



ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

14 May 2021

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE RESEARCH**
Fifty-first meeting
Videoconference, 22 June 2021
10:00 to 13:00 UYT
Agenda item 7

Decision XXVIII/5: The IAI whistleblower policy

1. This document has been prepared by the IAI Directorate in collaboration with the Chair of the Executive Council.

Background

2. The Conference of the Parties, at its 28th meeting (Videoconference, 2020), adopted Decision XXVIII/5: *Whistleblower policy*, which: *Instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the Executive Council, to revise the IAI employee handbook to include a whistleblower mechanism for consideration at the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. The *Employee Handbook*:

...embodies the fundamental conditions of service and the basic rights, duties and obligations of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI). It represents the broad principles of personnel policy for the staffing and administration of the IAI Directorate¹.

¹ IAI Employee Handbook, p. 5.

The IAI whistleblower policy

4. The IAI whistleblower policy is the result of a participatory process where IAI employees were invited to contribute to and comment on each draft of work. Following approval by IAI employees, the revised IAI employee handbook containing the IAI whistleblower policy was submitted to the Chair of the Executive Council.
5. The Policy entails to provide employees who are aware of possible wrongdoing within the Institute with a mechanism to disclose that information to the executive organ under the *Agreement establishing the IAI* with authority over the Directorate, namely, the IAI Executive Council,
6. It provides a guarantee to employees who in good faith disclose perceived wrongdoing to the Chair of the Executive Council will have protection from reprimand or adverse employment consequences.
7. The IAI employee handbook was also revised with minor changes, highlighted in yellow, to reflect the ongoing needs of staff and the IAI and is available as Annex III to the present document.
8. The IAI Whistleblower policy is contained in Annex II to the present document.

Recommendation

9. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider adopting the draft decision contained in the Annex I to the present document.

Annex I

Draft decisions of the Conference of the Parties

Whistleblower Policy

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXIX/xx . The Conference of the Parties is invited to approve the Whistleblower policy and the *IAI employee handbook*.

5 WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Whistleblower Policy for IAI employees Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research

Introduction

The IAI Conference of the Parties, at its 28th meeting (videoconference) adopted Decision XXVIII/5 which *Instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the Executive Council, to revise the IAI employee handbook to include a whistleblower mechanism for consideration by the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-29, Videoconference).*

[Following revision and approval by the IAI Executive Council, this policy was adopted by Parties at its 29th meeting.]

I. General

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) is committed to lawful and ethical behavior in all of its activities and projects and requires directors, officers and other staff to act in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and IAI administrative policies and to observe the highest standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties, responsibilities and research.

II. Reporting

The Organization encourages its directors, officers and other staff to share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with the Chair of the Executive Council.

Should the Chair of the Executive Council be unavailable, the concerns, suggestions or complaints should be addressed to the 1st Vice Chair of the Executive Council or the 2nd Vice-Chair of the Executive Council.

Any employee, officer, or director who reasonably believes that some policy, practice, behavior, or activity of the Organization or its staff is in violation of law or IAI policy should file a written complaint with the Chair of the Executive Council pursuant to the Council's role as the Executive Organ of the IAI per Article VI, paragraph 1 of the *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*.

Complaints may include, but are not limited to: ethics violation, or a suspected violation of law or administrative policy, such as a complaint of discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any other regulation governing the operations or administration of the IAI Directorate and its programs.

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis to the Chair of the Executive Council. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct the necessary investigation.

Crimes against person or property, such as physical assault, sexual aggression, burglary, among others, should also immediately be reported to local law enforcement personnel.

III. No Retaliation

A director, officer or other staff who makes a good faith report under this Whistleblower Policy or who cooperates in inquiries or investigations shall not suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence.

The complainant shall report to the Chair of the Executive Council any perceived harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence arising from the complaint.

The Executive Director, directors, officers, or other staff who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including possible termination of employment.

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable directors, officers, and other staff to highlight and raise serious concerns within the IAI prior to seeking resolution outside the IAI.

IV-. Investigation

The Chair of the Executive Council will notify the complainant and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five (5) business days. All reports will be investigated in a manner intended to protect confidentiality, consistent with a full and fair investigation, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

The Chair of the Executive Council will inform the complainant on the procedure of the investigation with timelines within 15 working days from the complaint. At the end of the investigation, the Chair will present a summary of the investigation to the IAI Executive Council.

The complainant may work from home during the investigation if he/she feels threatened or uncomfortable in the office environment or if the complaint involves crimes against the person.

Should the complaint be judged to be of an exceptionally serious matter or if the complainant believes to be under threat,, the Executive Council may determine that the person under investigation should suspend work activities with benefits and salary until the conclusion of the investigation or until such a time that suspension is deemed unnecessary.

V. Accounting and Auditing Matters

The IAI Executive Council and the Financial and Administrative Committee shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding IAI accounting practices, internal controls or audits. The Chair of the IAI Financial and Administrative Committee shall immediately notify the Chair

and Vice-Chairs of the IAI Executive Council of any such complaint and work with the IAI Executive Council until the matter is resolved.

VI. Acting in Good Faith

Directors, officers and other staff making a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of some policy, practice or activity of the IAI Directorate must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of a policy, practice or activity of the Institute or applicable law of the host country. Any allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be considered as a serious disciplinary offense and is subject to discipline up to and including possible termination of employment.