Department of the Interior
Departmental Manual

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Chapter 3: Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities

Originating Office: Office of the Deputy Secretary

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3.1 **Purpose**. This chapter provides Department-wide policy to guide and ensure the integrity of science and scientific products developed and used by the Department. It is also consistent with the Presidential Memorandum on Scientific Integrity, dated March 9, 2009, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy's guidance memorandum, dated December 17, 2010, and includes the following:

A. Departmental policy on the integrity of scientific and scholarly activities (hereafter "scientific activities").

B. A code of conduct applicable to those engaging in scientific activities.

C. Requirements for the use and dissemination of scientific information.

D. Identification and assignment of the responsibilities to carry out the functions listed above.

3.2 **Scope**.

A. The policy and requirements in this chapter apply to:

(1) All Department of the Interior (DOI) employees, including political appointees (hereafter employees), when they:

(a) Engage in, supervise, manage, or influence scientific activities,

(b) Publicly communicate information about the Department's scientific activities, or

(c) Utilize scientific information in making DOI policy, management, or regulatory decisions.

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(2) Outside parties that assist in developing or applying the results of scientific activities, by the terms of their agreement with the Department.

(3) All volunteers who assist with developing or applying the results of scientific activities.

B. These requirements are separate from and in addition to the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR Part 2635), DOI Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Department of the Interior (5 CFR Part 3501); the standards for Employee Responsibilities and Conduct (43 CFR Part 20) including, but not limited to, existing Departmental policy on ethics, criminal conflict of interest statutes (18 U.S.C. §§ 201-209), and any other requirements applicable to law enforcement actions and/or investigations and inspections for regulatory compliance.

C. The policy and requirements in this chapter are not intended to, and do not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

D. If there is a conflict between this policy and a statutory, regulatory, or judicial requirement, the statutory, regulatory, or judicial requirement will take precedence. Compliance with such conflicting requirements is not misconduct.

3.3 **Authorities**.

A. Federal Policy on Research Misconduct [(65 FR 76260-76264) December 6, 2000], which established criteria for identifying research misconduct and upholding research integrity.

B. 5 U.S.C. § 301, which allows the head of an executive department to prescribe regulations for the conduct of its employees.

C. 41 CFR 1.301, which provides the Secretary authority to develop procurement terms.

3.4 **Policy**. Science and scholarship play a vital role in the Department's mission, providing one of several critical inputs to decision-making on conservation and responsible development of natural resources, preservation of cultural resources, and responsibilities to tribal communities. Scientific information considered in Departmental decision-making must be robust, of the highest quality, and the result of as rigorous a set of scientific processes as can be achieved. Most importantly, the information must be trustworthy.

A. It is the policy of the Department to:

(1) Support a culture of scientific integrity.

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(2) Recognize the importance of scientific information, science, and scholarship as methods for maintaining and enhancing our effectiveness and establishing credibility and value with all sectors of the public.

(3) Preserve the integrity of scientific activities it conducts and activities that are conducted on its behalf.

(4) Ensure that employees and covered outside parties comply with the code of conduct established in this chapter.

(5) Facilitate the free flow of scientific information, consistent with privacy and classification standards.

(6) Document the scientific findings considered in decision-making, share this documentation proactively (when appropriate) as soon as possible, through established Department procedures.

(7) Ensure that public communications policies provide procedures by which scientists and scholars may speak to the media and the public about scientific matters based on their official work and areas of expertise. Public affairs officers must never ask or direct Federal scientists to alter scientific findings.

(8) Encourage the enhancement of scientific integrity through appropriate, cooperative engagement with the communities of practice represented by professional societies and organizations.

(9) Facilitate the sharing of best administrative and management practices that promote the integrity of the Department's scientific activities.

(10) Examine, track, and resolve all allegations of scientific misconduct while protecting the rights and privacy of those covered by this policy to the extent permitted by law.

(11) Pursuant to the NoFEAR Act, the Department provides annual notice to its employees, former employees, and applicants for Federal employment concerning the rights and remedies applicable to them under the employment discrimination and whistleblower protection laws. Individuals may seek additional information from the Office of Inspector General concerning whistleblower protections.

B. The Department will not tolerate loss of integrity in the performance of scientific activities or in the use of scientific products in decision making.

