



Third Party Engagement Policy

1 Introduction

The Third Party Engagement Policy helps Natural History Museum (NHM) staff decide with whom the Museum will contract, from whom we accept money or other benefits, and with whom we collaborate.

It helps external audiences understand how we reach decisions on who to work with.

2 Policy

- 2.1 The NHM's **mission** is to maintain and develop its collections and use them to promote the discovery, understanding, responsible use and enjoyment of the natural world.
- 2.2 The NHM's aim is to be seen as a voice of authority on the natural world.
- 2.3 The NHM's vision is to advance our knowledge of the natural world, inspiring better care of our planet.
- 2.4 The NHM works with a range of organisations and individuals across a broad spectrum of activities. Our partners bring intellectual, resource and social capability to the relationship, enabling us to achieve our main objectives:
 - a) To develop knowledge on the natural world
 - b) To inspire a sustained engagement with the natural world
 - c) To manage our resources and invest in our infrastructure
- 2.5 The NHM will work with any individual or organisation if:
 - a) The relationship would enable the Museum to further its mission, directly or indirectly including by providing additional resources for the Museum or its activities;
 - b) The relationship would not be contrary to the Ethics Policy which sets out the range of principles applicable to the Museum's professional and public functions.
 - c) The relationship would not compromise the Museum's reputation and, in appropriate cases, the relationship would enhance it.
 - d) The relationship would produce sufficient benefit for the Museum within its agreed strategic objectives, and without detriment to the wider public interest. This benefit must outweigh any risk of disadvantage for the Museum through association with the third party.

3 Scope

- 3.1 Subject to the exceptions below, this policy applies to all partnerships, associations, sponsorships, significant donations and other contractual relationships that the Museum holds from time to time, for example:
- a) Donations including in-kind (such as time, equipment, facilities, people)
 - b) Commercial and similar transactions including:
 - i. Transactional and one-off: e.g. venue hire,
 - ii. Transactional and longer term: e.g. procurement of goods or services; provision of NHM consultancy services
 - iii. Longer term, based on mutual benefit: e.g. corporate memberships, scientific collaborations, corporate sponsorship, licensing
- 3.2 It applies to relationships with individuals, companies, trusts, and private foundations but not to statutory bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund or the UK government-funded Research Councils UK (RCUK).
- 3.3 It does not apply to any relationships held by the Museum for the purposes of scientific research and which are funded by RCUK.
- 3.4 It does not apply to any collections management activity, including acquisitions, disposals borrowed or loaned items for exhibition or research or destructive analysis. These activities are governed by their own policies and procedures.

4 Procedure

- 4.1 The overriding aim is to ensure that relevant decisions are made by the department principally responsible for the relationship or proposed relationship, with a duty upon the Departmental Heads to involve more senior management when necessary¹. The NHM may, however, prescribe procedures for specific relationships²,
- 4.2 Before the relationship becomes formalised or commitments entered into by the Museum, the relationship manager³ will carry out brief research using public sources and raise any areas of concern with their Head of Department, where they are not the same person.

¹General guidance on the responsibilities of Heads of Department with regard to risks is set out in the Museum's "Guide to Effective Risk Management" available on the intranet resources page.

²The Guiding Principles and Procedure for Corporate Engagement set out the procedure for taking decisions to accept or refuse donations, sponsorship or other support valued at greater than £50,000 from companies. It is currently under review and will expand its scope to include major individual donors as well as corporate sponsors. Its name will therefore change to Donor Engagement Policy and Procedure.

³ Within the Corporate Services Group, the relationship manager will be the person who has authority to negotiate terms with the third party. Similarly, within the Public Engagement Group the relationship manager will be the person who has authority to negotiate terms with the third party. Within the Science Group, the relationship manager will be either the Sector Leader (for consultancy) the Principal Investigator (PI) (for research and collections), the Head of Facilities or the Head of Library and Information Systems,

- 4.3 The relationship manager should in the first instance seek appropriate assurance that the third party is legitimate, can meet its financial commitments and that entering into the relationship would not conflict with the NHM's Ethics Policy.
- 4.4 Certain potential relationships will raise no issues of significant concern in which case that should be recorded.
- 4.5 Where a potential concern is identified the NHM will undertake a risk assessment with a view to ensuring that the risk and cost to the Museum does not outweigh the potential benefit. The Museum will normally undertake such an exercise using a confidential risk assessment register.
- 4.6 The Museum may take any relevant factor into account including the consequences for the Museum of entering into the relationship. These may include the following:
- a) Is the undertaking in question or the proposed relationship likely to raise concerns among a significant number of people?
 - b) Is the relationship likely to attract unfavourable media coverage?
 - c) Is the relationship likely to engender opposition/protest from the general public or audiences aligned to the Museum (e.g. NHM Members)?
 - d) Is the relationship likely to engender opposition/protest and if so of what nature?
 - e) Is the existence of - or potential comment on - the relationship likely to be viewed in negative or positive terms by government stakeholders?
 - f) Is the existence of - or potential comment on - the relationship likely to be viewed in negative terms by non-governmental funders/potential funders of the Museum?
 - g) Is the existence of - or potential comment on - the relationship likely to be injurious to the Museum's standing within the cultural or scientific sector?
 - h) Is the existence of - or potential comment on - the relationship likely to damage the Museum's reputation with the general public, or their willingness to visit the Museum?
 - i) Is the financial benefit of the relationship likely to be outweighed by any additional costs of managing the partnership (such as extra security personnel and management time).
 - j) What is the evidence that the third party will be able to meet its obligations to the Museum?
 - k) Is the existence of the relationship likely to cause on-site demonstrations or any other disruption to our normal service or any disruption or discomfort to our staff and/or visitors?
 - l) Is there a risk that the outputs of the relationship could be used or suppressed in order to substantiate false or misleading claims or to pursue illegal activities?
- 4.7 The relationship manager should discuss any risks with their Head of Department. The Head of Department should consult, at the earliest opportunity, any of the following people for advice in order to analyse and manage the risk
- a) Head of Communications
 - b) Head of Media Relations
 - c) Head of Security
 - d) Special Advisers to the Director
 - e) Head of Prospect Research
- 4.7 The relationship manager and Head of Department should together agree a strategy for managing the risks, which may include escalation of the decision to proceed to the Group Director.

- 4.8 As a general guide, the decision to proceed rests with the Head of Department owning the relationship on condition that the Museum can satisfy the principles. Escalation to the next level of management should occur where:
- a) there is doubt over whether the principles can be satisfied; and/or
 - b) the risks have been identified and assessed as having an impact beyond the immediate business unit objectives, and/or
 - c) the risks have been identified as particularly serious.

5 Conditions

The Museum must reserve the right to withdraw from any relationship if we believe that,

- 5.1 as a result of the partner's actions subsequent to entering into the relationship, other stakeholders will withdraw their support;
- 5.2 that the partner's actions subsequent to entering into the relationship have resulted in a changed ethical position or balance of costs and benefits for the Museum; or
- 5.3 that new information on the partner's actions prior to entering the relationship have resulted in a changed ethical position or balance of costs and benefits for the Museum.

6 Review of existing relationships

A Head of Department shall review the relationships held by his or her department every three years or sooner if a) the relationship comes up for renewal, or b) any of the circumstances in section 5 arises.