



Corporate Engagement Policy

Preamble: Wetlands International is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands, recognizing their critical role in sustaining biodiversity, livelihoods, and the global climate. To achieve our vision, corporate sector engagement can change business behavior and provide valuable resources, expertise, and support as ways of addressing root causes of wetland decline promoting wetland restoration. However, corporate engagements also carry potential risks, such as compromising our independence, ethical integrity, and reputation. This Corporate Engagement Policy is designed to ensure that our interactions with companies across the network align with our mission and values, and that any risks are minimized through clear, transparent, and efficient decision-making processes.

The Corporate Engagement Policy aligns with the **Partnership Statement** and the **Ethical Policy**.

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Corporate Engagement Policy is to:

- Ensure corporate engagements support Wetlands International’s mission, values, and strategic goals.
- Provide a framework for assessing and corporate donations and partnerships and for guiding interaction with private sector parties.
- Maintain transparency, consistency, and accountability in decision-making.
- Safeguard the integrity, independence, and reputation of Wetlands International.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all corporate engagements by Wetlands International, including but not limited to:

2.1 Financial Donations

Corporations may directly or indirectly provide financial contributions to support Wetlands International’s operations, programs, or events. These donations must align with the organization’s mission and be free from any conditions that compromise its independence.

2.2 In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions, such as equipment, technology, or services, may be accepted if they are relevant to Wetlands International’s mission and do not create dependencies or conflicts of interest.

2.3 Collaborative Projects and Initiatives

Partnerships focused on specific projects or initiatives that contribute to wetland conservation goals, provided the partnership aligns with the organization's values and risk management policies.

2.4 Technical Expertise

Wetlands International may provide technical expertise to companies in areas such as ecosystem management, restoration technology, or community engagement.

2.5 Corporate Engagement Platforms

Wetlands International may participate in or interact with corporate engagement platforms, such as industry organizations, sector alliances, and multi-stakeholder initiatives.

3. Guiding Principles for Corporate Engagement

All corporate partnerships and donations must adhere to the following principles:

3.1 Legality

Corporate engagements will only be undertaken with companies that operate in accordance with applicable local, national, and international laws and regulations, as well as adherence to relevant customary laws where they are recognized and applicable.

3.2 Mission and Value Alignment

Corporate engagements must align with Wetlands International's mission and contribute to its strategic objectives, particularly in the areas of wetland conservation and restoration. The ethical guidelines outlined in the Ethical Policy must be observed, including respect for human rights, environmental sustainability, and social equity.

3.3 Transparency

Formal engagements with corporations must be transparent to the public. This includes openly communicating the nature of the relationship, funding sources, and the rationale for engagement.

3.4 Independence and Integrity

Wetlands International must maintain its independence in all corporate engagements. The organization will reserve the right to express its own views and will not allow any partnership to compromise its ability to act in line with its mission and core values, as outlined in the Ethical Policy.

3.5 Risk Management

Potential risks, such as reputational harm, conflicts of interest, or undue influence, must be assessed and managed. This includes risks related to individual companies, as well as cumulative risk at portfolio level. Wetlands International will not engage with corporations that pose unacceptable risks to its values, brand or mission.

3.6 Mutual Benefit

Corporate engagements should provide mutual benefits. Wetlands International seeks engagements that offer not only financial support but also opportunities for awareness raising, learning, innovation, advocacy, and greater impact on wetland conservation and restoration.

3.7 Sector Exclusion

Companies active in the following industry sectors, as classified by the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS), will not be accepted as corporate donors or partners: Aerospace & Defense (201010) and Tobacco (302030), and Oil & Gas Drilling (10101010), Integrated Oil & Gas (10102010) and Oil & Gas Exploration and Production (10102020).

4. Corporate Donations

Corporate donations will only be accepted if they meet the following conditions:

4.1 Corporate policies and behavior

The governance and behavior of the company must reflect the guiding principles for corporate engagement outlined in section 3 of this policy.

4.2 No Strings Attached

Donations should not come with conditions that could compromise the impact, independence or integrity of Wetlands International's work. Donations should support general operations or specific projects aligned with the organization's goals, without undue influence on programmatic decisions.

5. Corporate Partnerships

Corporate partnerships may be pursued if they meet the following conditions:

5.1 Strategic Alignment

Partnerships should directly contribute to Wetlands International's strategic goals in wetland conservation, restoration, or sustainable development.

5.2 Capacity and Feasibility

The scope of the partnership should align with Wetlands International's available resources and capacity. The organization should be able to effectively deliver on its commitments within the partnership.

5.3 Long-Term Impact

Partnerships should have the potential for long-term positive impact, either through significant social and environmental benefits, improved institutional and regulatory setting, lasting corporate or sectoral behavioral change, enhanced organizational capacity, or increased financial sustainability.

