

Our board members



Dr. Niamh Fitzgerald
President



Prof. Tom Babor
Immediate past
President



Mr. Matej Kosir
Vice President



Dr. Andrea Mohan
Secretary



Dr. Neo Morojele
Board member

Guidelines for the Management of Relationships with Organizations with Vested Interests

Why?

- ▶ Industry funding of science & research has been identified as a tactic used by vested interests to shape policy debate; and to gain credibility and influence in policymaking circles (Savell reviews).
- ▶ Tobacco industry efforts to distort evidence are well recognized; recent documented examples of similar alcohol industry tactics; pharma funded trials are more likely to find results in favour of the drug being tested. (McCambridge; Bero)
- ▶ Government contracts for research can also be subject to non-disclosure agreements or restrictions on publication. (Kypri)

Workshop Aim

- ▶ To facilitate participant discussion and reflection on the prevalence, acceptability and management of potential conflicts of interest in relationships between researchers/practitioners and organizations with vested interests.

Today

- ▶ **Emerging Issues 1:** “*Conflict of Interest Declarations & Dilemmas for Addiction Journals*” - Prof. Tom Babor, University of Connecticut, Immediate Past President of ICARA
- ▶ **Emerging Issues 2:** “*Conflicts of interest & the Emerging Cannabis Industry*” - Dr. James Nicholls, CEO, Transform Drug Policy Foundation
- ▶ **Open discussion with speakers and questions from the floor.**
- ▶ **Presentation of ICARA Guidelines on Management of Relationships with Organizations with Vested Interests:** “*Three primary principles in making decisions on relationships with funders and organizations with vested interests*”, Dr. Niamh Fitzgerald, University of Stirling, ICARA President.
- ▶ **Scenario-Based Roundtable Interactive or Group discussion (time permitting)**

The New Guidelines

- ▶ History of contentious debate about these issues in some ICARA member organisations (INEBRIA, KBS, others?)
- ▶ Two previous documents developed by ICARA:
 - ▶ Alcohol industry funding guidelines (Babor)
 - ▶ Guidelines on vested interests (Buhringer)
- ▶ Current document brings the two together and has been finalised following discussion

Guiding not Instructing...

Gerhard's original purpose:

- ▶ *“I avoided giving the reader moral lessons about to take or not to take money from sources with vested interests.*
- ▶ *I do not want to educate people or to be the moral judge or conscience.*
- ▶ *The knowledge about the misbehavior of such organizations is widely available, and a learned society should make up their mind themselves”*

Sections in the Guideline

- ▶ 1. Introduction
- ▶ 2. Organizations with vested interest
- ▶ 3. Risks & benefits from a societal perspective
- ▶ 4. Risks & benefits from the perspective of the ATOD Association
- ▶ 5. Managing Relationships with organizations with Vested interests

2. Who has a vested interest?

Private Sector

- ▶ Producers
- ▶ Distributors/retailers
- ▶ Treatment businesses
- ▶ Publishers
- ▶ Others

Not for profit

- ▶ Social aspects or PR organizations funded by the private sector
- ▶ Social enterprises, charities, NGOs etc.
- ▶ State organizations including state providers of products (monopolies etc.)
- ▶ Private individuals
- ▶ Governments/agencies

3&4. Risks & Benefits

- ▶ At societal level
 - ▶ Lending credibility or reputation to the funder - enhancing their influence
 - ▶ Often overlooked
- ▶ For the organization receiving funding:
 - ▶ Perceived endorsement
 - ▶ Reputational damage
 - ▶ Bias or conflicts of interest

5. Three Principles for Decision-making/Policy Development

1. **Due Diligence:** The association should seek to fully understand the risks of the proposed arrangement by establishing clear information on the proposed sponsor or funder, their aim, function and political activities, the original source of funding, and proposed conditions (informal or contractual) governing the arrangement.

Consideration should be given not only to the individual organization offering support, but the broader grouping or industry of which they may be part.

2. Open Decision-Making on Policy

- ▶ The association should promote a thorough and open discussion on the ethical and practical implications related to this type of funding at the level of the board of the association and amongst members and develop general guiding principles and procedures.
- ▶ This should consider the advantages and disadvantages of funding from various sources, the degree of influence by the sponsoring organization which is acceptable to members; and the risks to the association's credibility and focus as outlined above.
- ▶ The agreed policy/principles should then guide future decision making.

3. Transparency in applying policy

- ▶ **Transparency in All Relationships:** Agreed policies and procedures, and all types of funding or other arrangements with external organizations, and any related conditions and limitations, should be declared in a transparent manner to the society members and to the general public.

