



# EDF Corporate Sector Partnership Guidelines

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The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent NGO that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe. EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families. We are a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe.

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Working with corporate partners helps the European Disability Forum (EDF) reach new and diverse audiences, while raising funds to support the interests of people with disabilities in Europe.

The objective of these Guidelines is to enable the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships between the EDF and the corporate sector, with the aim to achieve equal opportunities for all men, women and children with disabilities throughout Europe. The Guidelines are set out in order to enable the EDF to access financing from the private sector while protecting EDF's reputation, integrity and strategic vision.




## Introduction

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent NGO that defends the interests of 80 million people with disabilities in Europe. EDF was created in 1996 by its member organisations to ensure that decisions at the EU level concerning persons with disabilities are taken with and by persons with disabilities.

EDF's objective is to achieve equal opportunities for all men, women and children with disabilities. EDF works closely with their active members around Europe; other non-profit organisations fighting for equality and non-discrimination; EU institutions and agencies; EU presidencies and permanent representatives of countries in the EU; the Council of Europe; the United Nations (UN) and its bodies; the International Disability Alliance (IDA); and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC).

## EDF's values and UN CRPD

EDF's values are built on the principles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD): Respect for inherent dignity; Individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices; Non-discrimination; Full and effective participation and inclusion in society; Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; Equality of opportunity; Accessibility; Equality between men and women; and Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.


The concrete decision on engaging in a corporate partnership belongs to the Board  EDF Directors. It is carried out on a case-by-case basis following this Guideline Document. Potential corporate sector relationships will undergo a screening and due diligence process using the screening criteria below.

The approval of the proposed partnership will be submitted to the Board of Directors by the EDF Director and the EDF Executive for its agreement. Once agreed by the Executive and by the Board, approval of the corporate sponsorship will be formalized in a written contract signed by the EDF Director.

Every decision, either positive or negative, and the state of play of every contract and its content will be made available for the General Assembly.

## Preliminary Screening Criteria

- The initial screening will be undertaken by an EDF Secretariat Staff member.
- The preliminary screening of prospective corporate partners will be based on:
  - the type of product or service the company sells (adult content, tobacco, alcohol and firearms companies are automatically excluded from partnerships); also companies with



a controversial nature, such as psycho-pharmaceutical companies<sup>1</sup> are excluded, as well as companies that are proven to lack ethics and social responsibility (such as pollutive oil companies).

- the company's public record with regards to human rights, and particular the rights of people with disabilities and all discriminated minorities;
- the effects of the company's mission, products, services or activities on people with disabilities. When there are signs of harmful or disputed effects the company is excluded to avoid controversies<sup>2</sup>.

To thoroughly assess the above, the following questions should be researched by the EDF secretariat staff member responsible for coordinating the corporate partnership.

## Preliminary Assessment Questions

- Is there anything in the company's goals or values which conflict with EDFs mission, vision values, or the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?
- Is the company openly opposed to equality and inclusion for persons with disabilities? Does the company directly or indirectly facilitate segregation or human rights violations?
- Does the company have any problematic approaches or misunderstanding towards human rights and nondiscrimination more generally? Such as using human rights rhetoric while actually not respecting human rights under CRPD? <sup>3</sup>
- If the company has a history of not respecting the rights of persons with disabilities, has it taken effective measures to address this?
- Is the company law abiding?

Undertaking a simple google search for articles, (especially recent news articles), related to users' satisfaction, the company's human rights or social track record, recent violations/scandals/lawsuits, advocacy positions, DPO opinions etc. is a quick way to get a sense of a company's reputation. If the Corporation is based in a country where EDF has a national council member, they will also be consulted. Also, EDF board will be notified and asked for their opinion/experiences with the company.

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<sup>1</sup> Lack of scientific basis for psychopharmaceutical products (e.g. critics on 'medicalizing' the causes of psychosocial distress, and disputed effectiveness), and the psychopharmaceutical products ARE being imposed without free and informed consent. Taking money from psychopharmaceutical companies might be harmful for EDF's profiling.