5.4 Innovation and Learning

Wetlands International seeks partnerships that offer opportunities for awareness raising, innovation, learning,, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy, especially in the areas of ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, community engagement and sustainable livelihoods.

6. Technical Assistance

Wetlands International may offer technical assistance to private sector partners, provided the following conditions are met:

6.1 Independent expertise

Wetlands International will maintain its status as an independent, science-based nonprofit organization, ensuring that this independence is not compromised when offering technical assistance.

6.2 Defined Scope and Output

Before commencing any collaboration, Wetlands International and the corporate partner must agree on the specific scope and intended outcomes of the technical assistance.

6.3 Duration

Technical assistance will be provided under service agreements of no longer than 12 months, with the option for annual renewal.

6.4 Financial Limit

Technical assistance service agreements should have a budget of less than € 100,000. In case this amount is exceeded, a partnership agreement will be required.

7. Assessment and Approval Process

The decision to accept a corporate donation or engage in a partnership will follow a structured and transparent assessment process, allowing for context-specific considerations:

7.1 Initial Screening

All potential corporate engagements will undergo an initial screening to assess alignment with Wetlands International's mission, ethical values, and reputation. This will involve background checks on the corporation and a review of its environmental and social performance.

7.2 Risk/Benefit Assessment

A detailed assessment of the risks and benefits of a proposed corporate engagement will evaluate the benefits and any potential conflicts of interest, reputational risks, or ethical concerns. The risk/benefit assessment applies to the corporate partner and to the partnership plan, outlining the objective, deliverables location, duration, and resourcing of the proposed collaboration.

7.3 Risk Mitigation

A risk mitigation plan will be developed for each corporate partner and donor, which will be subject to regular review.

7.4 Approval Process

The approval process of a corporate partnership or donation is set out in the Approval Procedure for Corporate Partnerships and Donations. Internal decision-making involvement and authority will be determined by the corporate risk profile, financial thresholds, and geographic scope of the partnership.

7.5 Use of External Advice

For complex or high-risk engagements, Wetlands International may seek external advice from legal, financial, or ethical experts to guide the decision-making process.

8. Formalizing Corporate Relationships

All corporate engagements must be formalized through clear, documented agreements that outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both parties. The following forms of agreements will be used depending on the nature and scope of the relationship:

8.1 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

An non-binding MoU will be required for all corporate partnerships involving strategic collaboration, joint projects, or significant financial contributions. The MoU should clearly outline:

- The objectives and goals of the collaboration.
- The roles and responsibilities of both Wetlands International and the corporate actor.
- The duration of the partnership.
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and impact of the partnership.
- Commitments related to transparency, reporting, and communication to ensure mutual accountability.

8.2 Donor Agreement

For donations with recognition benefits (such as branding or public acknowledgment), a donor agreement will be drawn up. This agreement will detail the donor amount, the agreed-upon recognition (e.g., logos, event sponsorships), and any expectations related to public communications.

8.3 Partnership Agreement

A binding partnership agreement is required for entering into a collaboration with a company. This agreement should include those of the MoU in section 7.1 and:

- Financial commitments and resource contributions from each party.
- Governance structure, including decision-making processes and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Intellectual property and confidentiality terms, where applicable.
- Procedures for amending the agreement as the relationship evolves.

8.4 Service Agreement

For technical assistance and advise, a service agreement will be required. This document will outline the scope of work, deliverables, timelines, and payment terms, ensuring that both parties understand and agree to the specific conditions of the engagement.

8.5 Termination Clauses

All formal agreements must include a termination clause that allows either party to end the relationship if the partnership no longer aligns with Wetlands International's mission, values, or ethical standards. The clause should specify the conditions under which termination is permitted and outline the steps for resolving potential conflicts before termination.

8.6 Legal review

All formal agreements related to corporate donations or partnerships must undergo legal review to ensure they comply with Wetlands International's governance standards.

9. Reporting and Accountability

Wetlands International aims to be accountable to external and internal stakeholders about the origins of corporate donations and the legitimacy of corporate partnerships, through:

9.1 Public Reporting

Wetlands International will publicly disclose all significant corporate partnerships and donations through its website and annual reports, providing transparency regarding the nature of these engagements.

9.2 Communication Protocol

Wetlands International will establish a Communication Protocol to guide both individual and joint communications with its corporate partners. This protocol will cover all aspects of the partnership and will be formalized in the agreement between Wetlands International and the corporate partner.

9.3 Internal Monitoring

Corporate partners and donors will be regularly monitored to ensure they continue to align with Wetlands International's goals and risk thresholds.

9.4 Account Management

Wetlands International will appoint a corporate account manager for each corporate account formalized through an agreement as per this policy. The account manager will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and will act as the first point of contact for the corporate account.

10. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed and updated every three years to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in addressing new opportunities and challenges in corporate engagement.

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