</sup> Annex XXIX to decision B.12/35 (annex II to document GCF/B.12/24).

## **Annex I: Draft decision of the Board**

The Board, having considered document GCF/B.17/17 titled “Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers of the Green Climate Fund”:

Adopts the Policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers of the Green Climate Fund as set out in annex II.

## Annex II: Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund

### I. Scope, purpose and applicability

1. This policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund sets out principles and ethical standards for the effective participation of the Active Observers in the meetings of the Board of the Fund. The Governing Instrument for the Fund specifies that the Board will invite two civil society representatives and two private sector representatives, to participate in its meetings as Active Observers.
2. As the Active Observers may, upon invitation of the Co-Chairs, participate in meetings of the Board and receive, in accordance with applicable rules and procedures and with the Fund's disclosure policies, Board meeting documents, this Policy has been adopted by the Board to provide guidance on matters of professional and personal behaviour of Active Observers, in connection with their participation in the meetings of the Board.
3. The Policy is in furtherance of the general principle set out in the Governing Instrument that the Fund shall operate in a transparent and accountable manner guided by efficiency and effectiveness.

### II. Definitions

4. For the purposes of the Policy, the following terms shall have the meaning set out below:
  - (a) **Active Observers** means the four representatives, comprising two from developed and two from developing countries referred to in paragraph 16 of the Governing Instrument and paragraphs 2(a) and 37 of the Rules of Procedure of the Board, invited by the Co-Chairs, in consultation with the Board, to participate as Active Observers;
  - (b) **Associated Institution** means:
    - (i) Any entity, agency, organization, corporation, administration or similar institution in which a Covered Individual is serving as an officer, director, stakeholder, trustee, partner or employee or for which the Covered Individual is working as consultant, that receives or may receive directly or indirectly funding from the Fund or with which the Fund has, either directly or through an intermediary, an agreement, contract, grant, understanding, arrangement or relationship; or
    - (ii) Any entity, agency, organization, corporation, administration with whom a Covered Individual is applying for, or negotiating to have, an arrangement concerning employment or consultancy;
  - (c) **Board** means the Board of the Fund;
  - (d) **Co-Chairs** mean the two co-chairs elected by the Board;
  - (e) **Covered Individuals** means the Active Observers referred to in paragraph 16 of the Governing Instrument and paragraphs 2(a) and 37 of the Rules of Procedure of the Board;
  - (f) **Ethics and Audit Committee** means the committee of the Board established by decision B.05/13, paragraph (e);
  - (g) **Executive Director** means the executive director of the Fund Secretariat as referred to in paragraph 20 of the Governing Instrument;

- (h) **Fund** means the Green Climate Fund;
- (i) **Gift** means any gratuity, favour, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, honorarium or other item having monetary value. These include services as well as gifts of training, transportation, local travel, lodgings and meals, whether provided in-kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reimbursement after the expense has been incurred;
- (j) **Governing Instrument** means the Governing Instrument for the Fund;
- (k) **Immediate Family Members** means a Covered Individual's spouses, domestic partner recognized under law and dependents;
- (l) **Policy** means this policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund;
- (m) **Prohibited Practices** means any of the following practices;
  - (i) A "corrupt practice" is the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting, directly or indirectly, anything of value to influence improperly the actions of another entity and/or individual;
  - (ii) A "fraudulent practice" is any act or omission, including a misrepresentation, that knowingly or recklessly misleads, or attempts to mislead, an entity and/or individual to obtain a financial or other benefit, or to avoid an obligation;
  - (iii) A "coercive practice" is impairing or harming, or threatening to impair or harm, directly or indirectly, any entity and/or individual improperly or the property of that entity and/or individual to influence improperly the actions of an entity and/or individual;
  - (iv) A "collusive practice" is an arrangement between two or more entities and/or individuals designed to achieve an improper purpose, including to improperly influence the actions of another entity and/or individual;
  - (v) An "obstructive practice" includes deliberately destroying, falsifying, altering, or concealing evidence material to an investigation; making false statements to investigators in order to materially impede an investigation; threatening, harassing, or intimidating any entity and/or individual to prevent it from disclosing its knowledge of matters relevant to the investigation or from pursuing the investigation; or materially impeding the Fund's rights of audit or access to information; and
  - (vi) "Harassment" means unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour that unreasonably interferes with work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- (n) **Secretary to the Board** means the staff member of the Secretariat of the Fund serving as secretary to the Board; and
- (o) **Stakeholder** means a person having a proprietary or economic interest in an entity.

