

Criteria for the disclosure of possible bias and conflict of interest in evaluation procedures of the Helmholtz Association

The aim of the obligation to report possible bias and conflicts of interest is to avoid these in the evaluation procedures of the Helmholtz Association and ensure the objectivity of evaluation results.

Bias and conflicts of interest may occur with regard to the research project, the applicants, or their home institutions.

Meeting one or more of the criteria does not necessarily always lead to exclusion, which is decided on a case-by-case basis. The list given below comprises criteria for the determination of conflicts of interest, with exclusion criteria referring to evident conflicts of interest. On the basis of these criteria, the president of the Helmholtz Association and the chair of the review panel will jointly decide whether or not the person may be considered as a reviewer. In the interest of making the selection process as transparent as possible, contacts between reviewers and the scientists or partner institutions involved in the application are disclosed and documented with the relevant review.

There is an obligation to disclose a possible bias/conflict of interest when

- a. Any of the following are currently ongoing, specifically planned, or have existed with/at an applying Helmholtz Center or project partner institution within the last six years:
 - joint publications
 - joint scientific collaboration
 - memberships in supervisory and advisory bodies (exclusion criterion)
 - use of (joint) Helmholtz infrastructures and facilities

- b. Any of the following are currently ongoing, specifically planned, or have existed:
 - employment relationships/appointment procedure at an applicant Helmholtz Center or one of the project partner institutions
 - business dependency or supervisory relationships with applicants (exclusion criterion if currently ongoing or specifically planned)

- c. Close personal relationships and ties to applicants

- d. Direct scientific competition

- e. Own economic interest