



**BLUE MARINE
FOUNDATION**

Business Engagement Policy

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Policy owner: Head of Operations

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Approved by the Board of Trustees on 20 July 2021

Policy Statement

BLUE welcomes and actively looks for opportunities to work with businesses which support the delivery of its objectives. BLUE will not work with businesses whose activities, policies, aims or objectives are or have in the past been contrary to BLUE's charitable purposes, mission and values. Where there is an exceptional conservation gain the Board may permit engagement with businesses or other organisations whose activities, aims or objectives are contrary to BLUE's but only after taking appropriate measures to safeguard the financial, reputational and other relevant considerations of BLUE.

Definitions

'Business supporter' refers to any business with whom BLUE is positively engaged.

'Business engagement' covers sponsorship, events partnerships, corporate partnerships, other partnerships and partners' staff work events and other volunteering. It is defined as 'a commercial agreement between BLUE and the business supporter for mutual benefit'. BLUE will receive either money or a benefit in kind which may be unrestricted or for a specific event, campaign, or project from a business which in turn gains publicity or other benefits. This might involve BLUE's delivery of service/ expertise or, in some cases, the use of BLUE's name and/or logo in conjunction with the sale of the business' goods or services.

Scope of the Policy

This policy covers business supporters with a value of £10,000 or greater in any one year. However, in cases where the actual value is conditional (on for instance, the level of sales), then BLUE may accept the business supporter if it can be reasonably expected that the donation in the first year is likely to exceed £10,000.

Corporates can support BLUE in one of two ways, through a donation or through entering into a corporate partnership:

- **Corporate Donation.** The first method is to donate directly to BLUE, usually to a restricted project. This funding is spent on a specific project or objective within BLUE's charitable activities with a percentage of the donation to support BLUE's overheads. This is often a one-off donation with no obligation for future partnership. As it is a donation there are no financial or marketing benefits received by the corporate in return for the donation, and as such the donation is free from VAT and can be deducted against the donor's corporation tax.
- **Corporate Partnership.** The second method of supporting BLUE as a corporate is to enter into a corporate partnership. This indicates an ongoing relationship with BLUE with recurring annual payments to support BLUE's overall objectives. Corporate partners are recognised on BLUE's website, documentation and annual review at corporate partner level (£10,000 per annum) or major partner level (£25,000 per annum) depending on their contributions. This recognition is part of several benefits received by corporate partners and as such the engagement is required by HMRC to be treated as a trading relationship, so payments are subject to VAT and cannot be deducted against the donor's corporation tax.

Aim of the Policy

BLUE depends on public confidence in its credibility as an independent and credible champion for biodiversity and environmental resilience for its long-term sustainability. It is therefore essential that it chooses its partners and funders with due consideration so as not to impugn or threaten such public confidence.

The aims of the Policy are to:

1. Ensure BLUE adopts a consistent and professional approach towards business engagement.
2. Ensure BLUE's position and reputation are adequately protected in business engagement agreements.
3. Protect Trustees, staff and volunteers of BLUE from allegations of inappropriate dealings or relationships with business supporters.
4. Ensure that BLUE remains independent, including areas of possible conflict of interest e.g. engaging with industrial fishing companies.
5. Ensure best value for BLUE is obtained and provided in arrangements with business supporters, whilst also offering business supporters attractive packages that offer value for money for both parties.
6. Ensure a clear and transparent process for determining whether to engage.
7. To make BLUE more efficient in its process of evaluating and accepting or rejecting requests to engage with Blue.

Principles of the Policy

The policy clarifies how BLUE works with businesses and aims to ensure that BLUE Trustees, staff and volunteers and partners share a common understanding of BLUE 's mission, purpose and ethical values and our overarching objectives of engagement with this sector.

