## **Corporate donations and partnerships ethical policy and process 2024**

**POLICY**

**Sea-Changers and corporate partnerships**

Corporate partnerships have the potential to deliver significant value, both financially and in-kind, that will help us achieve our mission. However, we do not want to partner with companies whose objectives or practices are in conflict with our mission, compromise our independence or risk our reputation.

It is therefore essential that we have a clear and robust ethical policy to determine which companies we will and will not partner with. We also require a straightforward process for reaching these decisions.

**What is a Corporate Partnership?**

Any person or company can choose to make a donation to Sea-Changers via CAF donate through our website. Companies may also approach us with donations ad hoc, asking to pay by BACS. Such donations do not constitute partnerships but may still be subject to this policy.

Corporate Partnerships are specifically relationships subject to a formal agreement between Sea-Changers and the company. These may be developed proactively (we approach the company) or reactively (the company approaches Sea-Changers.)

A partnership is unlikely to be developed where the value to Sea-Changers is less than £5,000 per annum, although benefits in kind may be considered and this is a guide minimum threshold only.

**Policy**

We are committed to raising income to fund our marine conservation grant-giving programmes. Donations from individuals, companies, foundations and other funders are vital to our organisation and to our grant giving programmes. As a charity we have a duty to accept donations or income offered if they fit with our ethical policies. It is therefore important to have robust and transparent decision-making process in accepting donations, to assess the potential risk and impact a donation may have. Any donation or engagement with a potential funder should be considered carefully and in line with our objectives and a due diligence process.

Our policy follows the code of fundraising practices as detailed by the Institute of Fundraising[[1]](#footnote-1). **The trustees of Sea-Changers ultimately have the responsibility to decide, on the basis of evidence available to them, whether the charity’s best interests are served by accepting or refusing a donation from a company. In doing so they must be able to demonstrate that they have acted in the best interests of Sea-Changers, irrespective of any individual or collective personal interest or bias.**

The trustees can refuse donations based on the following:

1. It would be unlawful to accept it e.g. the organisation knows that the gift comprises the proceeds of crime.
2. Where it is clear that the activities of a company are directly opposed or in conflict with the objectives, agreed policies or beneficiaries (funded projects) of Sea-Changers.
3. Where it can be shown clearly that the cost to Sea-Changers of accepting a donation will be greater than the value of the donation itself. In this instance trustees must be able to demonstrate that they have reasonable grounds to believe that the acceptance of the donation will itself directly lead to a net decline in the asset base or future income of Sea-Changers.

**Areas of potential concern**

Whilst we do not rule out any companies or industries automatically, we would be unlikely to accept a donation from:

* Companies that are involved in activities that cause **direct marine habitat or significant environmental damage**. This is likely to include any companies involved in:
  + overfishing or damaging fishing practices such as bottom trawling;
  + deep sea mining;
  + producing, processing or selling fish or seafood that is rated as unsustainable.
* Companies not actively seeking to reduce their environmental impact and to make their activities more sustainable.
* Companies that have acted illegally; contravened environmental regulations; committed a wildlife offence; or been found to persistently pollute the ocean.
* Companies that are involved in modern slavery.
* Companies whose reporting, financial administration, or the activities of persons of significance within the company indicate misuse of funds, dishonest activity or similar areas of concern.

We reserve the right to refuse a partnership and / or we will withdraw from one, where we believe that:

* Our right to editorial control of materials and publicity related to the partnership has been compromised.
* Negative press or publicity arises due to poor practice and is assessed as being likely to have a significant impact on our reputation and other supporter relationships.
* The resources required to steward and support the partnership exceed the potential gain to Sea-Changers.

**Company endorsement**

It should also be noted that just because Sea-Changers partners with a company, this does not mean that we endorse or will directly market their products or services.

1. Institute of Fundraising, [Acceptance and Refusal of Donations Guidance](http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/code-of-fundraising-practice/guidance/acceptance-and-refusal-of-donations-guidance/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)