PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT POLICY
Title:
Private Sector Engagement Policy

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IUNS policy document

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In pursuing its mission, the IUNS is open to engaging with all sectors that share its common goals of improving nutrition and health throughout the world. In this context, partnerships with private corporations involving financial agreements pose important ethical risks. In particular, the food industry is a vast, heterogeneous sector, and not all its members have adhered to ethical behavior in terms of advertisement and interaction with academic scientists. There are numerous documented examples of misleading advertisements, manipulation of data, and deliberate misrepresentation of results.

For a professional/scientific organization, an indiscriminate association with industry may result in loss of credibility due to the perception of bias. This can cause permanent damage to the reputation of the scientific organization.

Thus, the IUNS has formulated the following guidance for engagement with the private sector (PS).
2.1 The primary and majority source of funding of the IUNS will derive from Adhering Bodies (AB) contributions and meetings’ registration fees.

2.2 Nevertheless, the IUNS will consider financial contributions from the private sector from entities that comply with established principles of corporate governance, including protection of children, respect for civil liberties and equality in the workplace, and a corporate public profile consistent with health promotion and disease prevention.

2.3 Any financial contribution from the private sector must be clearly justified and must receive prior approval by the IUNS Council (the “Council”).

2.4 All financial agreements with the private sector must be disclosed on the organization’s annual report and website and included in the annual report to the IUNS General Assembly. The information must include justification, amount, donor, and allocation.
3. TYPES OF FUNDING

3.1 Unrestricted funding

These donations, spontaneous or in response to Council-approved solicitations by the IUNS, will constitute an unrestricted financial pool, to supplement the core IUNS budget, and will be allocated to further the IUNS agenda. These funds cannot be used for support of regular IUNS administrative activities, council travel, or any operational expenses already allocated to separate budgets. Donors will be recognized jointly in the IUNS web page and other appropriate dissemination channels.

3.2 Scholarship funding

This is a priority area for funding by the IUNS, particularly on connection with the International Congress of Nutrition (ICN) meetings. General Assembly-approved solicitations for scholarship funding must be incorporated into a specific scholarship pool. Decision on allocation will be the exclusive responsibility of the Council or its designated scholarship committee, strictly based on merit and need. Donors will be recognized through the appropriate channels.
3. TYPES OF FUNDING

3.3 Direct funding

These are funds allocated to specific work, usually performed in between the 4-yearly ICN conferences. These activities must be consistent with the IUNS agenda, and approved by Council. Such activities could include performing studies or reviews of literature, and/or for realizing symposia and/or workshops to discuss such findings and make recommendations. The goals, work plan and budget of each activity must be defined beforehand, and independently of the PS. Funding from industry cannot account for more than 40% of the total budget for the activity. Council will monitor its compliance with the guidelines and ensure transparency.
Private sector participation in IUNS-organized scientific meetings

Industry seeks to highlight relevant findings from its in-house research programs, as well as to explain the scientific basis of their products. That information may be of interest to nutrition scientists in general. Furthermore, industry participation in scientific meetings provides an opportunity for peer evaluation of results which may impact on a large number of consumers.

But at the same time, scientific meetings can be used to promote products, display biased conclusions based on questionable research, and attempt to exert undue influence on the scientific discourse. Given the high visibility of IUNS meetings, particularly the ICN, it is important to establish a set of guidelines for private industry participation in these meetings.

- Any financial contribution of the PS to scientific meetings must be given to a common donor pool, controlled by Council or its designee.

- The congress materials provided to participants cannot include gifts (pens, USB drives, sample products, etc) or any other material containing the logo or name of a company or product. This includes the bag of the Congress if offered.
Private sector participation in IUNS-organized scientific meetings

- The PS cannot place advertisements, sample stands, or any other labeled activity in any of the conference rooms, hallways, stairways and connecting areas where the scientific congress takes place.

- All commercial exhibits must be located in an area completely independent of the congress venue, preferably on a different floor, and clearly labeled as such.

- No food and drink carrying the PS logo can be offered by the PS, at any time and in any location within the congress venue.

- The PS can submit symposium proposals just like any other attendee or organization. They will be evaluated for their scientific quality and relevance to the topics defined for the congress program. These symposia will be scheduled outside of the regular meeting agenda, usually before 8 am or after 5 pm or later. The program will clearly label these symposia as industry-sponsored. No gifts, samples of food or drinks carrying PS logos or product names can be offered at these meetings.
All operational costs of IUNS projects must be covered from the specific budget approved for that project. Council members and IUNS officers cannot accept donations-in-kind from the PS related to the performance of activities on behalf of the organization. These donations may include, for example, the use of services such as communications, printing, etc., hospitality (lodging, food, drinks), transportation (air, car, train, etc.).
The IUNS annual report (printed and web-based) must include a section on Private Sector funding, in which all funds received from the PS will be itemized and their allocation described. This report will be monitored by the IUNS General Assembly, and its discussion will be an important source of improvement of our PS engagement policy.
The IUNS encourages all Adhering Bodies to consider these guidelines when engaging with the private sector. While the IUNS cannot enforce specific guidelines on each adhering organization, it is expected that each Adhering Body will comply with these principles for all activities in which IUNS is a sponsor, partner, or contributor.