The following 12 general principles will apply to business engagement:

1. BLUE will welcome opportunities to work with businesses, particularly those whose policies and values align with BLUE's strategic objectives, mission and values.
2. BLUE will seek to use this engagement to influence business supporters to increase their consideration of and positive impact on the natural environment in their activities and business planning, and will encourage them to be environmental leaders within their business sector.
3. BLUE will carry out its own screening of potential business supporters to assess the potential impact upon BLUE of any association.
4. BLUE will retain our independence and will have the right to publicly object to any activity of the business supporter that is not compatible with our charitable purposes, regardless of whether we have a business engagement agreement in place.
5. BLUE will recognise business support in our publications and on our website, proportionate to the benefit.
6. BLUE will retain the right to review and/or terminate any business relationship at any time and will set out the criteria for this in all agreements. In order to minimise any unnecessary bad feeling, prior to terminating a relationship, BLUE will make every effort to address concerns and re-build the relationship provided BLUE's integrity and reputation are not compromised.
7. BLUE will set out clear and unambiguous criteria for any use of BLUE branding or name by a business supporter where specifically permitted by the individual business engagement agreement and will raise any non-compliance of the criteria as soon as practically possible.
8. BLUE will take due account of the actions being taken by potential partners to remedy the negative impact they have on the environment. BLUE will not work with businesses whose principles, policies or conduct are in obvious conflict with our charitable purposes or values.
9. BLUE will not work with business where in our view, public perception of such businesses or industries might undermine BLUE's reputation or credibility or damage its relationship with its stakeholders.
10. BLUE will not enter into exclusivity agreements which could prevent us from working with other business supporters in a similar industry sector.
11. BLUE will not enter into any arrangement where it might be perceived that the business supporter has unduly:
 - influenced BLUE 's Trustees or staff in carrying out their functions;
 - gained favourable terms from BLUE in any business or other matter;
 - aligned BLUE with any organisation which conducts itself in a manner which conflicts with BLUE 's values.
12. BLUE will not endorse the products or services of a business supporter, except in circumstances where the proceeds of a specific product are given as donations to BLUE. Endorsement of such products may take place through BLUE's newsletter articles, annual review or on BLUE's website, but always with transparency and acknowledgement of the agreed donation. Business supporters may not infer that acknowledgement of its support by BLUE represents endorsement of its policies, actions or products.

BLUE PROCEDURE

Approvals

Business engagement is led by the Development Director (DD) and the Head of Partnerships (HP), one of whom must approve all such engagements to ensure that our Policy is followed and that awareness of such engagement is throughout BLUE. This includes:

- Corporate Partnership i.e. businesses who pay an annual fee to BLUE
- Business partners e.g. financing the running of projects
- Business sponsors e.g. financial contribution to events, activities or projects; goods and services in kind
- Other business supporters e.g. receiving expert advice from professionals

The Due Diligence form referenced in Appendix 1 shall be completed by the finance team to inform a recommendation as to whether to proceed or decline with a business engagement. Before entering into any business engagement the checks must have been undertaken to explore the potential for the relationship to compromise BLUE or damage its reputation or that of marine conservation organisations as a whole. We cannot anticipate the future action of partners, but we can ensure that we carry out sufficient upfront checks so as to mitigate our exposure.

Please see BLUE's Financial Authorisation Policy for additional approval required for all engagements larger than £10,000.

A central record of contact with current and potential business supporters shall be kept updated on BLUE's Salesforce system. All contact and opportunity owners are responsible for maintaining and updating the contact records on Salesforce, including recording the Due Diligence form referenced in Appendix 1.

Contract arrangements with business supporter

Any arrangement whereby a business is providing financial support (including gifts and services in kind) will be subject to a written agreement. Donations may only require a Memorandum of Understanding, but all Corporate Partnerships must have a formal contract in place between BLUE and the business supporter. Any such agreements must permit BLUE to withdraw from the partnership should new activities of the business mean that this Policy is breached.

At the time of signing any agreement, the business supporter will be required to confirm that they are not aware of any current or pending action or activities that could damage the reputation of BLUE, and that they will inform BLUE as soon as they become aware of any activity that may damage BLUE's reputation.