### III. Basic standard of conduct

5. Amongst accredited observers only the Covered Individuals are allowed to participate in the meetings of the Board. The opportunity of such attendance carries certain responsibilities. It is the duty of each Covered Individual to maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethics in their personal and professional conduct, to comply with this Policy and all current and future policies of the Fund and all laws, rules and regulations to which he or she is subject.

6. In order to reflect the importance of the Policy and the obligations contained in it, Covered Individuals shall, upon nomination as an Active Observer and being invited to participate in meetings of the Board and prior to attending every subsequent Board meeting, read and sign the Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers, a template of which is contained in Appendix I to the Policy, to be deposited with the Secretary to the Board.

7. Covered Individuals shall, in their interactions with others, act with tolerance, sensitivity and respect for cultural differences. Any form of discrimination based on any ground, such as gender, race, colour, national, ethnic or social origin, language, religion or belief, membership of a national minority, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be against the Policy.

8. Covered Individuals shall abide by the following standards of conduct:

- (a) Covered Individuals must not act in any manner that will undermine public confidence and trust in the Fund's governance. In particular, Covered Individuals will refrain from engaging in Prohibited Practices;
- (b) Covered Individuals must not encourage anyone to take any actions listed under paragraph (a) above; and
- (c) Covered Individuals must disassociate themselves from, and report to the Ethics and Audit Committee, any suspected misconduct, including those actions listed under paragraph 8(a) above, when it comes to their attention, in accordance with the procedure set out in section V below.

#### **IV. Participation at the meetings**

9. When participating in board meetings as an observer, the Covered Individuals shall act in the best interest of the Fund.

10. Covered Individuals shall not interfere with Board members, alternate Board members, their advisers, invited experts, other observers or the Secretariat, in any way which may hinder the work of the Board or the Fund.

11. Covered Individuals shall consistently attend Board meetings. However, they shall not attend any executive sessions of the Board unless explicitly invited by the Co-Chairs, in consultation with the Board. They may attend as observers the meetings of a Board committee or working group in special circumstances and if expressly authorized by the Board or the relevant Board committee or working group.

12. Covered Individuals shall comply with agreed consultation guidelines when consulting with other civil society and private sector stakeholders.

#### **V. Non-compliance with the Policy**

13. Alleged breaches of a provision of the Policy by a Covered Individual shall be referred to the Ethics and Audit Committee.

14. The Ethics and Audit Committee shall afford such Covered Individual an opportunity to explain the alleged breach of the Policy.

15. The Covered Individual who is alleged to have violated the Policy will be informed in writing and will be provided the opportunity to present his or her views of the alleged violation to the Ethics and Audit Committee who will then make a recommendation to the Board on action to be taken against the Covered Individual. Pending the assessment of the alleged

violations, the Covered Individual shall follow any measures that the Ethics and Audit Committee may determine to be taken on a temporary basis which may include placement of limits on their participation in the meetings or suspension. Non-compliance with this Policy may lead the Board to exclude such Covered Individual from the meeting in question and potentially from future meetings of the Board. The corresponding observer constituency may subsequently be requested to consider a replacement.

16. A Covered Individual against whom action has been taken pursuant to paragraph 15 above may appeal that action to the Board.

## **VI. Conflicts of interest**

17. A conflict of interest arises when a Covered Individual has an interest, which may include but is not limited to a financial interest that could, or reasonably could be deemed to, improperly influence the performance of her or his conduct as an Active Observer. It is acknowledged, however, that Covered Individuals are serving in a representative capacity of the broad group of civil society or private sector organizations, as the case may be, which themselves may have inherent interests in the outcome of issues before the Board.

