

IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group Section on Great Apes Conflicts of Interest Policy

The purpose of the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group Section on Great Apes (hereafter SGA) Conflicts of Interest Policy is to ensure the integrity and transparency of its decision making processes and provide guidance to members on how to handle conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof.

SGA mission statement

The Section on Great Apes is a group of experts active in research on and conservation of great apes. Its role is to promote conservation action on behalf of the great apes, based on the best-available technical information. It serves as a forum for discussion and information exchange; it establishes guidelines for best practices in research and conservation; its members formulate action plans, and advise on effective protection of great ape populations.

Policy

It is the SGA's policy that:

- SGA members must promptly and fully disclose any potential conflicts of interest;
- SGA members may not participate in any decisions in which he or she has a potential conflict of interest (unless the conflict is resolved pursuant to this Policy); and
- The SGA follows a documented process in making decisions about such matters.

Definitions

1. Conflict of Interest (COI). A potential COI exists in any transaction in which there may be actual or perceived conflicting interests, i.e. a situation in which the concerns or aims of two different parties are incompatible, including any transaction in which the personal interests of an SGA member may be seen as competing with the interests of the SGA, or that calls into question the fairness or propriety of the SGA's decision-making processes. See examples below.
2. Significant Relationship. An SGA member is considered to have a significant relationship with a potential beneficiary of a transaction if for example:
 - a. the other party is a family member, including a spouse or domestic partner, parent, grandparent, sibling, in-law, child, grandchild or any other relative;
 - b. the other party is an entity in which the SGA member is an officer, director or employee; or
 - c. the other party is an entity in which the SGA member (or his or her family member) has a material financial interest.
 - d. The SGA member works for an organisation with whom the industry has an MOU, especially if it is within the same country or region. (not necessarily exclusive)

Procedures

1. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest. SGA members must promptly and fully disclose any potential COI to the Executive Committee of the SGA. Any doubt about whether a relationship warrants disclosure should be resolved in favor of disclosure. The SGA encourages members who are concerned about a relationship to review it with the SGA Executive Committee.
2. Abstention from Participation. SGA members must abstain from participating in any decision in which he or she has a potential COI unless and until the conflict is resolved pursuant to this Policy.
3. Factual Investigation. The SGA Executive Committee will investigate the nature of the potential COI.

4. Determination. If the SGA Executive Committee determines that the transaction will not provide a benefit to the SGA member (or Family Member), then the SGA member will not be considered to have a COI and he or she may participate fully in the decision making).
5. If the SGA Executive Committee determines that the proposed matter will provide such a benefit, then the SGA member may not participate in the decision making.

Conflict of Interest (COI) Disclosure Statement

Every SGA member, upon joining the SGA and at each renewal, must complete and sign the SGA's COI Disclosure Statement. Disclosure of conflicts of interest in the SGA's COI Disclosure Statement does not eliminate the requirement for later disclosure of potential conflicts of interest that come up during the quadrennium.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest Requiring Disclosure

Some examples of conflict requiring disclosure are included below. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

- An SGA member is receiving funds, whether it be stipend, salary, in kind or other, from an Energy, Extractive or Associated Infrastructure Project (hereafter called an EEAI project), a consultancy firm working for that project, or a bank supporting (or considering support for) that project.
- An SGA member (or Family Member) sits on the board of directors/trustees of an organization that makes decisions concerning certification of products derived from resources from an EEAI project in ape habitat (e.g., coltan, wood, palm oil, aluminum, iron-ore, gold).
- An SGA member (or Family Member) is offered any incentive, payment, loan, or gift of any kind with a monetary value greater than US \$100.00 from or on behalf of any person or organization engaged in any EEAI project in ape habitat.
- An SGA member engages in consulting activities or enters into an employment relationship with an entity whose activities are in conflict with the activities or mission of the SGA.
- An SGA member lives in a country where an EEAI project is being considered, planned, or is underway, and may feel pressured, by for example civil society or government, to allow a project to proceed even if it may be to the detriment of great apes and their habitat.
- An SGA member works for an organisation that has a MOU with a company that is involved in planning or is already developing an EEAI project.

Disclosing Conflicts of Interest

All SGA members are required to complete and sign a COI Disclosure Statement when invited to join or renew their membership, and to update the Vice Chair of the SGA of any changes or new conflict of interests arising during the course of their membership. In addition to these disclosures, if a proposed transaction arises in which a member has or believes s/he may have a COI, the member is required to make an immediate disclosure to the SGA Executive Committee using the COI Disclosure Statement below.

Process for Resolving Conflicts of Interest

Upon a determination by the SGA Executive Committee that a COI exists, the SGA member shall not participate in the deliberations on the matter, but can still disclose any material facts or opinions related to the proposed or actual project.

Disclosing a COI does not preclude an individual from membership in the SGA. However, if a COI is deemed to have a potentially significant, negative impact on the activities or reputation of the SGA, the Executive Committee reserves the right to suspend an individual's membership.