



Strengthening Midwifery Globally

SPONSORSHIP AND COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

BACKGROUND

The ICM engages in a range of partnerships with non-profit agencies, and also undertakes certain agreements with commercial companies. The ICM derives significant benefits – financial, professional and public relations (PR) – from these arrangements. It is important to ensure that any commercial partnerships deliver the maximum benefits, while avoiding putting the Confederation's good name at risk, or offending member associations. This statement aims to:

- determine what kind of partnerships are acceptable
- set guidance for appropriate agreements
- ensure that the ICM is fairly and properly reimbursed for its costs
- maximise the ICM's financial well-being
- minimise any risk to the ICM's public reputation.

This policy covers work engaged with or for commercial organisations, or partnerships with other organisations, where the ICM will receive payment for services rendered. It includes, but is not limited to, the following range of partnership arrangements:

- Sponsorship (i.e. funding by an external company of all or part of the costs of staff, research, training, publications, meetings, meals, hospitality, hotel and transport costs, usually in return for overt acknowledgement and branding opportunities)
- Funding (as above, but without the requirement for overt acknowledgement)
- Endorsement (i.e. the ICM lending its name to the promotion of specified products or services)
- Conference exhibitions (i.e. external organisations exhibiting at ICM events)
- Advertising (i.e. external organisations advertising in ICM publications)
- Contracted project work
- Grants, bursaries and prizes.

It is recommended that potential partners are categorised in three bands, reflecting the level of risk involved in creating partnerships with them.

Green partners are those where there is little or no PR risk, and where we can assume no problem with associating with them (though it is still important to get the agreement right).

Amber partners are those where some caution may be needed, for a range of reasons; the implications of such an arrangement should be thoroughly considered, and reflected in the written application to proceed (see below).

Red partners are those where significant caution is needed, for example because it is known that a number of members may have objections to engagement with them. Normally arrangements with these organisations would not be set up, where

there is a satisfactory alternative, and where such arrangements are set up they should be accompanied by written PR plans to anticipate and deal with any negative feedback.

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The ICM believes that properly formulated commercial partnerships are of immense benefit, providing vital funds for midwifery, encouraging cross-sectoral skill-sharing, and developing commercial investment in health and social welfare. However, such partnerships are primarily a means to an end, and not an end in themselves.

POSITION

In keeping with the above beliefs, the ICM will only enter into partnerships which:

- directly and substantially contribute towards the ICM's strategic aims, and where they do not contravene or undermine the good standing of the Confederation or the midwifery profession
- are consistent with the need for the ICM and the midwifery profession to be objective, and to be seen to be objective with regard to midwifery practice in pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period
- do not bind the ICM to associate itself with a product in the event of any new evidence emerging related to its risks, benefits or acceptability.

The ICM will endeavour to develop a range of commercial partnerships, in order to ensure that it is not identified solely with one company. Where this is not possible, the ICM must make every effort to ensure that its integrity is not compromised by the use the commercial partner makes of the arrangement. All commercial partnerships should be for a finite period of time, which should not normally be for longer than five years. Commercial firms in partnership with the ICM may not use the name or logo of the ICM for the purpose of marketing their own products without prior agreement.

No commercial arrangement may be developed which might reasonably be seen to compromise the ICM's judgement or integrity, or seek to exert preferential consideration.

GUIDANCE TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Member associations are urged to develop their own policies and guidance based on this statement.

RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

- ICM. International Code of Ethics. ICM, 2008.

Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008

Due for next review 2014