C. Employees may be protected from reprisal for disclosing alleged scientific misconduct or a loss of scientific integrity under Federal law. Employees who are found to have engaged in reprisal may be subject to discipline under 370 DM 752, Discipline and Adverse Actions.

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3.5 **Definitions**.

A. Scientific Integrity. The condition that occurs when persons covered by this chapter adhere to accepted standards, professional values, and practices of the relevant scientific community, including, the DOI Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct and Departmental standards for the performance of scientific activities for DOI employees and covered outside parties. Adherence to these standards ensures objectivity, clarity, reproducibility, and utility of scientific and scholarly activities and assessments and helps prevent bias, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, outside interference, censorship, and inadequate procedural and information security.

B. Loss of Scientific Integrity. Occurs when there is a significant departure from the accepted standards, professional values, and practices of the relevant scientific community, including (for DOI employees and covered outside parties) the DOI Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct and Departmental standards for the performance of scientific or scholarly activities. Improperly using scientific information (including fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism of science) for decision making, policy formulation, or preparation of materials for public information activities, can constituent a loss of integrity. Loss of scientific integrity negatively affects the quality or reliability of scientific information.

C. Scientific Misconduct.

(1) Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing scientific activities, or in the products or reporting of the results of these activities. (Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 FR 76260-76264, December 6, 2000.) Scientific misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

D. Scientific Activities. Activities that employ the scientific method for inventorying, monitoring, experimenting, studying, researching, and modeling. These activities include matters covered by any of the physical, biological, cultural, or social sciences, and may include matters such as landscape architecture, engineering, mathematics, and statistics that employ the scientific method. These activities also include scholarly activities, which are intellectual endeavors involving inventorying, monitoring, experimentation, study, research, modeling, and assessment conducted in a manner specified by standard protocols and procedures in culturally focused disciplines such as history, archeology, ethnography, architecture, and landscape architecture. Scientific activities do not include educational programs or exhibits.

E. Conflict of Interest. Any personal, professional, financial, or other interests of those covered by this policy and/or their immediate family members that is prohibited by an applicable law or policy, which may include federal ethics requirements, applicable standards issued by the Office of Government Ethics, federal acquisition requirements, and the prevailing practices of the National Academy of Sciences as adopted by OMB.

F. Outside Party. Any contractor, cooperator, partner, permittee, lessee, grantee, group, organization, or individual who provides goods or services to, or otherwise interacts with,

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the Department under terms specified in a written agreement (such as a cooperative agreement, grant, or memorandum of understanding), contract, lease, or permit.

G. Decision Makers. Individuals who develop policies that involve, or rely on, scientific activities; implement or manage activities that involve, or rely on, scientific activities; or supervise employees who engage in scientific activities.

H. Fabrication. Making up data or results and recording or reporting them. (Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 FR 76260-76264, December 6, 2000.) Fabrication does not include documented use of modeling or statistical techniques.

I. Falsification. Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes; or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. (Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 FR 76260-76264, December 6, 2000.)

J. Plagiarism. The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. (Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 FR 76260-76264, December 6, 2000.) Included in the concept of plagiarism is self-plagiarism, the re-use word for word of large portions of previously published text without citation to the previously published work.

K. Reporting. Dissemination of scientific activities and results.

L. Coordinating Manager. A supervisor or manager who is assigned to work with a scientific integrity officer on an inquiry. Supervisors or managers who have a real or potential conflict of interest should not be selected as the Coordinating Manager.

M. Scientific Method. A method of research in which a problem is identified, relevant data are gathered, a hypothesis is formulated from these data, and the hypothesis is empirically tested in a manner specified by documented protocols and procedures.

N. Scientific Product. The results of scientific activities including the analysis, synthesis, compilation, or translation of scientific information and data into formats used in the Department's decision-making processes or publications. Scientific products may be Federal records under the Federal Records Act and/or agency records under the Freedom of Information Act and, as such, subject to statutory and regulatory preservation and/or disclosure requirements.

O. Professional Judgment. An authoritative evaluation that is characterized by or conforms to the technical and ethical standards of a discipline, and requires specialized knowledge or applicable academic preparation.

P. Volunteer. A person who provides, under the terms of a Volunteer Services Agreement, uncompensated hours of service to the Department. A volunteer is not subject to the wage, hour, and compensation provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and cannot perform inherently Federal functions.

