

SfPI Conflict of Interest Policy

Role definitions

The Science for Progress Initiative (SfPI)'s [Standard Operating Procedures](#) define the review processes by which decisions are made on proposals for funding. In doing so it defines the following roles, reproduced here for convenience:

- **Co-Chairs:** Co-chairs are responsible for the overall management of the review process, and serve as Review Board Members.
- **Review Board Members:** Review Board Members review individual proposals and are voting participants in Review Board meetings where funding decisions are made. The Review Board includes the Co-Chairs as well as other Review Board Members.
- **Advisory Committee Members:** At the request of the Co-Chairs, Advisory Committee Members provide written peer reviews of proposals. They do not participate in Review Board meetings or vote on which proposals to fund. The Advisory committee includes policy stakeholders from companies and nonprofits with aligned interests.
- **Peer Reviewers:** Peer reviewers are an umbrella group from whom the Co-Chairs may solicit written peer reviews of proposals, including Advisory Committee Members as well as J-PAL affiliates and invited researchers.

In what follows we refer to all the above as “participants” in the review process.

Procedures

The following procedures apply to all participants in any round of funding. A “round of funding” here means either an “on-cycle” decision process (as defined in the SOPs) in which several proposals for funding are to be considered simultaneously, or an “off-cycle” decision process in which a single proposal is to be considered asynchronously. In either case, “conflicts of interest” refer to conflicts with respect to the set of proposals being considered within the given round of funding.

1. *Duty to disclose.* It is the responsibility of each participant to disclose, individually and proactively, any actual or potential conflict of interest to the Co-Chairs prior to participation in any review process. When in doubt as to whether a conflict of interest could exist, the participant should err on the side of disclosure.
2. *Determining whether a conflict of interest exists.* Upon such disclosure the Co-Chairs will determine whether a material conflict of interest exists and

what participation (if any) in the review process is appropriate, subject to the following:

- a. Any party submitting a proposal in a given round of funding is automatically deemed to have a material conflict of interest.
 - b. Any party who is a spouse, partner, or immediate family member (parent, child, or sibling) of any individual named on a proposal application is automatically deemed to have a material conflict of interest.
3. *Recusal.* Any participant deemed to have a material conflict of interest with respect to a proposal submitted during a given round of funding is required to recuse themselves from all participation in the review process for that round, *except* that the Co-Chairs may request written peer reviews of proposals in areas in which the conflicted participant has particular expertise, *provided* that these peer reviews are clearly labeled as such for the purposes of discussion by the Review Board, and shall be additional to (and not count towards) the minimum number of peer reviews required by the SOPs.
4. *Voting.* When two or more Review Board Members are deemed not to have a conflict of interest in any given round of funding, they will meet and vote to determine the allocation of funds. If fewer than two Review Board Members are deemed not to have a conflict of interest, the two least-conflicted members (as determined by the Co-Chairs) will meet and vote to determine the allocation of funds.
5. *Record-keeping.* The Co-Chairs will maintain written records (which may be electronic) of all disclosures made to them under this policy, and all determinations reached as to whether a conflict of interest exists.
6. *Violations.* If the Co-Chairs have reasonable cause to believe that any participant has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they will first inform the participant of the basis for this belief and afford them an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to make such disclosure. If, after hearing the response and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Co-Chairs determine that the participant in question has failed to disclose an actual or potential conflict of interest, they shall inform J-PAL's Executive Committee of the matter and take remedial action as deemed appropriate.
7. *Acknowledgment.* The Co-Chairs will provide a copy of this policy to all Review Board Members, Advisory Committee members, and other Peer Reviewers, *prior* to their participation in any review process, and obtain from them and retain a written acknowledgement (which may be electronic) that they have read and understood the policy and agree to comply with it.