<sup>2</sup> Such as psychopharmaceutical companies, hospitals,

<sup>3</sup> Note that some companies claim to promote human rights, but may not be in line with UN CRPD (eg. certain institutions, psychopharmaceuticals)



If research reveals that a company has had a recent public issue related to violating human rights, and there is no information on what steps are being taken to remedy or mitigate the situation, the EDF should reach out to their contact at the company to gather further information about how the company is handling the situation.

In such a scenario, EDF Board members will be consulted for their opinion on the issue.

## Secondary Screening Criteria

If the company has met the preliminary screening criteria, the EDF staff in charge of the screening process should then ensure that both the company, as well as the details of the proposed partnership meet the following criteria regarding the **suitability of the partnership from a commercial, financial and strategic perspective**.

These are standard criteria used by NGOs and Non-profit organisations to ensure that a potential partnership is financially sound and mutually beneficial.

### Financial Health

- In principle EDF requires a guaranteed minimum donation of 5,000 euros for partnerships and provides a list of benefits commensurate with each donation level.
- EDF welcomes proposals from businesses with at least one year of operating experience.
- Both the EDF and the partner company should have sufficient human resources and financial capacity to effectively and efficiently manage the proposed partnership. The hours required to manage the partnership from the EDF side should be calculated and weighed against the fiscal benefit of engaging in the partnership.

### Strategic Relevance and Mutual Accountability

- The potential collaboration must fit within the EDF's overall mission, facilitate activities of EDF's strategic plan and must advance the goals and objectives of the EDF.

### Endorsement and Messaging

- EDF does not endorse specific brands, products, political or religious ideologies.





- While EDF may publicly acknowledge its corporate partners, EDF cannot advertise, promote, sell or distribute products or services for partners.
- EDF owns the trademarks for its name and logo and a written contract is required to use any licensed marks.
- Any messages or information conveyed by the corporate partner as a result of the collaboration must be consistent with the EDF's standards.

## Transparency

- EDF will maintain a process of openness and fairness in developing collaborations with partners on similar projects or projects with similar intent. As such, the EDF retains the right to fully disclose any potential collaboration.
- A written contractual agreement is a precondition for partnership. This contract will clearly define the roles, responsibilities and deliverables of both EDF and the corporate partner, as well as indicate the name of the staff persons responsible for the delivery of the project for both the EDF and the corporate partner. The Board will be consulted before a decision is taken on such a corporate sponsorship contract. If the Corporation is based in a country where EDF has a national council member- they will also be consulted. This contract will be signed and approved by the Director of the EDF after consultation with appropriate EDF staff, including teams responsible for finance and communications.

## Types of Partnerships

The EDF can engage in different types of partnerships with the corporate sector, including but not limited to fee-for-service and subcontractor relationships, collaborative partnerships, and event sponsorships. The partnership should be used to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and communication about the partnership should reinforce positive messages about persons with disabilities and their rights.

The type of partnership, as well as the deliverables and activities each party is responsible for will be developed and agreed together based on the needs of both organisations.

EDF retains the right both to offer corporate sponsors standard sponsorship packages, as well as to create customized packages or projects based on the needs and resources of both parties.



## Obligations of both parties

The written contract between EDF and corporate partner will clearly specify the obligations of both parties in terms of advertisement and publicity. It may include but is not limited to:

- Use of partner logo on EDF website, newsletter, e-mail footer, press releases, social media (for communication regarding the activity/ activities being sponsored).
- Signage at EDF private or public events: use of partner logo in event programmes, opportunities for stands or booths (non-commercial) at EDF private or public events; invitation of corporate partner employees to EDF events; introduction by corporate partners of speakers at EDF events; use of partner logo on event merchandise (bags, pens and notepads, registration booth, lanyards) etc.
- Opportunities for partners to host EDF dinners, conferences, cocktails or workshops at their office
- Opportunities for corporate partners to send employees for skills-sharing and staff-swaps at EDF secretariat
- Sponsorship of physical infrastructure improvements to EDF secretariat building, with permanent plaque recognizing corporate sponsor

Every decision either positive or negative should be submitted to the Board and the state of play of every contract and its content should be made available for the GA.

## Contact person at the EDF secretariat:

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Should you have any problems in accessing the documentation, please contact the EDF Secretariat. (Tel: +32 (0) 2 282 46 00, Email: [info@edf-feqh.org](mailto:info@edf-feqh.org)).



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