

CODE OF CONDUCT

PERTAINING TO MEMBERS
PARTNERSHIPS AND
ASSOCIATIONS



GLOBAL NETWORK
FOR TOBACCO FREE
HEALTHCARE SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The Global Network is an independent non-profit organization under Swiss law that develops, disseminates and supports tobacco free policies and standards implementation within healthcare services on a global level.

The Global Network “Code of Conduct” (for its’ Board, members, partnerships and associations) aims to fully and publicly state its values, its ways of joint working without contravening the principles and values of the Global Network and its members, in developing evidence and good practice for a tobacco free society. (**Appendix 1**, “Core Values of Global Network”)

The Global Network with its members engages in a wide range of activities including participating in or conducting grant funded academic research which may be supplemented by commercial collaboration including consultancy, commercial research and development, intellectual property licensing and involvement in ‘spin-out’ companies.

The Global Network is committed to working towards greater transparency, accountability and ethical behaviour while working in partnership with commercial bodies and industry. It does not aim to provide a standard behaviour for every possible situation or relationship but rather define a set of operating principles).

The Global Network must maintain a level of independence and integrity. This will allow the Global Network to position itself in public health policy without being influenced by vested interests. In the majority of cases simple disclosure of known or maybe perceived conflicting activities is sufficient.

FUNDRAISING, PARTNERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING, RELATIONSHIP WITH FOR PROFIT CORPORATIONS

To fund its operational and programme costs and reach its objectives, the Global Network and its members raise funds from outside its organisation and may get support from sponsors. As a recipient of such funds, it is important that the Global Network and its members be open and transparent, be accountable to the sponsor, use the funds responsibly, and communicate developments to individuals and organisations who have contributed to the funding of projects.

Partnership and sponsorship opportunities will be assessed by the Board on a case by case basis, while respecting the below mentioned principles and subsequent acceptance by the General Assembly.

GENERAL FUNDING PRINCIPLES

1. MISSION-LED: The Global Network shall only accept funding that is consistent with its mission, does not compromise its core principles, and does not restrict its ability to address relevant issues freely, thoroughly, and objectively.

2. MISSION PRIORITY: Global Network activities and programmes will be designed to meet the mission of the Global Network and never designed simply to meet the needs of a funding source. (**Appendix 2**, “Conflict of Interest policy and guidelines”).

The Global Network must set its own agendas and priorities and remain faithful to them.

3. INDEPENDENCE: The Global Network shall enter into collaboration with a for-profit corporation only when it is beneficial to the achievement of its objectives and does not compromise the independence or self-control of the Global Network.

- The Global Network and members do not take direct or indirect sponsorship or funding from the tobacco industry;

- The Global Network does not take direct sponsorship or funding from any pharmaceutical company and all funders or partners with the Global Network will be required to complete a agreement to avoid any potential conflict of interest (**Appendix 3**, “Stakeholder Agreement”)

- The Global Network will collaboration with and take funding or sponsorship from organisations where they themselves are sponsored or funded by a for-profit corporation (ie pharmaceutical industry) only when the modus operandi of the Global Network is not influenced directly or indirectly through this association.

4. TRUTHFUL: The Global Network must be truthful in all matters relating to the raising of funds and their use.

Members and associate members of the Global Network make their relationship (funding, cooperation, association or other relationship) to the pharmaceutical industry transparent when actively engaged in Global Network activities through a disclosure of conflict of interest form (**Appendix 4**, “Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form”).

5. UNRESTRICTED: All funds from a for-profit corporation should be truly unrestricted, i.e the Global Network must be able to use and spend them as deemed appropriate.

Marketing

CORPORATE IDENTITY: No pharmaceutical companies’ logos should appear on any material / means of communication / marketing items together with the Global Network logo. Sponsor’s and partner’s logos can remain on any material and take-away items distributed at Global Network meetings, provided the Global Network logo is not on them.

The mention “with the support of X” or “in collaboration with X” on presentation material or and various means of communication is accepted if not a predominant piece of information in the Communication means.

The Global Network will never solicit or accept any offer that would attach its name or logo to a commercial product, service or activity.

USE OF FUNDS

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE:

The Global Network shall ensure efficient and effective use of grants and charitable contributions.

Accountability

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Financial statements regarding sponsors' funds shall be available upon request by interested parties and presented at the Global Network Annual General Assembly. Financial supports will appear in the Global Network reports to members and the public and other relevant documents as a lump sum.

Relationship with Funder

CONFIDENTIALITY: privileged or confidential information regarding the sponsor or donation must not be disclosed to unauthorised parties, except the Global Network Board.

