

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Policy



© Graham Burns

Corporate Partnerships

Corporate Partnerships Policy

Our approach to accepting transfers of money, skills or other resources from commercial entities

Definitions

1. This policy deals with ‘corporate partnerships’ as defined using the following Institute of Fundraising definition: a corporate partnership is a relationship where there is a transfer of money, skills or other resources from the commercial entity to the charity. Corporate partnerships include, but are not restricted to, sponsorship agreements, affinity marketing, donations and grants; they exclude employee match funding (as in this scenario the corporate has no formal agreement or linkage with the charity).

Context

2. The Scottish Wildlife Trust seeks to engage with as wide an audience as possible in pursuit of its vision of healthy resilient ecosystems. Policymakers, business leaders, communities and individuals all have a role to play in working with the Trust to tackle the serious threats facing biodiversity and ecosystems today.
3. Individually and cumulatively, business activities have significant impact on the natural environment. The Scottish Wildlife Trust believes that in order to reduce negative impact, and ultimately work towards the goal of ‘net positive impact’, there needs to be an open and innovative exchange between environmentalists and business leaders. We would like to see public, private and voluntary sectors all become part of the solution to on-going biodiversity loss at Scotland, UK, European and international levels.
4. When engaging with corporate partners, we will endeavour to ensure that all parties are working to shared goals, with clear guidelines on engagement, in order to achieve positive environmental outcomes. As stated in 9(g) below, the Trust will only engage with businesses which are committed to advancing nature conservation and environmental sustainability.
5. As noted above, in addition to accepting transfers of money, skills or other resources from the commercial entity to the Trust from selected corporate partners, the Trust will actively engage in dialogue with private sector organisations in connection with the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital and World Forum on Natural Capital. As one of the primary purposes of these activities is to bring about corporate behaviour change, there will be no barriers to participation in these activities as we believe that awareness, education and dialogue are vital to progress. The range of parties with whom the Trust chooses to engage in this context may be wider, including some companies that are trying to address significant negative environmental impacts.
6. Ethical investment and procurement are not included in the scope of this policy but are instead covered by the Trust’s Ethical Investment Policy and Procurement Policy.
7. This policy covers corporate partnerships entered into by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and any subsidiary company of the Trust.

Rationale for engaging with corporate partners

8. Using these guidelines to help determine choice of corporate partners, the Scottish Wildlife Trust will proactively engage with corporates for the following reasons:
 - a) **To champion conservation policy.** The Scottish Wildlife Trust will accept contributions of resources and / or undertake joint advocacy work with selected corporate partners, where this helps advance progressive conservation policy with key decision makers and opinion formers.
 - b) **To demonstrate best-practice conservation management to others through practical projects.** The Scottish Wildlife Trust will accept support from selected corporate partners that will further the Trust's nature conservation activities.
 - c) **To raise awareness of the importance of nature conservation.** The Scottish Wildlife Trust will work with selected corporate partners to develop educational, outreach and communications initiatives in order to broaden the base of support for, and understanding of, nature conservation.
 - d) **To improve the environmental performance of corporates.** The Scottish Wildlife Trust will seek to work with companies to improve their environmental performance. (Note that, as stated above, where a company wishes to become involved in the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital or the World Forum on Natural Capital, in which the Trust plays a leading role, there are no barriers to participation. The purpose of engagement in the case of these activities is to improve business practices in order to achieve better environmental outcomes.)

Guidelines for corporate partnerships

9. All corporate partnerships should:
 - a) **Align with Trust's vision, aims and values.** Engagement must have a clearly defined purpose which aligns with the Scottish Wildlife Trust vision, aims and values.
 - b) **Help the Trust deliver its objectives for Scotland's wildlife.** Engagement must advance a Scottish Wildlife Trust priority, (as defined in *Our Nature, our future 2012-2017*), with measurable results within five years.
 - c) **Deliver a net benefit for wildlife.** The benefits to wildlife from the proposed engagement must outweigh the assessed risks.
 - d) **Not signify an endorsement of the corporate by the Trust.** No engagement by the Trust with a corporate partner must represent an endorsement of its products or services. All public communications relating to the engagement will be subject to joint approval. Use of the Scottish Wildlife Trust's name and logo will require written permission from the Trust.
 - e) **Not provide 'undue benefit' to the corporate.** The level of benefit to the Trust must be at least equal to that gained by the corporate partner.

-
- f) **Include a right for the Trust to comment publicly on the business practices of the corporate partner or its industry more widely.** The Trust retains the right to comment on any aspect of business practices which, in the opinion of the Trust, may impact on progress towards our vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems. For additional transparency, the Trust will also ensure:
 - a) Other interested stakeholders are be consulted where appropriate
 - b) The identities of corporates with whom the Trust partners will be disclosed together with the nature and purpose of the engagement
 - c) Sharing of knowledge and expertise gained through corporate partnerships to promote better conservation practices

 - g) **Include a commitment by the corporate to further nature conservation and environmental sustainability.** The Trust will only engage in corporate partnerships with businesses which are committed to advancing nature conservation and environmental sustainability. The Trust will expect corporate partners to have, or to develop, policies or practices to address their most significant environmental impacts. If after a certain period of time, we have reason to believe that this is not the case with any given partnership, we may choose to terminate that partnership.

 - h) **Not lead to a disproportionate reputational risk to the Trust.** The reputation of the corporate must not present a material risk to the Trust's reputation or ability to achieve any of its conservation objectives that is greater than the achievable benefit from the engagement.

 - i) **Include a right for the Trust to terminate the engagement.** The Trust will monitor its corporate partnerships and may terminate the partnership in cases where agreed objectives are not being achieved or are not satisfactory. The Trust will retain its right to terminate engagement partnership for reasons relating to actual or potential reputational harm, or legal compliance, breach of an agreement, and misuse of intellectual property including the Trust's name.

Implementation of the policy

- 10. The Trust will operate all corporate partnerships according to the guidelines above. Additionally, where a corporate partnership is deemed to exist (i.e. there is a movement of funds or equivalent resources from a corporate to the Trust), a due diligence procedure will be put in practice. Due diligence will be proportionate to the scale of the transaction and follow guidelines (see Appendix 1).

- 11. Assessment of corporate partnerships is delegated to the Head of Development.

- 12. Where it is proposed that a corporate partnership be declined, the matter will be referred to Management Team (which contains representation of all areas of the Trust's functions including fundraising, communications and policy) to endorse the decision.
 - a) Any decision to decline corporate support will be reported to the Board of Trustees;
 - b) Any corporate partnership valued at >£100k will be referred to the Board of Trustees for approval.

- 13. To ensure financial resilience and protect the Trust's independent role, no single corporate partnership will generally exceed a value of 15% of the Trust's income stream.

Future action

- 14. The Trust will review the Corporate Partnerships Policy periodically as advised by Council.