

## **Rules of procedure**

of the German Council for Sustainable Development  
as of 17 January 2020

### **Section 1 Tasks**

(1) The German Council for Sustainable Development (the Council) is bound in its activities solely by the commission outlined in the Federal Government's resolution stipulating the Council's formation. It operates wholly independently.

(2) In particular, the Council has the following tasks:

- a. The Council prepares contributions aimed at further developing and implementing the German Sustainable Development Strategy and achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To do so, it proposes concrete projects and supports joint learning, in particular through peer review formats.
- b. The Council provides opinions on issues by request of the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development. The Federal Government decides on whether or not to publish these recommendations. At the same time, the Council may also communicate considerations regarding issues of sustainable development without the State Secretaries' Committee's commissioning, especially on the status of affairs with regard to sustainability policy in concrete areas of action.
- c. The Council fosters social dialogue on sustainable development at the national and international levels. It realises projects aimed at embedding the topic of sustainability effectively within society and the business community and promotes international exchange of experiences.

(3) The Council gives itself a programme of work. This programme is to comprise the work steps needed to fulfil the tasks as described in Section 1 (2).

(4) The Federal Government may dispatch representatives to the meetings of the Council or its bodies. These representatives have the right to express viewpoints in relation to items on the agenda.

(5) The Council may, with the approval of the Federal Government, invite expert third parties to participate in Council meetings for a time. Collaboration with expert third parties is carried out on a project basis and may not be extended; this participation does not confer voting rights.

(6) The Council may invite guests to its meetings.

(7) The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development of the German Bundestag is a regular guest. He or she may also send a representative to the meetings in their stead.

## **Section 2 Chair**

(1) The Council selects the Chairperson from among its members; voting involves a secret ballot and the appointment is valid for three years.

(2) The Chairperson represents the Council externally and leads its meetings.

(3) The Council further selects a Deputy Chairperson.

(4) Following expiry of the respective period of appointment, the Chairperson carries out the tasks in a provisional capacity until such time as a vote to select a new Chairperson is held.

## **Section 3 Meetings, quorum**

(1) The Chairperson shall convene the Council for regular meetings as needed, but at a minimum twice per year; invitations to Council meetings shall be communicated in written form. The Chairperson is obliged to convene a meeting of the Council at the request of the Federal Government or of at least five Council members.

(2) The invitation calling a meeting of the Council shall further comprise a proposed agenda; all documents needed for informed consultation shall accompany the proposed agenda.

(3) Meetings of the Council are not public. This applies additionally to all documents associated with its meetings and the minutes thereof, unless otherwise agreed.

(4) The Council members, expert third parties (Section 1 para. 5) and guests (Section 1 para. 6 and 7) as well as staff from the Council office are obliged to maintain secrecy with regard to meeting consultations, including with regard to recommendations from the Federal Government considered and any consultation documents stipulated as confidential by the Council. The obligation to maintain secrecy further applies to any information communicated to the Council by the Federal Government outside of meetings stipulated as confidential.

(5) The Council is quorate when at least two thirds of its members are present. The Council endeavours to reach unanimous decisions. If this is not possible, a majority decision is reached among the members present. In the case of recommendations the Council presents to the Federal Government, a majority of the full Council is required. Furthermore, in cases

of a tie vote, the vote of the Chairperson shall count double. Dissenting opinions are to be included in the minutes of the meeting as per Section 5 (1) on request.

(6) The Council may in certain circumstances agree to take resolutions by way of a written vote. The stipulations of Section 3 (5) with regard to quorum requirements apply.

(7) Within the means available, the Council may request input from specialists, commission assessments or have evaluations conducted by third parties.

(8) With approval from the Federal Government, the Council may on a project basis accept financial or in-kind contributions from third parties insofar as these support the pursuit of its tasks, in particular of facilitating societal dialogue, and they do not negatively impact the public perception of the Council's independence. The stipulations of the "Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zur Förderung von Tätigkeiten des Bundes durch Leistungen Privater (VV Sponsoring)" (German Federal Gazette No. 126 from 11 July 2003, page 14906) and their corresponding notes on implementation are to be heeded.

#### **Section 4 Bodies of the Council for Sustainable Development**

(1) The Council may build work groups and may commission these to prepare recommendations.