SPONSOR PRIVACY: a sponsor's privacy shall be respected and Global Network must safeguard any confidential information regarding the sponsor. Sponsors are to have the opportunity to remain anonymous, and to not have their names added to any lists that are sold, rented or given to others.

UNETHICAL SOLICITATIONS: The Global Network or its agents must not use excessive pressure, coercion, undue influence or other unethical means in their solicitations.

General Principles of Partnerships, Associations and Collaboration

COMMON OBJECTIVES: when appropriate, not for profit organisations or NGOs such as the Global Network with overlapping missions, values, and target groups, should partner with each other with civil society organisations, when it would be beneficial for the common target groups and for the achievement of common objectives.

COMPETITION AND SERVICE DUPLICATION: NGOs with overlapping missions, values, and target groups should refrain from competing with other civil society organisations, and should refrain from unnecessary duplication of services and disruption of each other's projects.

INFORMATION SHARING: NGOs with overlapping missions, values and target groups should share relevant project information with other NGOs and civil society organisations, and mutually support each other.

NETWORKING: The Global Network will network with other ethical NGOs as a means for raising awareness of Tobacco Control and Prevention strategies and policies.

Revision of the policy may be carried out every second year at the General Assembly.

Acknowledgement

The Global Network acknowledges the European COPD Coalition as a major source and template for this document, the ECC financial and ethical rules documentation.

APPENDIX 1

Core Values of the Global Network:

The Global Network encompasses working with health professionals and healthcare services globally and where appropriate other relevant partners in support of the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). FCTC Article 14 Guidelines demand protection from all commercial and vested interests in the development of strategies to implement Article 14 of the WHO FCTC. This is also considered by Global Network as binding for its development of strategies.

The Global Network, in engaging in healthcare services, partnerships and working arrangements with other relevant partners in the pursuit of clinical excellence in tobacco control, does not consider engagement with the Tobacco Industry or receive funding or sponsorship from the pharmaceutical industry as this last one is likely to causes bias in decisions. Independence and reliability protect Standards and provide evidence based procedures.

Code of Conduct: Code of Accountability in the Global Network

Accountability - public judgments of propriety and professional codes of conduct of Global Network members

Probity - absolute standard of honesty in course of Global Network activity

Openness - sufficient transparency about Global Network activities

Transparency and trust,

Appropriateness of projects,

Value for money,

Reasonable contact,

Responsibility,

Impartiality and honesty,

Truthfulness and fairness.

APPENDIX 2

Conflict of Interest - Policy and Guidelines

- Present a definition of Conflict of Interest
- Set out typical examples of situations where potential conflict of interest can arise

The Conflict of Interest policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant existing policies and procedures.

Definition

It is the policy of the Global Network that all members and its elected Board have an obligation to manage and/or avoid ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest, and to ensure that activities and interests do not conflict with any obligations to the Global Network.

The Global Network accepts by the widely used definition of 'Conflict of Interest' as:

“A conflict of interest (COI) is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest.”

We understand that a COI is not just about money. It is about the presence of factors — any factors — that a reasonable person might think is likely to bias a decision-makers judgment.

As the involvement of individuals, members, partners and association can be complex, it is important for the Global Network to have a clear a policy on how to deal with conflicts of interest and to provide maximum transparency on the decision-making process of all, Board and network members engaged in Global Network activities.

The damage caused by such conflicts can be considerable, whether the conflict of interest exists or appears to exist. For this reason, an explicit conflict of interest policy does not infer any lack of trust in, or loyalty of potential partnership. Rather, it is a mechanism for protecting the Global Network, Board, members and all agents of the Global Network against criticism or compromise by ensuring that they recognise and disclose such conflict situations and take steps to avoid and manage them.

The main categories of conflict of interest are:

- i. Educational Mission
- ii. Research Integrity
- iii. Conflicts of Commitment and Loyalty
- iv. Financial Conflicts

The most important message in this document is that members and partners should, as part of the Global Network vetting procedure, disclose any activity or involvement in other organisations, known or perceived to represent a conflict of interest.

The need for comprehensive policy has been made more acute by the increasing tendency to form spin-out companies, license intellectual property and other activities that reflect the economic impact of research. Individuals often have multiple roles, for example as a director, manager or consultant. Fulfilling these multiple roles in the company can create (or appear to create) a conflict with the individual or member's obligation and allegiance to the Global Network.

Other general examples include:

A) Access to confidential information or the ability to adapt or change this information relating to the Global Network concepts, principles, progress, research findings or other.

