

Definition

In recognition of the commercial and other benefits that can flow from sponsorship projects, it is SPCB policy that sponsorship of its activities should be encouraged where appropriate and that the relevant level of [Purchasing Authority](#) is required to take forward a project.

For the purposes of this policy, sponsorship is defined as “a business relationship of mutual benefit involving the payment of a fee or payment in kind (e.g. resources or services) by a third party sponsor in return for an association with the Scottish Parliament and other rights which have been agreed between the parties. The arrangement can be for individual projects or series of projects, on a short term or long term basis”.

European obligations

SPCB obligations under the EU Treaty’s principles of equal treatment, transparency and mutual recognition apply to sponsorship. The SPCB will seek to work with the private, public and voluntary sectors and offer sponsorship opportunities in an equitable manner. If the sponsorship arrangement results in the provision of goods or services (rather than general funding) then EU procurement rules apply.

General Principles – Appropriateness

- sponsorship should be used to enhance and extend SPCB activities, and add to (rather than replace) core funding
- the SPCB should always retain ownership of its activities - obtaining the support of sponsors must be secondary to achieving the SPCB’s aims
- any sponsorship should add to, and not detract from, the value of the activity in question
- sponsorship arrangements must not harm the reputation of the Parliament or undermine the aspirations of the Parliament as set out in the Strategic Plan – whether in relation to the sponsor or any associated product
- to avoid any perception of individuals being placed under an obligation to the sponsor, sponsorship received must be confined to support for specific events, projects or activities – it must not be of the Parliament (as an organisation), MSPs or SPCB staff. Care should be taken to ensure that the SPCB retains control over any activity conducted on a “partnership” basis
- acceptance of sponsorship should be tested against the general principle that it does not, and does not appear to, place the SPCB under an obligation to the sponsor that goes beyond any agreements relating to the activity or event
- sponsorship must not influence or appear to influence goals, policy development, strategic direction or the integrity of the Parliament or the SPCB
- sponsorship opportunities must not be sought or accepted where there is the potential for conflict of interest, e.g. where the body concerned is involved in commercial negotiations with the SPCB, or is involved in a Private Bill going through Parliament (either as a promoter or objector) or where there is an actual conflict of interest of any kind.

General Principles – Benefits to the sponsor

- sponsorship should be sought in an open and even-handed manner, with opportunities being offered as widely as possible over time
- any benefits offered to sponsors must be no greater than is proper and proportionate - it must be made clear to potential sponsors from the outset that they will not receive any benefits beyond those specified in the written agreement, and that they will not be sympathetically regarded for other purposes, such as special access to the legislative process, to MSPs or to future SPCB procurement or sponsorship opportunities
- sponsorship must not imply that the Parliament endorses particular products, brands or services which means tight controls on copyright, use of logo etc.
- sponsors will not be permitted to use the Scottish Parliament name or logo (or any other names and/or logos of specific events the SPCB retain copyright for) without the prior approval of the SPCB
- unless agreed at the outset as being appropriate, there should be no overt commercial advantage to the sponsor in terms of the direct sale of its goods/services as a result of its association with the SPCB.

Unsolicited offers of sponsorship

It is SPCB policy that, unless there is a genuine requirement for sponsorship, unsolicited offers should be politely declined.

Unsolicited offers over £5,000 in value should not be accepted without the prior involvement and agreement of Procurement Services.

Unsolicited offers below £5,000 may be accepted without referral to Procurement Services provided that the guidance provided in the General Principles above are satisfied.

Review of the sponsorship process

It is SPCB policy that a project review must be carried out at the conclusion of all projects in excess of £5,000. The review should be undertaken within 48 days of completion of the sponsorship agreement or event. The review should be commensurate with the value, complexity and profile of the sponsorship agreement.