18. In general, and without limitation, conflicts of interest may be deemed to exist in the following situations:

- (a) Where a Covered Individual's interests, or the interests of an Immediate Family Member or Associated Institution (other than the civil society or private sector organizations the Covered Individual is representing) could affect the conduct of his or her participation in the meetings of the Board or result in a reasonable perception that a conflict of interest exists; and
- (b) Where the Covered Individual's actions create the perception that the Covered Individual is using his or her position at the Fund for his/her personal benefit or for the benefit of an Immediate Family Member or an Associated Institution.

19. If there is doubt whether a conflict, actual, apparent or perceived, exists, the Covered Individual concerned shall promptly refer the matter to the Chair of the Ethics and Audit Committee for guidance.

20. In order to avoid conflicts of interest and to strengthen the proper, transparent and independent governance of the Fund and its governing bodies, Covered Individuals shall submit to the Secretary to the Board a list of their functions and roles outside the Fund and shall update such a list if and when required to reflect amendments. The Ethics and Audit Committee shall review the Declaration but shall not make this list publicly available. Where a specific case of a conflict of interest arises the Ethics and Audit Committee will disclose it to the full Board and to the Executive Director.

21. Each Covered Individual shall:

- (a) Exercise personal discretion in deciding whether he or she has an actual or perceived conflict of interest with respect to any matter under consideration by the Board; and
- (b) Remain committed to observing, developing and implementing the principles embodied in this Policy in a conscientious, consistent and rigorous manner.

## **VII. Procedure when a conflict of interest arises**

22. Covered Individuals must make a timely and full disclosure in any situation where they have a conflict of interest or where an appearance of a conflict of interest is perceived. If a

conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest arises, the Covered Individuals should take action, as appropriate, to address the conflict.

23. As a matter of principle, Covered Individuals shall disclose any conflict of interest they may have in relation to any items on the agenda of Board meetings and shall recuse themselves from participating in the discussion of that item.

Specifically, during the course of a Board meeting, a Covered Individual will decide whether he or she has an actual or perceived conflict of interest with respect to any items on the agenda under consideration by the Board and shall disclose the conflict to the Board. In such cases, the Covered Individual shall take any or all of the following actions as appropriate to:

- (a) recuse themselves from participating in the proceedings of that item;
- (b) refrain from attempting to exert personal influence in connection with the issue being discussed/decided;
- (c) be silent and abstain from the deliberations and adoption of the recommendations or decisions related to proposals for funding or accreditation of entities and any other matter for which s/he has an actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
- (d) immediately question the possibility of conflict if they have reason to believe that another Covered Individual has a conflict of interest.

24. All actual or potential conflicts of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof that are not addressed through the recusal of the Covered Individual shall be immediately disclosed in writing to the Ethics and Audit Committee. In addition, others such as any official of the Fund or any individual or entity, may bring an actual or potential conflict of interest of a Covered Individual to the attention of the Ethics and Audit Committee.

25. The Ethics and Audit Committee shall promptly review these disclosures or any alleged conflicts of interest communicated to it and determine whether an actual or potential conflict of interest exists and, if so, whether to issue a waiver defining the extent to which such a Covered Individual may participate in any discussion of the issue that has given rise to the conflict, or to take any other action to manage, reduce, or eliminate the conflict. The Ethics and Audit Committee may also bring any conflicts of interest issue to the Board for further consideration and decision.

26. When it is determined by the Ethics and Audit Committee that an actual or potential conflict of interest exists, the Covered Individual shall not participate in the matter that has given rise to the conflict absent a waiver from the Ethics and Audit Committee or, if the matter has been referred to the Board, from the Board, and shall follow any other relevant direction given by the Ethics and Audit Committee or the Board.

## **VIII. Documentation of conflicts**

27. The existence and resolution of the conflict of interest must be documented in the proceedings and/or report of the Board meeting at which such conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest arose.

