

BSI policy on working with pharmaceutical, biotech and medical technology industries

The purpose of this document is to set out the position of the British Society for Immunology (BSI) regarding its relationships with commercial organisations, including pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical technology companies – referred to as ‘industry’ herein. All working relationships are in line with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry’s (ABPI) Code of Practice, or code of practice from other relevant sector bodies, and associated policies.

The BSI recognises the importance of working with different stakeholders with an interest in supporting our mission, ‘to support our immunology community in driving scientific discovery and making a positive impact on health’.

Charities, NGOs, government departments and commercial organisations play important roles in a complex research landscape and bring different but complementary strengths to our work. We are a membership organisation with members in many different sectors including academia, industry, the NHS, government and charities. In addition, industry make a large contribution to basic and translational immunology research which leads to the development of new ways of diagnosing, treating, preventing and curing disease and is enhanced through collaborative work that many of our members are involved in. The BSI will work with industry where it furthers our mission and supports key projects and initiatives within our strategy.

We recognise the importance of working with industry and we acknowledge that these relationships should remain in line with our mission and follow this policy to safeguard our independence, reputation and continued support of our members.

The BSI will make this policy available to any industry organisation it may work with. A version of this policy is also available on our website. This policy excludes relationships with exhibitors and sponsors at BSI events, advertisers or publishing companies, which are dealt with separately.

A decision to work with any given industry organisation will be made by the BSI Senior Management Team (SMT) based on the criteria set out in appendix 1. Operational safeguarding considerations are also set out in appendix 1.

1 Independence and impartiality

- 1.1 Any direct work arrangements with industry will be set out in writing. If the work involves a particular project (e.g., an event, report, etc.), the written agreement will outline the aims of the project, individual organisation responsibilities and the expectations of everyone involved.
- 1.2 The BSI and industry organisation will agree on the appropriate uses of both organisations' names, logos and brands. The use of brand must be in line with ABPI branding guidelines.
- 1.3 Industry will not be allowed to provide editorial input into BSI publications or other materials. Where the BSI works with industry on a specific project, the BSI will retain editorial control over all printed and digital work and maintain copyright.
- 1.4 BSI strategy, activities, independent reporting and advocacy on immunology matters will not be influenced by industry organisations with which the BSI works.
- 1.5 Regular audits of industry-supported activities will be conducted to safeguard both parties against undue industry influence on the work of the BSI and compliance with the ABPI Code of Conduct (or similar). These will be conducted by the SMT and be reported to the BSI Finance Sub Committee.
- 1.6 The BSI will always seek to work with several industry organisations on any given project, where possible. Collaborative projects are favoured to avoid competitor advantage. However, the BSI reserves the right to work with individual industry organisations if it is deemed to be in the best interest of our members and the BSI has followed due diligence.
- 1.7 The BSI will not endorse a particular product or products of industry.
- 1.8 The BSI reserves the right not to work with a given industry organisation.

2 Openness and transparency

- 2.1 The BSI will make every effort to ensure compliance with the ABPI Code of Practice, which states that,
'Companies must ensure that the involvement of the company is made clear and that all of the arrangements comply with the Code.'
- 2.2 Where the BSI is working with industry, this will be noted on the BSI website (www.immunology.org).

- 2.3 The BSI corporate members help to fund several of our activities. Their names and logos can be found on the [corporate membership page of our website](#). Corporate members of the BSI may choose to advertise in *Immunology News* and have an annual profile appear in the publication.
- 2.4 The BSI will report on all activities covered by this policy where income from industry is received. This will be published as appropriate on our website and/or in the annual review and report.
- 2.5 Any person who advises or acts on behalf of the BSI and has a relationship with industry must declare their involvement about any potential conflict of interest.
- 2.6 The BSI will declare any interests in industry to its key committees including our Board of Trustees, Member Representative Forum, Congress Committee, Clinical Immunology Professional Network (BSI-CIPN) Steering Committee and our Expert Task Force.
- 2.7 The acceptance of any financial support from industry must fit with the BSI's mission and strategic aims and should not compromise BSI's integrity, reputation or charitable status.
- 2.8 The BSI may also receive non-financial support from industry when the activity follows the above guidelines and is deemed beneficial. Non-financial activities with industry will be openly declared on the BSI website.

3 Financial support

- 3.1 The BSI will accept funding from industry where it believes:
 - 3.1.1 There are strong grounds to believe that the activity will result in benefits to the BSI, its members and is in line with the BSI mission and strategic aims.
 - 3.1.2 There is no attempt by the funder to influence the BSI's strategy or activities.
- 3.2 In order to safeguard the BSI's independence, total funding from industry will not exceed a maximum level of 25% of income from the BSI's total annual income.
- 3.3 Any funding arrangements with a single industry organisation that exceed 5% of total budgeted income in any one financial year or for one individual project will be reported to the Finance Sub Committee for approval.
- 3.4 The acceptance of funding from industry will be confirmed and drawn up in a written agreement before the initiation of the partnership.

This policy has been drafted in line with relevant best practice guidance on collaborations and commercial partnerships, including: The Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) 'An Essential Partnership: A guide for charities working with industry'; and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's (ABPI) [Code of Practice](#) administered by the Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA). Clause 27 of the ABPI Code of Practice contains detailed provisions for the pharmaceutical industry on relationships with patient organisations – A BSI-Industry relationship would fall under this category.

The above policy is inclusive of partnerships with pharmaceutical, biotech and medical technology companies. This does not include financial arrangements set up with exhibitors, sponsors, advertisers and publishing companies (e.g., exhibitors at BSI meetings).

Note that some of the financial arrangements will be processed by BSI Trading Limited.

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Appendix 1 – Decision criteria

The BSI Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for conducting due diligence on all new potential agreements with industry. Decision for agreements valuing less than £100k will be made by the SMT, any £100k or over will be decided by the BSI Finance Sub Committee (FSC).

The SMT-lead for the potential relationship will be tasked with presenting a view on the following to the SMT for discussion:

- The industry organisation must be committed to following the ABPI Code of Practice or code of practice from relevant sector body
- The industry organisation will preferably have a UK-based office
- The relationship must not compromise or risk BSI reputation and/or the impact of our work
- The relationship must not be associated with the BSI public-facing vaccine engagement work and must not influence our position or policies
- The relationship must not lead to an actual or perceived endorsement of the company and/or its products/services

The SMT will endeavour to make a decision, though may choose to escalate to the FSC or Board if felt appropriate.

Once a decision has been made to work with a company, the BSI will:

- Ensure the written agreement clearly states that the relationship will not affect the BSI's ability to report independently and conduct independent advocacy on immunological matters
- Conduct regular audits of industry relationships to protect both parties in ensuring there is no undue company influence on the BSI and/or specific project
- Ensure the internal staff lead for the work is selected appropriately to eliminate conflicts of interest
- Declare the interest to key BSI committees (Board of Trustees, FSC, Member Representative Forum, Congress Committee, BSI-CIPN Steering Group, Expert Task Force)
- Update the relevant BSI webpages
- Include information in the annual review and report as appropriate