

Checklist for pharmaceutical companies and organisers to check whether events for the purposes of postgraduate medical training or continuing medical education may be supported

When supporting events for the purposes of postgraduate medical training or continuing medical education, a number of statutory and self-regulatory requirements must be observed. [Practice Recommendation No. 4 to the PC](#) also provides further guidance. The Code Secretariat has repeatedly found that a structured checklist can offer additional assistance for pharmaceutical companies and organisers. The relevant requirements are therefore briefly outlined below. An event may only be supported by a pharmaceutical company if these points can be answered in the affirmative:

- 1. Scientific programme should be available at the time of commitment**
The event must impart technical or scientific information that is of direct medical or pharmaceutical relevance. An appropriately detailed programme including speakers, content, structure and timetable guarantees the quality of the event and should be available in concrete form at the time of commitment. No framework programmes may be included in this document ([SAMS Guideline](#) section 4.3.3. *). In addition, the non-technical part of the event (return trip/meals) must be of much lesser importance in terms of time and money.
- 2. Conference venue should be easy to reach**
This applies both to the trip itself and the time required for the trip. It is also important to ensure good public transport connections.
- 3. No exclusive/extravagant conference venue**
The event infrastructure must be appropriate. Three- to four-star hotels are to be preferred for the event venue as well as for the accommodation. Venues that are known for their entertainment facilities (such as spa, sports or cultural activities, etc.) or where the focus falls on the tourism aspect should be avoided.
- 4. Reasonable hospitality only**
The catering must be related to the main purpose of the event and should be of secondary importance. The type of hospitality depends on the duration of the event and the time of day (break, lunch or dinner), but must always be modest. Support for gala dinners and the like is not permitted.
- 5. No fringe programmes**
Pharmaceutical companies may not financially or organisationally support entertainment or leisure activities or other social activities that go beyond simple networking. Medical professionals should pay for and organise such activities themselves, as independently as possible.
- 6. No offers for accompanying persons**
No offers may be made to persons who are not actively participating in the event, nor may any costs be covered for them. This also applies if they are medical professionals themselves.
- 7. No gifts may be given**
It must be ensured that organisers do not provide any gifts. Pharmaceutical companies may not assume any costs for this. The strict requirements of self-regulation apply to PC signatory companies (sections 15.2 and 15.3 PC*).

* PC [Pharma Code](#); ; PCC: [Pharma Cooperation Code](#); VITH: [Ordinance on Integrity and Transparency in the Therapeutic Products Sector](#), SAMS Guidelines: ["Collaboration between medical professionals and industry"](#)

8. Guidelines for contributions by participants must be met

The guidelines for the cost contribution (art. 6 para. 2 VITH & section 35.4 PC*) must at all times be observed. The plausibility of the stated cost contribution must be assessed.

9. Multi-sponsorship requirement

Pharmaceutical companies may not demand to be the exclusive supporter of an event (cf. section 15.7 PC*). In order to avoid undue dependence, support should be provided by several companies whose contributions should as far as possible be evenly balanced (section 4.3.5. SAMS Guidelines).

10. Duty to disclose budget and invoice

Section 4.3.5 of the [SAMS Guidelines](#)* stipulates a disclosure obligation at the request of pharmaceutical companies. In order to ensure that there is no excess compensation, pharmaceutical companies are advised to check the budget and invoice. Organisers should therefore automatically enclose the budget and invoice with the request for support sent to the pharmaceutical companies.

An event can be supported by a *donation* or a *sponsorship*. A donation is a purpose-tied payment for which no return compensation is agreed. The Code Secretariat does not consider the mere naming of the supporters in the programme as a pecuniary benefit, be it a one-off logo or preferably just a name mention (with the friendly support of ...). Rather, this should be seen as a transparency measure which is subject to the statutory provisions of art. 4 and 5 VITH*. As soon as further consideration is agreed (e.g. a consistent logo presence at an event or in event documents), it is considered to be a pecuniary benefit (sponsorship), which is governed by the provisions of art. 7 VITH*. This distinction is also crucial with regard to the PCC, as donations are disclosed separately from sponsorships.