



# Guidelines for Corporate Sponsoring of the International Society for Computational Biology

Adopted 9 October 2014

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY

## OVERVIEW OF PRINCIPLES

The principles of the International Society for Computational Biology to guide corporate sponsoring have been organized into the following categories: General Principles that apply to most situations; Special Guidelines that deal with specific issues and concerns; Organizational Review that outlines processes as well as the roles and responsibilities of specific bodies and officers of the society. These guidelines should be reviewed over time to assure their continued relevance to the policies and operations of ISCB and to our scientific environment.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ISCB vision and values statement provides guidance for third-party sponsoring. Sponsor relations that are not motivated by the society's mission provide a risk to ISCB's ability to provide representation and leadership for the profession.

### 1. ISCB's vision and values must drive the proposed activity.

ISCB's vision and values ultimately must determine whether a proposed sponsor relationship is appropriate for ISCB. ISCB should avoid relationships with organizations or industries whose principles, policies or actions obviously conflict with the ISCB's vision and values, as documented in ISCB's relevant statements (<http://www.iscb.org/iscb-mission-vision-values>). For example, relationships with producers of products that harm the public health (e.g., tobacco) are not appropriate for ISCB. Also ISCB stands for respectful handling of organisms and human specimens.

### 2. The relationship must preserve or promote trust in ISCB and in the professional computational biology community.

To be effective, professionalism requires the public's trust. Corporate relationships that could undermine the public's trust in ISCB or the related profession are not acceptable. For example, no relationship should raise questions about the scientific content of ISCB's conferences, ISCB's advocacy on issues pertaining to computational biology or the truthfulness of its public statements.

### 3. The relationship must maintain ISCB's objectivity with respect to issues in computational biology.

ISCB accepts funds or royalties from external organizations only if acceptance does not pose a conflict of interest and in no way impacts the objectivity of the society, its members, activities, programs or employees. For example, relationships requiring exclusivity with manufacturers of information-technology, biotechnology, or health-related products marketed to the public could impair ISCB's objectivity. The ISCB's objectivity with respect to scientific issues relevant to the theme of the society issues should not be biased by external relationships.

## **SPECIAL GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines address a number of special situations regarding external funding.

### **1. Relationships must not permit or encourage undue influence by the corporate partner on ISCB.**

ISCB encourages corporate relationships that help the society understand the industrial sector and its goals and interest. As such, we encourage membership of corporate representatives on advisory committees, etc., is desired (*see ISCB Industry Advisory Council Charter*). However, an ISCB corporate relationship must not permit undue influence by the corporate partner on ISCB policies, priorities, and actions.

### **2. Participation in a sponsorship program does not imply ISCB's endorsement of an entity or its policies.**

Participation in sponsorship of an ISCB program does not imply ISCB's approval of that corporation's general policies, nor does it imply that ISCB will exert any influence to advance the corporation's interests outside the substance of the arrangement itself. ISCB's name and logo should not be used in a manner that would express or imply an ISCB endorsement of the corporation or its policies.

### **3. ISCB may accept unrestricted funds from corporate sponsors and use them as it sees fit.**

ISCB will not accept funds from corporate sponsors earmarked for core governance, its public affairs and policies activities, or its advocacy agenda. However, ISCB is free to use any contributed unrestricted corporate funds it receives to defray the costs of these activities on a temporary basis.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW**

**Reviewing of proposals:** Every proposal for an external sponsor relationship is screened by the ISCB staff. It is the authority and the responsibility of the ISCB staff to conservatively identify proposals that might conflict with the guidelines. Those proposals are given to review by the appropriate committee (hereinafter Committee).

**Decision on proposals:** The staff decides on proposals that are not given to the Committee. For any other proposal, the Committee prepares a suggestion for a decision on the proposal which it hands over to the Executive Committee for discussion subsequent handing over to the Board of Directors for discussion and decision.

**Reporting of affiliations:** All ISCB corporate arrangements will be summarized annually as part of the material for the annual in-person meeting of the Board of Directors and communicated to the ISCB membership at the Open Business Meeting of ISMB.

It is important for ISCB to have an orderly reporting process to the ISCB membership. This presentation will take place at the annual Open Business Meeting.