Q. Volunteer Services Agreement. The official DOI document that must be reviewed and signed by the volunteer or volunteer group leader and the appropriate DOI manager, before work can begin. The agreement will include the requirements of this chapter and describes the activity(ies) and circumstances under which the volunteer work is performed.

R. Managers and Supervisors. Employees who manage people, funds, and resources of the Department.

3.6 **Responsibilities**.

A. Deputy Secretary.

(1) Provides leadership for the Department on scientific integrity.

(2) Ensures Departmental compliance with this policy.

(3) Designates the duties of "Departmental Scientific Integrity Officer (DSIO)" to a senior career staff person with scientific and/or scholarly credentials.

(4) Revises and updates this chapter, as necessary.

(5) Serves as the coordinating manager for inquiries performed by the DSIO involving bureau heads or higher.

(6) Appoints a coordinating manager for inquiries performed by the DSIO involving other Office of the Secretary (O/S) employees.

(7) Acts on a request from the DSIO to form a Scientific Integrity Review Panel (SIRP) and ensures provision of resources to establish the SIRP, as necessary.

B. Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs (OES).

(1) Receives allegations of misconduct against DOI employees.

(2) Refers allegations to the DSIO or appropriate Bureau Scientific Integrity Officer (BSIO), subject to the DSIO's authority to determine where a complaint should be referred, and may reassign an allegation at their discretion.

(3) Maintains the official repository for the Report of Inquiry.

C. Departmental Scientific Integrity Officer (DSIO).

(1) Provides Department-wide leadership for implementing this chapter.

(2) Serves as Scientific Integrity Officer for the Office of the Secretary.

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(3) Implements this chapter as it pertains to bureaus and offices of the Department and maintains the record of the scientific integrity allegation process by the DSIO.

(4) Ensures the integrity and consistency of the process across the Department.

(5) Serves as Chairperson of the Department's Scientific Integrity Council.

(6) Conducts inquiries consistent with this chapter, including requesting a SIRP, if needed, and recommending the membership of the SIRP.

(7) Informs the Deputy Secretary of the status of the implementation of this chapter, and recommends appropriate changes in scientific policy or practice.

(8) Serves as the DOI ombudsman on matters of scientific integrity, which includes: fostering effective communication; acting as an intermediary between the complainant and the Department; acting as source of information, and provides advice and guidance on the Department's scientific integrity policy.

D. Assistant Secretaries.

(1) Provide leadership and oversight for their bureaus and offices on scientific integrity.

(2) Ensure that their bureaus and offices comply with this policy.

(3) Review and approve bureau and office-specific guidance, as appropriate.

E. Heads of Bureaus.

(1) Provide leadership for their bureau on scientific integrity.

(2) Designate a Bureau Scientific Integrity Officer (BSIO) who will report to the non-political deputy bureau director or equivalent, and will coordinate with the DSIO regarding the review of bureau level allegations of scientific misconduct. The non-political deputy bureau director, or equivalent, will also:

(a) Act on a request from the BSIO to form an SIRP, and provide resources to establish the SIRP, as necessary, and

(b) Appoint a coordinating manager for inquiries performed by the BSIO.

(3) Ensure bureau implementation of this policy.

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(4) Develop bureau-specific guidance, as appropriate.

(5) Ensure persons covered under this policy are aware of who the BSIO is and of their responsibilities to comply with this policy and any bureau-specific guidance.

F. Bureau Scientific Integrity Officers (BSIO).

(1) Implement this chapter as it pertains to the bureau and maintain the record of the scientific integrity allegation process.

(2) Keep the non-political deputy bureau director or equivalent informed on the status of the implementation of this chapter.

(3) Conduct inquiries consistent with this chapter, including requesting a SIRP, if needed, and recommending the membership of the SIRP.

(4) Inform the DSIO of the status of scientific complaints.

(5) Serve on the Department's Scientific Integrity Council.

(6) Recommend appropriate changes in scientific policy or practice to the DSIO.

(7) Serve as the bureau ombudsman on matters of scientific integrity, which includes: fostering effective communication and acting as an intermediary and source of information, as well as providing advice, and guidance on the scientific integrity policy.

G. Coordinating Manager.

(1) Upon appointment by the Deputy Secretary or bureau head, work with the DSIO/BSIO, Office of the Solicitor (SOL), and any other offices, as required, to provide information relevant to the inquiry.