B) Involvement in externally-funded activity that might infringe the independence or decision-making process within activity directly related to the Global Network.

C) Over-dependence on a company for research funding which may result in the company, outside of contractual obligations, either formally or informally influencing the direction of Global Network research or dissemination or results.

Rather than seek to prohibit all activities that might give rise to a conflict of interest, this document provides some practical guidelines on how they should manage known or perceived conflicts of interest. The policy provides for a three-fold approach:

Always disclose conflicts of interest

Members, partners and associates should disclose activity or involvement in other organisations that may represent a conflict of interest (Appendix 3 & 4). This policy document provides for disclosure to be made prior to entering into activity or partnership with the Global Network. The fact that the Global Network has adopted such a policy does not in any way cast doubt on the integrity of potential members, partners or funders. Rather it recognises that the Global Network wishes to put in place a mechanism to protect its members and itself, from reputational damage and other liabilities.

Manage the conflict wherever possible

In the instance of a known or perceived conflict of interest, the key goal is to segregate the relevant decision-making and related activities, so that they are separately and independently managed. The Global Network is particularly concerned to ensure that activities of members and partners do not create conflicts in the areas of the Global Networks' Educational Mission and Research Integrity, as these areas are of fundamental importance to the Global Network as an association dedicated to developing a common strategy amongst healthcare services active in tobacco management, prevention and cessation worldwide.

Prohibit the activity when necessary to protect the public interest or the interest of the Global Network

When circumstances change in a way that give rise to potential Conflict of Interest, this can present a significant challenge since circumstances often change gradually and with little formality. It is nevertheless important for the Global Network to be informed in advance of any change in situation.

The Global Network board members will advise on how the potential conflict can be managed. In many cases the simple disclosure of a known or perceived conflict, will be sufficient, in a minority of cases where the potential conflict is deemed serious and cannot be effectively managed, it may be necessary to discontinue one of the conflicting activities. In all cases the Global Network will keep a written record of the fact that the conflict was reported and of how the conflict was dealt with.

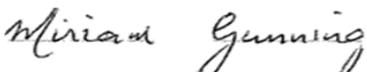
Management Procedure

Where a known or perceived conflict of interest is identified the following steps should be followed

1. Notification of any known or perceived conflicts of interest should be directed initially to the Coordinating Centre
2. All notified conflicts of interest must be tabled as an agenda item at a Global Network board meeting.
3. Prior to the meeting a body of evidence should be collected and circulated to all board members so that all members are adequately informed of the facts and concerns.
4. Then depending on the decision and recommendation of the Board tabled as an agenda item at a General Assembly where adequate time is allocated to allow for all members to participate in the discussion.

The Global Board should consider future working arrangements with such individuals, members or partners against the Global Network agreed criteria.

Global Network for Tobacco Free Healthcare Services (Global Network, GNTH)

Signature: 

Chairperson - Ms. Miriam Gunning

Date: 5th December 2017

APPENDIX 4

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of Interest - Disclosures

In its dealings with stakeholders (Board, committees, work groups, conferences, etc.) the Global Network believes that it is of the utmost importance to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest which could influence the independence or efficacy of the Global Network.

At the same time, the Global Network is aware financial support from third parties is a frequent and often necessary occurrence in the healthcare services. This requires care to be taken when accepting and evaluating contributions from stakeholders. To this end, the Global Network requires transparency from all stakeholders, including thorough and unreserved disclosure of all potential or actual conflicts of interest.

Such transparency via the disclosure of conflicts of interest is crucial to maintaining the credibility of the Global Network in the eyes of its stakeholders and the broader public.

The disclosures must be submitted to the Global Network Coordination Centre at the start of any activity. Any party making a disclosure is required to do this within a reasonable time frame if any material changes occur, to or prior commencing a new activity.

All disclosures will be evaluated by the Global Board to determine whether any items disclosed would likely impact on the independence or credibility of Global, Network or lead to inappropriate influence on the Global Network by third parties.

The Global Board may, at its discretion, determine that any stakeholder is no longer permitted to work with the Global Network (in general, or for specific projects) as a result of an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the Global stated vision and values.

VISION

Our mission is to advocate, recruit and enable healthcare services and professionals globally to implement and sustain effective tobacco management and cessation policies in accordance with the WHO FCTC.

VALUES

- Responsibility – Duty of care to curb the tobacco epidemic
- Diligence – Pursuit of clinical excellence in tobacco management
- Integrity – the highest level of integrity and transparency in its administration and activities
- Accountability – independence, value for money and protection against all commercial and vested interests



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