



Office Memorandum

To: Fund Staff

From: The Managing Director

Subject: **Staff Cooperation with the Independent Evaluation Office**

Fund Management and the Executive Board place great value on the contributions of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to enhance the learning culture within the Fund, strengthen the Fund's external credibility, and support the Board's institutional governance and oversight. Staff cooperation with the IEO is critical to the success of the IEO in fulfilling its mandate. This memo updates guidance to staff on cooperating with IEO requests and summarizes best practices. It reflects discussions that staff has had with the IEO, including regarding IEO practices.¹

- **GUIDELINES FOR STAFF COOPERATION WITH THE IEO**

- **Sharing Documents and Information with the IEO²**

IEO requests to departments for documents and other information from staff are generally made in writing, as specific and focused as possible, to department directors or other staff explicitly designated by the department, with copy to SPR's contact persons. The IEO will set a target date for receiving the requested documents and provide the name of the IEO contact person for the project.

- Given potential resource implications, staff are encouraged to seek early clarification from the IEO as necessary, including in case the department believes that it would not be able to meet a deadline or if the information is not available. Strictly confidential Board documents responsive to IEO requests will be provided by SEC.
 - Staff is obliged to comply with information requests from the IEO, with very limited exceptions as discussed below (in Section II.B). If questions arise about whether the IEO's access to requested information is appropriate, staff should contact SPR, which may consult LEG as appropriate.
 - Staff should provide the information as promptly as possible and in an agreed format that could include USB drive, hard copy, e-mail, shared network drive, or software

¹ This memo replaces the guidance in the Managing Director's memorandum to staff of April 16, 2002.

² Documents could include memoranda, emails, notes, or other documentary materials.

such as Box Sync. As needed, special arrangements will be made for the sharing of secret or highly-sensitive material to ensure that information security is maintained.

- Staff are encouraged to provide the IEO with all information and documents they are aware of that would be pertinent to an evaluation (subject to the exceptions set out below in Section II.B), at any time, even if such information was not requested.
- Staff may also provide documents during interviews that are pertinent to an evaluation (subject to the exceptions set out below in Section II.B). If in this context the IEO obtains documents that are marked secret or, in the view of the IEO, appear to be highly sensitive, the IEO is committed to ensuring that they are handled in line with Fund information security standards. The IEO will inform SPR of receipt of such documents to ensure information security, but it will not reveal the source. If SPR considers that such documents should be subject to special procedures, the IEO is committed to ensure that such procedures are implemented.

○ **IEO Interview and Survey Requests**

The IEO also approaches staff for individual interviews. IEO requests for interviews with staff are made directly with individual staff members, either via email or over the phone, without informing Management, the Board, or other staff members. The IEO often engages a significant number of consultants, some of them for very short periods of time. To avoid confusion on whether requests for interviews with consultants are part of the IEO's evaluation work, such interview requests are always made by IEO staff.

- Staff is required to accept interview requests made by the IEO and should share views openly and freely (with the limited exceptions as described below in Section II.B).

The IEO also conducts IMF staff surveys.

- Staff are encouraged to participate in these surveys. Staff responses to surveys are not attributed to individual staff members. The IEO will provide the name of a contact person in case clarification is needed by staff about survey questions.

○ **Questions on Interactions with the IEO**

If staff have questions or concerns about interactions with the IEO, staff can seek confidential clarification from the contact person of the IEO for the corresponding project. At any time, staff can also contact the responsible senior staff in SPR, which acts as a facilitator between the IEO and staff. Contact information of the senior staff is posted at [SPR's website](#).

- **IEO's Assurances of Confidentiality**

The IEO is committed to respecting the confidentiality of the views or information provided by staff or Management. If such views are included in any reports or other documents, the identity of the source will not be disclosed. Information obtained from staff or Management that was provided by officials of a member or other source on a confidential basis will not be disclosed by the IEO without the consent of the member or other sources.

The IEO will preserve the confidentiality of documents and information received and ensure the appropriate handling of documents, regardless of the channel by which they were requested or received.

