

## Corporate Partnership Guidelines

This policy aims to guide all parts of our organization when entering into partnerships with corporations worldwide. Our organization, Stichting (Foundation) Aidsfonds – Soa Aids Nederland, Amsterdam, Netherlands, presents itself by two brands (Aidsfonds and Soa Aids Nederland). In this document we refer to all of the organization when mentioning the ‘Foundation’.

### 1 Definition

For the purpose of this policy a corporate partnership is *defined as a relationship with a corporation or institute where the company or firm interacts with the Foundation to achieve joint objectives on levels such as financial donation, employee engagement and/or corporate social responsibility.*

### Policy statement

The Foundation attaches great importance to partnerships with other organizations and with the private sector, in order to generate a social and/or financial added value. Such partnerships may be related to specific projects, like an information campaign, or they may be of a more general nature, such as structural sponsoring or a specific action plan. In principle every activity, every program, service or project of the Foundation is eligible for sponsoring, on the condition that it corresponds to the specific mission and objectives of The Foundation and its brands.

Although partnerships with the private sector produce some evident advantages, the Foundation is aware that these partnerships may entail some risks as well. These risks might be related to harmful practices that are not in line with our mission and objectives and/or risks related to our credibility and our independent position towards governments, prior target groups and sponsors. Therefore the Foundation has developed an ethical code, providing guidelines for partnerships with the private sector.

The Foundation seeks cooperation with private sector organizations that ensure that its integrity, reputation and image are well protected and enhanced.

### General Principles

- Partnerships should sufficiently guarantee the independent position and the integrity of the Foundation and its brands. Hence they will have no influence on the information, advice, trainings and services with regard to sexual health and HIV offered by our organization.
- The Foundation refuses to conclude partnerships with companies that take up stands on sexual health and rights and HIV that are contrary to the positions of our organization.
- On the basis of its public mission, in particular the promotion of sexual health and a better quality of life for people in- or affected by HIV, the Foundation refuses to conclude partnerships with companies that provide products or show business activities that are counterproductive to public health, human rights and/or show lack of transparency about its activities in sectors/regions where contraventions of international standards frequently occur;
- The Foundation expects possible partners to take up their corporate social responsibility. This means among other things that they pursue an adequate social and environmental policy and that they respect human rights. In case of any doubt, the Foundation can call in the advice of an impartial third organization.
- Partnerships based upon contracting goods and/or services or purchasing medicines should comply with the usual best practice guidelines concerning the price/quality ratio;
- The Foundation makes decisions on a case-by-case basis, relying on the principles outlined in this document;

- The Foundation may accept donations<sup>1</sup> from any source, provided that:
  - Acceptance of the donation does not harm the Foundation’s mission and principles;
  - Acceptance of the donation does not compromise the independence of Foundation’s (international) advocacy, campaigning or programme work or that of our partners;
  - Acceptance of the donation does not damage the Foundation’s public image or professional reputation.

#### **Partnerships with pharmaceutical companies**

1. Partnerships with pharmaceutical companies should comply with all European laws and applicable codes of conduct.
2. The Foundation should always be able to prove that the cooperation does not exert any influence on its own policies and practices concerning the safety, effectiveness and acceptability of all medicines with regard to sexual and reproductive health and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.
3. The Foundation does not support any product in a way that implies that it would be better than any other similarly composed products. Neither should it sustain the claim of producers that their products are superior to other similarly composed products, unless this has been independently and scientifically proven.
4. For specific events, publications, campaigns, etc. The Foundation should get support from several commercial companies, in order to avoid the risk of being identified with one single company. Partnerships with only one company should be regularly evaluated.
5. Companies must not use the names nor the logos of The Foundation brands for marketing purposes of their products, unless the agreement contains a clause that explicitly stipulates the conditions for using one of the names and logos.
6. Partnerships that include a large contribution in kind, in particular pharmaceutical products, should not pursue promotional objectives, and the distribution of these products should correspond to the existing best practice standards. The products should be distributed on the basis of objective criteria with regard to selection of the receiving target groups/programs and/or projects.
7. Staff or members of the board of pharmaceutical companies must not be on the supervisory board of the Foundation.
8. Voluntary workers and staff members of the Foundations are only allowed to receive gifts and presents with a nominal or fixed value, like pens or flowers, from commercial suppliers or from pharmaceutical companies. All other amounts, such as sponsoring for participation in international congresses, must be reported to the board of directors. In that case the board of directors should guarantee that these volunteers/collaborators cannot influence political decisions concerning the purchasing policy and practices, in order to avoid that sponsoring companies or commercial suppliers get a preferential treatment.

#### **Selection, screening and contracts**

- Looking for mutual benefits and interests is the basis for the Foundation when entering (potential) partnerships with (commercial/private) companies. The Foundation will assess whether a company complies with the general principles as described above. This may be done by ‘desk study’, interviewing representatives or, in some cases, making use of third party screening results. The depth of the screening inquiry depends on the possible impact, the potential risks and the type of company in question. There will be more to assess when doing business with a worldwide pharmaceutical company than when dealing with ‘the backer shop on the corner’.

---

<sup>1</sup> The word ‘donations’ refers to any kind of financial or in-kind sponsorship, or gifts.

- When both parties want to put their ideas about the partnership in writing, a contract may be drawn up stating the vision, time span, activities, financial details etc. of the joint action.
- The final decision to effectuate a partnership will always be taken on the level of the Board of Directors of The Foundation. Preparatory work is done by policy officers and/or the Corporate Fundraiser.
- At least once a year the partner relationship will be evaluated, including a face-toface conversation with a representative of the company. When parties agree to continue the partnership, the advice will be presented for the Board of Directors of the Foundation so they can decide upon the continuation.