

## **Air Quality Objectives (AQO) Review Working Group**

### **Guidelines on Declaration of Interests**

#### **I. General Principles**

It is the objective of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to engage the key stakeholders and relevant experts in the AQO Review Working Group (Working Group) so that the review can be carried out pragmatically and comprehensively.

2. When a member of the Working Group has a potential conflict of interest in a matter placed before the Working Group or its sub-groups for which the member belongs to, he/she should make disclosure of his/her interest. The basic principle to be observed is that members' advice should be impartial and it is the responsibility of each member to judge and decide if the situation warrants a declaration, and to seek a ruling from the Chairperson in case of doubt.

3. The following are examples that warrant a declaration:-

- (1) Direct personal or pecuniary interests in a matter under consideration by the Working Group/sub-group held either by the member.
- (2) A directorship, partnership, advisory or client relationship, employment or other significant connection with a company, firm, club, association, union or other organization which is connected with, or the subject of, a matter under consideration by the Working Group/sub-group.
- (3) A member who, as a professional adviser/consultant, has personally or as a member of a company, participated in the consultancy of the review of Air Quality Objectives or represented or had dealings with any person or body connected with a matter under consideration by the Working Group/sub-group.

4. It is impossible to set out all the situations that would call for such a declaration, because each case differs, and it is difficult to cater for all unusual and unforeseen circumstances.

#### **II. Guidelines on Declaration of Interests at Meetings**

- (1) A member who has a potential conflict of interest in any matter under consideration by the Working Group/sub-group should, as soon as practicable after he/she has become aware of it, disclose to the Chairperson prior to the discussion of the item, so that the Chairperson and other members of the Working Group/sub-group are aware of his/her potential conflict of interest when they consider his/her suggestions/advice on the matter concerned.
- (2) Under normal circumstances, a member who has disclosed his/her potential interest in an item will not be refrained from participating in the discussions, unless the Chairman considers the credibility of the Working Group/sub-group would likely be seriously affected by the potential conflict of interest of the member. For example, it is logical for a member from the transport trade to reflect the concerns of his trade towards a policy proposal at the meetings.

- (3) But if a member works for EPD on the AQO review directly or indirectly in a paid capacity, the Chairman shall decide the appropriate action to be taken, e.g. the member shall withdraw from the meeting for that part of the discussion so as to uphold the impartiality of the Working Group/sub-group..
- (4) All cases of declaration of interests shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings.

Environment Bureau / Environmental Protection Department  
June 2016