(2) Meetings of these Council bodies which result in costs being incurred that are reimbursable as per Section 3 (7) require the approval of the Council Secretary-General.

#### **Section 5 Meeting minutes and publications**

(1) The Council Secretary-General shall prepare minutes of the Council's meetings and present a draft of these to the members by way of circulation. The Secretary-General shall present the minutes to the Council members for approval at the next meeting of the Council. Meeting minutes are to be sent to members without delay. Any guests present at a given meeting may also receive the meeting minutes or excerpts thereof.

(2) Paragraph 1 above shall apply correspondingly to Council meetings as per Section 4.

(3) Publications executed in the Council's name or which contain material results of the Council's activities are to be consulted on and approved by the Council.

#### **Section 6 Secretary-General**

(1) The Secretary-General prepares the Council's meetings in consultation with the Council Chairperson, executes the Council's projects and informs the Council and the Federal Government of the results. The Secretary-General participates in the Council's opinion-forming consultations and can suggest to the Council topics for discussion.

(2) He/she prepares the information basis needed for the Council's work, reviews the current state of knowledge on individual topics and realises the Council's initiatives aimed at promoting societal dialogue on sustainable development at national and international level. To do so, he/she may commission expert opinions or other tasks.

(3) The Secretary-General is the agent of the Council who receives the tasks expressed by the Federal Government, in particular by the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development, and coordinates work schedules and delivery deadlines with the Federal Government. The Secretary-General maintains contact with ministries and public authorities, parliament, the business community, the scientific community and groups in civil society. He/she advises the Council on endeavours on the part of these bodies, insofar as these bear significance for the Council's work. He/she is the representative of the Council to the wider public.

(4) Further, the Secretary-General presents the draft work programme as per Section 1 (3). He/she holds responsibility for coordinating the specialist tasks and work required as per Sections 3 (7) and 4 (1) and resolutions as per Section 5 (3) as well as carrying out budgetary and organisational operations. He/she executes all other Council affairs in agreement with the Chairperson and taking any applicable recommendations of members into account.

(5) In the course of executing his/her tasks, the Secretary-General is supported by the Council office, of which he/she is supervisor. He/she has a supporting deputy officer. The Sustainability Code Office and the Coordination Centre of the Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies are also allocated to the Council Office.

## **Section 7 Travel expenses and reimbursements for meetings**

(1) With regard to reimbursement of travel expenses for staff of the Council office and Council members, the stipulations of the Federal Travel Expenses Act (BRKG) apply as well as, with regard to Council members, the "Richtlinien für die Abfindung der Mitglieder von Beiräten, Ausschüssen, Kommissionen und ähnlichen Einrichtungen im Bereich des Bundes" (Guidelines on reimbursement of members of advisory boards, committees, commissions and other similar bodies at federal level).

(2) Travel expenses are reimbursed when they result from participation in regular Council meetings, the meetings of its work groups or consultations at the Council office. Further, travel expenses may be reimbursed if a Council member represents the Council at third-party appointments; the decision of whether or not the Council is represented by a Council member is taken by the Council Chairperson in conjunction with the Secretary-General.

(3) Invoicing of travel expenses incurred in relation to Council work is carried out based on a copy of the invitation to the Council meeting, the relevant form having been filled out, original receipts (travel tickets etc.) and a copy of the travel agent's invoice (if one has been produced).

(4) For participation in regular meetings of the Council or its working groups, the Council members may request reimbursement of up to €500 in expenses per meeting. Should multiple meetings take place on the same day, a single reimbursement is made. In order to initiate

reimbursement, the Council office requires a formal request from the Council member concerned.

(5) Compensation for the time invested by the Chairperson in their task of representing the Council at public events such as conferences and panel discussions as well as in consultation meetings regarding sustainability strategy is paid based on time spent as per Section 4. The same stipulations apply for the case of a Council member representing the Council at third-party appointments; the decision of whether or not the Council is represented by a Council member is taken by the Council Chairperson in conjunction with the Secretary-General.

(6) Section 7 paragraphs 1 to 4 apply correspondingly to expert third-parties (Section 1 para. 5). Section 7 paragraphs 1 to 3 apply correspondingly to guests (Section 1 para. 6, not in case of Section 1 para. 7).