(2) As requested by the DSIO/BSIO, provide assistance as needed, to secure all original records and materials relevant to the complaint; and obtain access to all original records and materials relevant to the complaint, including these items from the subject(s), and the complainant. These gathered materials and records may be shared when required by law.

(3) Upon completion of the inquiry process:

(a) Take steps, if needed, to correct the loss of integrity and to prevent future occurrences of the sequence of events that led to the impact to integrity.

(b) If needed, work with the Human Resource Office, determine appropriate actions, if any, to be taken using 370 DM 752 - Discipline and Adverse Actions, and any union contracts, as applicable.

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H. Managers and Supervisors.

(1) Comply with and implement this chapter as it pertains to their area of management or supervision, ensuring that persons covered under this policy are aware of who the BSIO is and of their responsibilities to comply with this policy and any bureau-specific guidance.

(2) Mitigate and prevent future loss of scientific integrity using lessons learned from a finding under this chapter.

(3) Ensure that all contracts, written agreements, cooperative agreements, grants, permits, and leases, covered under the scope of this chapter and under their purview include the requirements of this policy in the Performance Work Statement.

I. Employees and Volunteers.

(1) Be aware of and uphold the principles in the Code of Scientific Conduct contained in this chapter.

(2) Comply with this policy.

(3) Ensure that any outside parties have been informed of their responsibilities for complying with this policy.

J. Outside Parties. Abide by the principles contained in this policy regarding the integrity of the Department's scientific activities, as specified in written agreements or Statements of Work (SOW).

K. Scientific Integrity Review Panel (SIRP) Members.

(1) Objectively examine issues related to scientific integrity.

(2) Prepare and submit a report to the BSIO/DSIO as laid out in paragraph 3.8D.

3.7 **Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct.**

A. DOI Employees, Volunteers, and Outside Parties.

(1) I will act in the interest of the advancement of science and scholarship for sound decision making, by contributing or using the most appropriate, best available, high quality scientific data and information to inform the mission of the Department.

(2) I will communicate the results of scientific activities clearly, honestly, objectively, thoroughly, accurately, and in a timely manner.

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(3) I will be responsible for the resources entrusted to me; including equipment, funds, my time, and the employees I supervise.

(4) I will adhere to the laws and policies related to:

(a) the protection of natural and cultural resources,

(b) the conduct of research on animals and human subjects.

(5) I will not knowingly participate in a particular matter that causes a conflict of interest for myself or others.

(6) I will not intentionally hinder the scientific activities of others or engage in scientific misconduct.

(7) I will clearly differentiate among facts, personal opinions, assumptions, hypotheses, and professional judgment in reporting the results of scientific activities and characterizing associated definable uncertainties, in using those results for decision making, and in carrying out public information activities.

(8) I will protect, to the fullest extent allowed by law and policy, the confidential and proprietary information provided to the Department by individuals, communities, and entities whose interests and resources are studied or affected by scientific activities.

(9) I will be responsible for the quality of the data I use or create and the integrity of the conclusions, interpretations, and applications I make. I will adhere to appropriate quality assurance and quality control standards, and not withhold information because it might not support the conclusions, interpretations, and applications I make.

(10) I will be diligent in creating, using, preserving, documenting, and maintaining scientific collections, records, methodologies, information, and data in accordance with Federal and Departmental law, regulation, policy and procedures.

B. Individuals Engaged in Scientific Activities. In addition to paragraph 3.7A above, for all employees, volunteers, and outside parties who engage in scientific activities:

(1) I will place quality and objectivity of scientific activities and reporting of results ahead of personal gain or allegiance to individuals or organizations.

(2) I will maintain scientific integrity and will not engage in fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting scientific activities and products of these activities.

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(3) I will fully disclose the scientific methodologies used, all relevant data and information, and the procedures for identifying and excluding faulty data except where protected by law.

(4) I will adhere to appropriate professional and organizational standards for authoring and responsibly publishing the results of scientific activities and will respect the intellectual property rights of others.

(5) I will welcome constructive criticism of my scientific activities and will be responsive to peer review.

(6) I will provide constructive, objective, and professionally valid peer review of the work of others, free of any personal or professional jealousy, disputes, competition, non-scientific disagreement, or conflict of interest resulting from financial interests or personal or business relationships. I will substantiate comments that I make with the same care with which I report my own work.

