

## **Conflict of Interest and Transparency Policy**

**This document outlines how the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty (Scientists' Coalition) works to ensure transparency and manages potential conflicts of interest (Col) amongst its membership**

The Scientists' Coalition is committed to safeguard its independence and the rigorousness and transparency of its operations from undue external influence. The Coalition is anchored to the principles of scientific evidence, concerted building of scientific consensus among peers and the precautionary principle. To guarantee fulfilment of these principles, the Coalition applies a robust set of measures and practices aimed at avoiding conflicts of interest, while reinforcing truthfulness, accountability, and credibility of its outputs and actions. Members of the Steering Committee and Expert Working Groups, as well as members presenting in external fora, are selected according to their scientific competence and expertise, as well as balancing fields of expertise, regional representation and gender.

### **Why is a transparency and Conflict of Interest policy needed?**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that potential conflicts of interest are identified, disclosed, and managed in order to protect the legitimacy, integrity, trust, and credibility of the Scientists' Coalition and the individuals involved in its activities.

### **How does the Scientists' Coalition define 'Conflict of Interest'?**

*'Conflict of interest' means any situation where an individual is either associated or involved in any way with an organisation that has a particular interest that may either 1) compromise or be reasonably perceived to compromise the individual's capacity to act independently and in the public interest when providing advice to public entities and that runs contra to the mission and guiding principles of the Scientists' Coalition, or 2) create an unfair advantage for any person or organisation, or is 3) personally receiving money (for example as salary or similar) from an industry partner or hold substantial numbers of shares in an identified conflict of interest company.*

*For the purposes of this policy, circumstances that could lead a reasonable person to question an individual's objectivity, or whether an unfair advantage has been created, constitute a potential conflict of interest. These potential conflicts are subject to disclosure.*

*This policy is principles-based and does not provide an exhaustive list of criteria for the identification of such conflicts. It is subject to be updated when needs are identified to better protect the credibility of the Scientists' Coalition and the individuals involved in its activities.*

### **How does the Scientists' Coalition apply its transparency and Conflict of Interest policy?**

- The Scientists' Coalition requires all members to submit a declaration of interest, providing an overview of one's *financial, professional and non-financial interest* e.g. any affiliations, sources of funding, ownerships and financial interest held related to actors with an interest in issues surrounding plastics pollution. This may include funding from governmental,

private sector, or non-governmental organisations, membership and affiliations in interest groups and ownership or stocks in companies, etc. Besides unconditional restrictions applying to experts employed by or holding financial and business interest or receiving funding for research or any other activity by plastic business operators, having a specific interest may not necessarily constitute a Col.

- The Steering Committee of the Scientists' Coalition has the discretion to determine whether or not a member's stated interests may constitute a Col at odds with the mission of the Scientists' Coalition. If the Steering Committee finds that there is a Col, they are at liberty to determine the remedial action. This may entail requiring the member(s) in question to declare Col in plenary meetings discussing related issues, resolve the conflict, exclusion from specific working groups, and potentially exclusion from the organisation and its work as a whole.
- If an expert is found to have omitted relevant information, this will constitute a breach of the rules of procedure, and may lead to the exclusion of the expert concerned from the Steering Committee or an Expert Working Group. Failure to reveal interests may constitute a reason for exclusion from the organisation as a whole.

### **Scientists' Coalition Register of Declarations of Interest**

- Before taking up their appointments, all working group and committee members must declare any private, professional, financial or commercial interests that could conflict with the Scientists' Coalition's interests. These interests may be direct or indirect, monetary or non-monetary, which the public might reasonably think could influence the Steering Committee or committee members' judgement.
- The Scientists' Coalition will record the declarations of interest centrally. Members will be asked to update their declaration of interest form annually, in addition to providing updated information as affiliations or other relevant changes occur.

### **FOR INFORMATION:**

#### **The declaration form consists of the following questions:**

**3. Academic Freedom:** Is your academic freedom (ability to express your academic results or share results/outcomes of research activities) impeded or limited by your employer or funders? Please select a single answer that best describes your academic freedom based (fully or in part) upon your employment contract.

**4. Support and Remuneration:** Within the past 5 years, have you received any financial and/or other support from a legal entity or other body with a particular interest in the activity and/or mission of the UN Plastics Treaty that might represent or give rise to a conflict of interest, or the perception of a conflict of interest, regarding your activity in the working group(s), committee, or other position in the Scientists' Coalition?

**5. Financial Interests:** Do you have current financial investments (e.g. stocks, shares or other investments)\* in a legal entity with a particular interest in plastic pollution?

**6. Non-financial Interests:** Are you engaged in any professional or other activities which outside parties could consider might represent or give rise to a conflict of interest, or the perception of a conflict of interest with regard to your activity in a working group, committee or other positions in the Scientists' Coalition?

**7. Intellectual Property:** Do you, or do you intend to, hold any intellectual property rights that might be affected by the outcome of the work carried out by Scientists' Coalition or of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee?

**8. Close Family Links:** To your knowledge, are there any interests (financial, intellectual or other) of your immediate family members which could be seen as undermining your independence and objectivity when providing advice in the field of activity of the working group, committee or other positions in the Scientists' Coalition? If yes, please specify below.

**9. Other interests and/or relevant information:** Are there any other elements that you consider might be perceived as affecting your objectivity or independence when providing advice in the field of activity of working groups, the Committee or other positions in the Scientists' Coalition?

#### **Declarations**

*I hereby declare that the information disclosed in this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I declare that I have disclosed all associations and information required for disclosure under the Scientists' Coalition Transparency Policy; and that, except as declared, I do not consider that any of the associations present a conflict of interest. Should there be any change to the above information, including as regards to upcoming activities, I will promptly notify the Secretariat and complete a new declaration of interest form describing the changes in question. In the case of any discrepancy found in the information provided, I will take full responsibility for any consequences that may arise as a result.*