Additionally, special procedures can be established for the IEO's access to secret or highly sensitive information. Requests from the IEO for materials that are secret or highly sensitive should be brought to the attention of the coordinating department (SPR), so that special procedures (i.e., procedures for access and limits on use) can be put in place if necessary. With respect to side letters, the Director of the IEO has access to side letters in accordance with the same procedures and limitations as apply to Executive Directors.

The IEO is committed to continuing to offer full confidentiality to interviewees, and therefore it does not inform Management, SPR, or anyone else in the staff about the content of, information provided during, or the participants in prospective or conducted interviews.

- **LEGAL BACKGROUND FOR STAFF COOPERATION WITH THE IEO**

- **IEO Mandate**

The IEO was established in 2001 to conduct independent and objective evaluations of Fund policies and activities. Under its Terms of Reference, it is fully independent from Management and operates at arm's length from the Executive Board. The Executive Board and Management established a framework for information sharing with the IEO through the Terms of Reference for the IEO and the Director of the IEO and subsequent memoranda to staff. In carrying out its mandate, the IEO has broad scope to consult with anyone it considers necessary, both within and outside the Fund. This often includes discussions with Fund staff. Except as outlined below, the IEO has the right to obtain information from any staff member that is relevant to its work program.

- **Exceptions to IEO Requests**

IEO requests to staff for information and documents must be honored, with only a few specific exceptions. These exceptions are: (1) information subject to attorney-client privilege; (2) documents containing personal information about Fund employees or candidates for employment (such as information about an individual's appointment, salary and benefits,

performance assessments, or other employment-related information that is maintained on a limited access basis); (3) confidential communications which fall within Management's "zone of privacy." The "zone of privacy" covers confidential communications of the Managing Director and Deputy Managing Directors with persons or institutions outside the Fund, and within and between their immediate offices. Finally, the terms of reference for the IEO provide: "In conducting its work, IEO should avoid interfering with operational activities, including current programs." Accordingly, if staff is concerned that provision of a strictly confidential document responsive to a request would interfere with the Fund's operational activities, the request should be brought to the attention of SPR, which will seek a resolution of the issue with the IEO.

○ Disputes

If there is a difference of views between staff and the IEO about whether the IEO may have access to documents or other information, it should be brought to the attention of SPR. If necessary, SPR, SEC, LEG, and the IEO will consult promptly with the Chair of the Evaluation Committee, who will mediate to find a satisfactory solution. The IEO may appeal to the Executive Board.

• FAQs

1. *I received an interview request from someone identifying themselves as working for the IEO but I do not find them listed in the intranet as IEO personnel. What should I do?*

Answer: First, ask the person to have an IEO employee contact you to verify that this is part of an IEO evaluation (you can also ask the SPR contact). Second, and importantly, accept the interview request and share your views openly and freely.

2. *What if I do not have much to say on a given evaluation topic or the period in question was some years ago? Can I politely decline?*

Answer: No. In conducting interviews, the IEO carries out due diligence to identify appropriate interviewees. Some staff may be of the opinion that their views are not relevant or valuable; however, the IEO may find their views worthy of consideration. You can always contact the IEO to seek advice if you feel you need to prepare for the interview.

3. *I am afraid the information I have may not shine a favorable light on the Fund. Should I try to hide this information and only provide it if explicitly asked?*

Answer: No. The effectiveness of the IEO depends critically on the cooperation of staff. For the Fund to get the maximum benefit in terms of learning and transparency, staff need to share freely with the IEO. Providing the IEO with all the relevant facts and information is the

best way to do this and the only way to ensure that the IEO can effectively carry out its mandate.

4. *I am not sure if the information the IEO is asking me to provide falls under the exceptions. What should I do?*

Answer: You should contact SPR if any questions arise about whether the IEO's access to requested information is appropriate. SPR may consult with LEG as appropriate.

5. *Should I inform my supervisor about an IEO request for an interview or documents?*

Answer: You are not required to inform your supervisors of such requests. Authorization for responding is not required.

cc: The Deputy Managing Directors
Heads of Departments
IEO