



IFS Policy to Ensure Independent Research and Dissemination of Results by its Grantees

Operationalising academic freedom and
avoidance of potential conflicts of interest

A. RATIONALE FOR AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Building science research capability in low- and lower-middle-income countries is a long-term investment in sustainable development in line with the SDGs. This is expected to benefit the research culture that IFS works to sustain and renew in a rapidly changing world. It also helps to build an independent intellectual work force from which donors and partners can later recruit candidates for their activities. IFS bases its support to early-career scientists on the idea of full academic freedom and independent research in the provision and use of IFS grants. To enable pursuit of its mission as described in the IFS Strategy 2011-2020, IFS is pleased to receive support in various forms from several contributors.

Throughout its existence, IFS has received different types of both in-kind and monetary support. Examples of the former include staff secondments for a specified time, and the contribution by around 1,000 scientific advisors who donate their time to assess research project proposals. Some donors give core funding support, and others fund projects. Some donors co-finance specific activities, and others have cost-sharing arrangements with IFS for agreed activities. In one case, IFS received a bequest from a previous member of the Board. IFS is now also open to interested private sector actors to support IFS activities.

IFS will seek and accept financial support only from sources consistent with its vision, mission and purpose, within the scope of its 2011-2020 Strategy. IFS may refuse donations, co-funding, cost-sharing or other forms of sponsorship that could potentially use the relationship to promote or defend products, practices or positions that are not aligned with its vision, mission and purpose.

This policy regulates and ensures non-interference by any third party (and avoidance of potential conflicts of interest) that could threaten IFS grantees pursuit of – or damage the Foundation's reputation for – independent research and academic freedom.

B. IFS POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR RECEIVING SUPPORT

1. Funds provided in the form of unrestricted grants, special grants for an agreed number of IFS grantees, or restricted grants for one of the three IFS research approaches, should support the overall vision, mission and purpose of IFS.
2. The nature of support is acknowledged in full transparency on the IFS website.
3. Financial support shall be channelled appropriately through IFS and not be directed to any one particular IFS grantee or collaborative research team.
4. Mention of support to IFS must not imply that IFS therefore endorses the organisation in question.
5. Any form of funding or relationship is to be neutral to and not permitted to influence the actual choice of and support for scientific research by individual grantees or collaborative teams.
6. Research themes and the way research is carried out and disseminated are chosen by the grantees and approved by IFS after thorough evaluation.
7. All final research findings and recommendations are openly accessible.
8. The name or logo of IFS must not be used in connection by other parties or for any activities other than those stated in the agreement with IFS, nor without written permission.

C. PROCEDURES

When IFS enters a funding agreement it signifies that it has reached a mutual understanding with the signatory(ies). The scope and responsibilities of the parties under the agreement and the timeframe for the agreement are described in a legal contract to be signed by the Director of IFS in accordance with the Foundation's standard written procedures.