C. Decision Makers. In addition to paragraph 3.7A above, for all decision makers:

(1) I will do my best to support the scientific activities of others and will not engage in dishonesty, fraud, misrepresentation, coercive manipulation, censorship, or other misconduct that alters the content, veracity, or meaning or that may affect the planning, conduct, reporting, or use of scientific activities.

(2) I will offer respectful, constructive, and objective review of scientific activities of employees I supervise and will encourage them to obtain appropriate peer reviews of their work. I will respect the intellectual property rights of others and will substantiate comments that I make about their work with the same care with which I carry out and report the results of my own activities.

(3) I will adhere to appropriate standards for reporting, documenting, and applying results of scientific activities used in decision making and ensure public access to those results in accordance with Departmental policy and established laws.

3.8 **Processing Complaints of Scientific Misconduct or Loss of Scientific Integrity**.

A. Filing a Complaint.

(1) Any person or organization ("complainant") may file a complaint claiming scientific misconduct and/or a loss of scientific integrity for scientific activities performed on behalf of DOI ("complaint").

(2) The complainant must submit the complaint within 60 calendar days of the date he/she first learned of the potential scientific misconduct and/or loss of scientific integrity to the Office of Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs ("OES") at the email: (doiexecsec@ios.doi.gov) or postal address:

Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs
1849 C Street, NW – Main Interior Building Mailstop 7328
Washington, DC 20240

Complaints submitted by mail will be deemed submitted as of the postmark on the envelope, and the email will be deemed submitted as of the date on the email.

(3) The complaint must be in writing and include all of the following information:

(a) The name and signature of the person submitting the complaint, including any organizational affiliation.

(b) The name of the person(s) or organization alleged to have committed the scientific misconduct or the loss of scientific integrity, if known.

(c) A statement of facts (including dates, locations, and actions) that support the complaint, including when and how the complainant first learned of such facts.

(d) An explanation of how the criteria for scientific misconduct (as laid out in paragraph 3.5H, I, and J) and/or loss of scientific integrity (as laid out in paragraph 3.5B) are met, including, for loss of scientific integrity: 1) citations or other information identifying the accepted practices of the relevant scientific community, and 2) an explanation of how the complained-of actions constitute a significant departure from those practices.

(e) An explanation of any conflict(s) of interest (as defined in paragraph 3.5E) that the complainant has with the subject(s), entity(ies), or situation(s) named in the complaint.

(f) A statement indicating whether he/she also submitted some or all of the facts of their complaint elsewhere, such as Office of Ethics, a Human Resources Office, Office of Special Counsel, Office of Inspector General (OIG), etc.

B. Initial Processing of a Complaint.

(1) Referral of a Complaint. Upon receipt of a complaint, OES will open a file to track the complaint and will refer the complaint to the BSIO (if a single bureau is involved) or to the DSIO (if multiple bureaus or the Office of the Secretary are involved). The DSIO, however, retains the authority to determine where a complaint should be referred.

(2) Preliminary Review of a Complaint. The DSIO/BSIO will timely conduct an initial review of the complaint and determine whether the complaint is timely under paragraph 3.8A(2), and contains the information required by paragraph 3.8A(3).

(a) The DSIO/BSIO will close the complaint and inform the complainant of the reason for closure in writing, if:

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(i) The complaint is not timely (as laid out in paragraph 3.8A(2)) or any additional required information requested by the DSIO/BSIO is not provided in a timely manner,

(ii) The DSIO/BSIO determines that the complaint was previously the subject of a scientific integrity complaint and provides no substantial new information, or

(iii) The DSIO/BSIO determines that the complaint fails to allege a viable claim of scientific misconduct or a loss of scientific integrity on its face, or

(iv) The DSIO/BSIO determines that a reasonable person would conclude that there was no scientific misconduct or loss of scientific integrity after consulting with both the complainant and the subject of the complaint. (If this is this case, the SIO will also inform the subject of the complaint of the outcome.)

(b) If the complaint alleges a case of scientific misconduct or a loss of scientific integrity but also involves matters that may be within the purview of another complaint process, such as an OIG or Information Quality Act complaint, then the DSIO/BSIO must coordinate with the responsible office(s) with respect to investigative responsibilities. If the complaint involves matters that are the subject of an active complaint against the Government, then the scientific integrity officer will work with the Office of the Solicitor to coordinate the scientific integrity investigation with other legal processes as appropriate.

