WRR

NETHERLANDS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY

Scientific and official integrity of the WRR (The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy)

The scientific and official integrity – in particular the independence – of the WRR is guaranteed by:

1. Anchoring the independent position in a special law on the WRR: Institutions Act WRR Stb. (Government Gazette) 413, August 5th, 1976; amended last by the Act of December 11th, 1997, Stb. 1998 No. 27.
2. The independence of the council members who form the WRR in collectivity.
   a. The council members are independent scientists (partly with political and/or policy experience).
   b. The council members are not in a hierarchical relationship with AZ (General Affairs).
   c. The council members are all professors at one of the Dutch Universities. They are bound therewith by the ‘Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice‘ of the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands).
   d. The WRR endorses the basic principles of the 'Code on dealing with conflicts of interest' of the KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), Health Council and KNMG (Royal Dutch Medical Association) and follows the principles of independence and prevention of conflicts of interest. Additional functions are therefore explicitly reported on the website.
3. The independence of setting the agenda by the Council.
   a. The Council itself determines the work program - after consultation with the Prime Minister (Institutions Act WRR, Article 7a).
4. The independence of the execution of research and advice.
   a. Reports, explorations and other products are held by the Council as a collective. Joint responsibility of the Council strengthens independence.
   b. Reports are written by the Council itself, thereby supported by the academic staff.
   c. The staff members of the WRR are bound as officials by the State Code of Conduct Integrity.
   d. Some staff members also have an appointment as employees at a Dutch University and are therefore bound by the ‘Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice‘of the VSNU.
5. The elements of the internal quality process, consisting of:
   a. Critical discussions of working documents and draft texts throughout the entire board (advised by the research staff).
   b. Discussions with external experts during the research and writing process; these are explicitly stated in the reports.
   c. Peer-review concept texts by external experts on scientific quality, these are explicitly stated in the reports.
   d. Final adoption of the WRR publications by the Council.
6. Clear role of the WRR in discussions with external experts.
   a. The WRR conducts interviews with external experts to set the agenda and in the work process of the WRR. These experts are both scientists (national and international) and experts involved in the field, both from society and from politics and policy. The WRR explicitly and independently reflects on the given input to set the agenda and plan research.
7. Through external evaluation of the Council every five years.
   a. Reports on external evaluations are public (these are available on the website of the WRR).
   b. In the autumn of 2017, the WRR is being evaluated by an external committee under the direction of Prof. Wiebe Bijker (Maastricht University), with Prof. Bea Cantillon (University of Antwerp), Mr. Tjibbe H.J. Joustra (OVV, Dutch Safety Board) and Prof. Bas ter Weel (University of Amsterdam) as members. This report is expected early 2018.