



INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK  
BANCO INTERAMERICANO DE DESARROLLO

**Forum on Implementing Conflict of Interest Policies  
in the Public Service**

**5-6 May 2004  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

**CONCLUSIONS:  
AN "IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS"  
AS THE WAY FORWARD TO MANAGE CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**In Co-operation with the  
Organization of American States  
and  
the Government of Brazil**

**In association with  
Public Ethics Commission, Brazil  
Office of the Controller General, Brazil  
Brazilian Development Bank,  
Petrobras, Serpro and ESAF, Brazil**

## **FORUM ON IMPLEMENTING CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICIES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

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### **Conclusions: An "Implementation focus" as the way forward to manage conflict of interest**

#### **I. Forum objectives**

The Forum on Implementing Conflict of Interest Policies in the Public Service – organised jointly by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in co-operation with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Government of Brazil – took place in Rio de Janeiro on 5 and 6 May 2004.

Building on the standards laid out in the OECD Guidelines and Toolkit for Managing Conflict of Interest, and in continuation of countries' efforts to implement the OAS Inter-American Convention against Corruption, over 175 high-level policy-makers, technical experts, senior public managers, as well as representatives of businesses and NGOs from OECD member countries and countries in Latin America, met with the objective to review experiences in designing and implementing conflict-of-interest policies in the public service and to analyse how they work in their national environment.

The Forum focused, in particular, on exploring practical approaches in the application of policy guidelines, benchmarks and hands-on management tools to improve the identification, control and management of conflict-of-interest situations, and on identifying conditions for success to put conflict-of-interest policy into practice in the national context.

#### **II. Conclusions: An "implementation focus" as the way forward to manage conflict of interest**

In the deliberations during the Forum participants the following remarks were made:

1. "Beautiful words should not remain on paper." Participants agreed that there is an urgent need for improving policies in order to prevent and identify conflict-of-interest situations. Countries are moving from formulating standards to implementation supported by tools, assisting officials to put policies into practice.
2. The practical focus of the Forum enabled countries to share different national approaches and provided them with a range of practical tools and solutions. Thanks to case studies from both OECD and Latin American countries, presentations and country-group discussions, Forum participants reviewed and analysed specific policy approaches, management strategies and administrative practices.

3. The OECD Guidelines and Toolkit as well as other practical tools provide practical instruments that could be adapted to national contexts in order to help the implementation of conflict-of-interest policies. Forum participants examined the possible application of particular tools in OECD and Latin American countries for controlling conflict of interest.
4. The following key emerging areas were identified during the Forum:
  - Successful management of conflict-of-interest situations are based on effective disclosure and recusal/withdrawal procedures that balance the right to privacy and the demand for transparency.
  - A need to better define the proper balance between public and private interests.
  - The role of parliaments in improving transparency and accountability. Some participants from Latin American countries also mentioned the importance of party financing in the context of corruption preventing.
  - Civil Society and Media as a driver to promote reforms and cultural change.
  - A need to integrate the conflict-of-interest policy into a broader strategy to promote good public governance.
  - Assessing the effectiveness of policies was recognised as a precondition to ensuring successful implementation.

The discussions underlined the necessity to pursue the policy dialogue between the OECD, IADB and the OAS member states. The Committee of Experts and the Conference of States Parties to the follow-up mechanism to the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption will be acknowledged, in accordance with their respective rules of procedure of the outcomes of the Rio meeting. The OECD Global Forum on Good Governance will continue to facilitate the policy dialogue between OECD and Latin American countries in co-operation with IADB on new approaches for implementing effective mechanisms for managing conflict of interest and preventing corruption.

The participants look forward to the forthcoming IV Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Promoting Integrity, organised by the Government of Brazil, which will provide a global platform for high-level officials to review progress and develop innovative approaches for implementing policies in fighting corruption.