(3) If the complaint is against a contractor, cooperator, partner, permittee, lessee, or grantee, the DSIO/BSIO will follow the procedures under paragraph 3.8H below.

C. Conducting an Inquiry.

(1) If the initial review indicates that the complaint is timely, complete and has merit, the DSIO/BSIO will conduct an inquiry into the complaint.

(2) In conducting an inquiry, the DSIO/BSIO must:

(a) Assist the non-political deputy bureau director or equivalent in appointing a Coordinating Manager for purposes of this inquiry.

(b) Inform the Coordinating Manager of the nature of the complaint and the identity of the subject(s) of the complaint.

(c) Request Coordinating Manager assistance, as needed, to secure all original records and materials relevant to the complaint; and obtain access to all original records and materials relevant to the complaint from the coordinating manager, the subject(s), and the complainant.

(d) Within 10 business days of initiating the inquiry, per paragraph

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3.8 C (1), provide notice to the subject(s) in writing that a complaint has been filed, describing the claim(s) of scientific misconduct or loss of scientific integrity lodged against them.

(e) Gather documents and other evidence, conduct interviews, and obtain signed and dated witness statements or declarations from any individual with information relevant to the complaint, as appropriate.

(f) Within a defined period of time, allow each subject an opportunity to provide a statement and other material the subject believes is relevant to the complaint.

(g) Retain the assistance of subject-matter experts, as appropriate.

(3) Throughout the inquiry and fact finding, all employees involved in the inquiry must maintain confidentiality and protect the person who submitted the allegation to the extent permissible under law.

D. Scientific Integrity Review Panel (SIRP).

(1) The DSIO/BSIO may request that a SIRP be convened at any point in the inquiry, in order to:

(a) Determine the "accepted practices of the relevant scientific community";

(b) Determine if the evidence gathered indicates a "significant departure" from those accepted practices; or

(c) Assist in further fact-finding and review.

(2) The DSIO must request that a SIRP be convened if the complaint is against a bureau head or an Office of the Secretary employee.

(3) The DSIO/BSIO will submit a request to convene a SIRP to the relevant non-political deputy bureau director or equivalent, or, for matters in the Office of the Secretary, to the Deputy Secretary. A written response to this request must occur within 10 days. If the request to the bureau head is not acted on or approved, the BSIO may appeal to the DSIO for further consideration of this request.

(4) Following approval to convene a SIRP, the DSIO/BSIO will recommend the panelists and chairperson for the SIRP, subject to the approval of the non-political deputy bureau director or equivalent or Deputy Secretary, as appropriate.

(5) Once the SIRP is convened, it will report to the DSIO/BSIO until the inquiry is complete and may assist the DSIO/BSIO with any part of the inquiry in paragraph 3.8 C (2) above.

(6) The Chairperson of the Panel must advise panel members of the importance of confidentiality of materials and discussions relating to the alleged scientific misconduct. There is to be no release of information by panel members pertaining to any allegation. The SIRP members must safeguard all discussions and not share information outside of the panel unless required by law.

(7) In conducting an SIRP, the DSIO/BSIO must:

(a) Remain responsible for the actions outlined in 3.8 C (2) above.

(b) Clearly describe the scope of the SIRP's inquiry and the questions to be answered.

(c) Provide the SIRP with the complaint and any additional information the SIRP requires to answer the questions.

(8) Within 45 calendar days of receipt of the complaint, the SIRP will provide to the DSIO/BSIO a final report answering the questions posed by the DSIO/BSIO. The final report may make related recommendations, including changes to policy, but the report must not recommend any specific personnel actions or other corrective measures.

E. Report of Inquiry.

(1) Within 90 calendar days of referral, the DSIO/BSIO must issue a Report of Inquiry (ROI).

(2) The ROI must contain:

(a) A record of all the evidence (documents, SIRP final report, signed or affirmed witness statements, etc.) relied upon.