Marketing and media

All arrangements for associated publicity, marketing or media activity will be stated in the business engagement agreement. Media relations for all business engagement will be overseen by the DD and HP. BLUE will agree with the business supporter the nature and content of publicity and will retain the right to approve all publicity material.

The use of BLUE's logo by the business supporter must be approved by the DD and HP and is subject to a minimum donation of £10,000 per year. However, in some cases where the actual value is conditional (on for instance, the level of sales), then BLUE may accept the business supporter if it can be reasonably expected that the donation in the first year is likely to exceed £10,000.

In the case where a business supporter misuses BLUE branding or otherwise goes against the agreed communications protocol stated in the business engagement agreement then BLUE will ask the supporter to immediately remedy the situation, or may terminate the agreement/contract.

Transparency

A list of business supporters will be maintained on BLUE's website and shown in the relevant Annual Report and Accounts. A copy of the Business Engagement Policy will be available on BLUE's website and provided on request for all potential or current business partners.

Maintaining BLUE's records

BLUE will maintain a full record of all business engagement; securely storing copies of all completed Due Diligence forms & business engagement agreements (including contracts, MoU).

APPENDIX 1: DUE DILLIGENCE FORM

All business engagement work requires the completion of the Due Diligence online checklist prior to signing an agreement or accepting any funding:

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/BLUEMarineFoundation/BLUEMarineFoundationDueDiligence>.

Each checklist will be filed electronically for at least six years.

The checklist requires completion of the following information and based on the responses given, will prompt whether the supporter is a corporate donor or corporate partner, whether the engagement requires additional CEO or board sign-off, and whether any additional policies (e.g. the supporters sustainability policy) should be uploaded and attached to the submission.

PAGE 1 - INTRODUCTION

- Identify the type of due diligence required – Business Supporter
- Name of person completing the form
- Date of completion

PAGE 2 – DETAILS

- Name of Business
- Company Number
- Registered Address
- Briefly describe the business activities
- Contact Name
- Contact Email
- Contact Position
- Contact Phone

PAGE 3 – PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT

- What is the proposed value of the donation in GBP?
- Donation Type – select from ‘One-off Donation’ / ‘Ongoing Annual Donation’ / ‘Commercial Participator, donation is a % of sales’
- What benefits is the corporate expecting in return for their donation?
 - None - the corporate may be thanked as a donor in the review and website, but not recognised as a partner. BLUE may invite members to some events but is not obliged to do so.
 - Partnership - the corporate will be recognised as a corporate partner or major partner in the review and website, and is able to use our logo in their marketing materials.

The form will then identify the type of proposed engagement, confirm the billing arrangements (i.e. donation to BLUE directly, or trading arrangement liable to VAT through BLUE’s Trading Subsidiary) and confirm whether further due diligence is required.

PAGE 4 – SCREENING

- Has the funder given to BLUE previously?
 - If yes: How was the experience of them as a funder. Good communication, reliable payments, reasonable reporting requirements?
- Is the corporate already engaged through other organisations similar to BLUE?
 - If yes: Please describe which organisations and how the funder is involved
- Does a member of staff or trustee of BLUE have an existing relationship with this corporation?
 - If yes: Who in BLUE holds the relationship? What is the nature of the relationship? (i.e. family, friends, business relationship)
- Has the corporation received adverse publicity in the press/social media? Are there any 'anti-company' campaigns being run?
 - If yes: Please briefly summarise the adverse publicity. Is it ongoing public criticism or a one-off incident?
- Are you aware of any other risks to BLUE in accepting funding from this corporation
 - If yes: Please briefly summarise the perceived risk
- Is their engagement being driven by one particular individual?
- If the proposed engagement is with other partners as well as BLUE, please list the other organisations involved

Uploads

Please upload copies of their CSR and Environmental policies if possible, to assist in the approval of the due diligence check.