## **IX. Transparency and disclosure of information**

28. Covered Individuals explicitly acknowledge that they may have access to information regarding the Fund and its operations that is deemed confidential according to the Fund's information disclosure policies and agree that they shall at all times respect the confidentiality of such information, and shall not disclose such information to anyone or use for the purpose of furthering their personal interest or the personal interest of any other person or entity for

whom or which such information is not intended. The Covered Individuals shall comply with the information disclosure policies of the Fund. Covered Individuals shall not get access to any documents containing confidential information or documentation relating to any agenda item where their participation is excluded.

29. Covered Individuals shall not disclose, both during and after their term of office, information obtained from the Fund and/or project participants that is marked as proprietary and/or confidential, without the written consent of the Fund and/or the provider of the information. If a Covered Individual believes that confidential information may have been improperly disclosed, he or she shall promptly inform the Ethics and Audit Committee and the Executive Director.<sup>1</sup>

30. Covered Individuals shall consult the Executive Director if they have doubts as to whether certain information is deemed confidential.

31. If a Covered Individual believes that confidential information may have been improperly disclosed, he or she shall promptly inform the Executive Director and the Ethics and Audit Committee.

## **X. Gifts and entertainment**

32. All Covered Individuals and their Immediate Family Members are prohibited from accepting gifts under circumstances where it could reasonably be construed that the gift is motivated by the position of the Covered Individual in relation to the Fund and interests that could be substantially affected by the Fund.

33. All Covered Individuals and their Immediate Family Members are prohibited from giving gifts where it could reasonably be construed that the gift is intended to affect the policies or practices of the Fund or any of the programmes it funds.

## **XI. Employment by the Secretariat**

34. Any Covered Individual and Immediate Family Member shall not be eligible for employment by the Secretariat, including as a consultant, until one and a half years following the last date of service of the Covered Individual in the relevant position. The Board may waive this provision upon recommendation from the Ethics and Audit Committee. A request for such a waiver must be submitted by the individual concerned to the Ethics and Audit Committee before he or she applies for employment by the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall not take action on or accept an application for employment from such an individual unless a waiver has been granted by the Board.

## **XII. Review and amendment**

35. The Board shall keep the Policy under regular review and, on the recommendation of the Ethics and Audit Committee, amend the Policy, as necessary, to ensure that the highest ethical standards are applied to the Covered Individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> The Executive Director is to be informed promptly in order to manage any potential liability towards third parties to whom the Fund has confidentiality obligations, for example under a non-disclosure agreement.

### **XIII. Effective date**

36. The Policy shall come into effect upon adoption by the board, and shall remain in effect until amended or superseded by the Board.
37. Covered Individuals who have Active Observer status at the time this Policy comes into effect shall submit the signed Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest promptly upon the effective date of the Policy in accordance with paragraph 6 above.
38. Amendments to the Policy and any amendments thereto shall come into effect in accordance with paragraph 36 above.

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## **Appendix I: The Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund**

I hereby undertake to act in the performance of my role and responsibilities as an Active Observer in the general interest of the Green Climate Fund.

I solemnly declare that I accept and will be bound by the policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for the Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund.

I explicitly acknowledge that I may have access to information regarding the Fund and its operations that is deemed confidential according to the Fund's information disclosure policies and agree that at all times I shall respect the confidentiality of such information and shall not use such information for the purpose of furthering my personal interest or the personal interest of any other person or entity for whom or which such information is not intended. I shall comply with the information disclosure policies of the Fund.

I shall disclose to the Ethics and Audit Committee, as the case may be, any interest in any matter under consideration by the Board which may constitute a conflict or potential conflict of interest or which might be incompatible with the requirements of integrity and transparency in my role as an Active Observer and I shall refrain from participating in the proceedings of the Board in relation to such a matter, unless a waiver has been granted by the Co-Chairs.

I confirm that at present I have no personal, contractual or financial interest in an Associated Institution.

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Name of Active Observer

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Signature

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Date