(b) Findings of fact that reference the evidence of record; and

(c) A determination as to whether scientific misconduct or loss of scientific integrity has occurred and an explanation of the reasons for the determination. A determination that misconduct or a loss of scientific integrity has occurred requires that:

(i) there be a significant departure from accepted practices or standards of the relevant scientific community;

(ii) the actions causing the scientific misconduct or loss of scientific integrity be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; and

(iii) the actions be proven by a preponderance of evidence.

(3) The DSIO/BSIO must provide the Office of the Solicitor an opportunity to review and comment on the ROI prior to finalizing and, at the request of the Coordinating Manager, to provide a briefing about the legal issues.

(4) The DSIO/BSIO may extend the time to complete an ROI by up to 60 days.

F. Distributing a Report of Inquiry.

(1) Upon completion of the ROI, the DSIO/BSIO must:

(a) inform OES that the finding and record are complete;

(b) close the case; and

(c) provide a copy of the ROI to the coordinating manager, the bureau head, the non-political deputy bureau director or equivalent, OES and SOL.

G. Reconsideration of a DSIO/BSIO Finding.

(1) The subject(s) may file a request for reconsideration in order to present new relevant and material information about the findings of fact or determination.

(2) The subject(s) must submit the request to OES no later than 14 calendar days after receiving the notice of the finding. OES will log the request and send it to the DSIO. If the request for reconsideration involves a matter previously decided by the DSIO, the Deputy Secretary must designate another SIO to consider this request.

(a) If the request presents new relevant and material information, the DSIO or designee may conduct additional inquiries or convene a SIRP, as necessary, and amend the ROI as necessary to reflect any modified finding or additional factual information.

(b) If the request does not present material new information, the DSIO may deny the request and notify the requester in writing of the denial.

(3) The DSIO or person assigned should make a final decision on the request for reconsideration and related materials within 30 calendar days of receipt or assignment, whichever is later.

H. Complaints Involving Contractors, Cooperators, Partners, Permittees, Lessees, or Grantees.

(1) If a contractor, cooperator, partner, permittee, lessee, or grantee is the subject of the complaint, the DSIO/BSIO must:

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(a) Conduct an initial review of the complaint, and, if warranted under paragraph 3.8B, contact the appropriate Federal official responsible for the activities of the contractor, cooperator, partner, permittee, lessee, or grantee to inform the official that a complaint of scientific misconduct or loss of scientific or scholarly integrity has been filed. The appropriate official could be the Contracting Officer, Financial Assistance official or permit/lease manager.

(b) The appropriate Federal official and the DSIO/BSIO will notify the subject and the subject's organization of the complaint.

(2) No DOI inquiry will be conducted regarding a complaint against a cooperator, partner, permittee, lessee, or grantee until the DSIO/BSIO and the appropriate Federal official have consulted the SOL.

3.9 **Participation as an Officer, Director or Trustee of Nonprofit Organizations**. The Department encourages employees to participate in outside professional organizations when it advances the Department's mission, programs, and operations, and when that participation enhances their professional development. DOI employees must follow the guidelines in the Scientific Integrity Procedures Handbook (SIP Handbook) when they engage in scientific, scholarly, and other activities within these professional networks. This policy does not address participation with organizations that are for profit entities. The SIP Handbook guidelines explain how an employee may be appointed as an official liaison; obtain an authorization of assignment to serve in an official capacity as an officer, director or trustee; or serve in a personal capacity as an officer, director or trustee. Employees must contact the Departmental Ethics Office or their bureau Deputy Ethics Counselor before entering into service in these capacities.

3.10 **Scientific Activity Requirements for Contractors, Cooperators, Partners, Permittees, Lessees, and Grantees**. Departmental offices responsible for DOI acquisitions, financial assistance agreements, permits, or leases must, in consultation with the Office of Acquisition and Property Management, insert standardized language (see SIP Handbook) into any contract or agreement that includes activities covered under this policy. The language must include a statement requiring adherence to this policy or its equivalent as provided by their organization or State law.

3.11 **Scientific Integrity Procedures Handbook (SIP Handbook)**. The SIP Handbook provides details on the scientific integrity policy, requirements, procedures and processes. It contains the requirements and forms for filing and evaluating complaints of violations of the Department's scientific integrity policy, as well as standardized language for contracts, agreements, permits, or leases involving scientific activities and templates for participation as an Officer, Director or Trustee of Nonprofit Organizations. The SIP Handbook is available at: http://elips.doi.gov.

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