Reviewer's report

Title: Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Public Private Partnerships

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2010

Reviewer: Robert Holloway

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript addresses an important topic in public-private partnerships, which has received little prior attention.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The term public-private partnership requires clarification. In particular, what is considered public: non-profits, government agencies, academic institutions, anything that is not for-profit.

2. The article moves directly from introduction to discussion. As a result, it currently reads like a loosely done research effort with a discussion that states the authors' opinions. I would have liked to see a more structured methodological approach of PPP selection, data abstraction, presenting the results, and formulating the discussion based on the results.

3. The authors conclude that more emphasis is needed for independent external monitoring, but it is not clear why they make this recommendation. It is not based on the results of their web-based review. Can they explain why they think this is the best way to manage COI in PPPs. External monitoring would require a tremendous effort and it is not clear how best to implement, and sustain this effort in a coordinated and cost-effective way. The same issue applies for why they recommend a web-based system as a forum to discuss these issues, although it is not clear from the data presented why this would be the case.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Can the author provide any past examples of COI issues with PPPs. This would provide a better context for their project.

2. They should also make explicit if they reviewed policies that deal with individual, institutional COI, or both. Both are highly relevant.

3. Do the authors have any estimation of the amount of PPP that exist, at least within the areas of global health and agriculture? Otherwise, it is hard to estimate the potential for selection bias which most certainly exists and should be acknowledged as a limitations.
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. There are few typos throughout ("The is a need....", 'comppletion")

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests