

# Guidance on Sponsorship

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## Guidance on Sponsorship

Sponsorship and partnership marketing are ways in which British Rowing affiliated clubs and events can maximise the value of their assets to help deliver their objectives. When executed well, it can provide funding and additional resource, however, if executed badly it can damage the reputation of a club or event and the sport of rowing as a whole.

The following guidelines summarise the British Rowing Partnership Principles and are designed to supplement the Rules of Racing. If you require any further advice please contact British Rowing.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this guidance, the following definitions apply:

**Sponsorship** generally involves seeking external financial support in return for a set of benefits and entitlements for an activity, event or campaign that a club or event owns or controls. The sponsor will usually benefit from brand enhancement or alignment, advertising and distribution and employee engagement and business networking.

**Partnership marketing** is the development and delivery of a club's or event's messages via partnerships with private and public sector organisations, utilising one or more elements of the partner's range of marketing communications channels. For example, a publishing partner could advertise a club regatta in one of their publications at no cost. Partnership marketing does not usually involve payment of any fee to the partner, it is generally in-kind activity.

### Principles for sponsorship and partnership marketing relationships

The following principles apply to all sponsorship and partnership marketing relationships:

#### Reputation Management

The reputation of the club, event, British Rowing and/or the sport of rowing are paramount when deciding which bodies are suitable to enter a sponsorship or partnership marketing agreement with. If there is a reasonable risk that a relationship will have a negative effect on one or all of these then an agreement should not be made.

Any sponsorship or partnership marketing arrangements should:

- adhere to the highest standards of governance;
- not bring, or potentially bring, the club, event, British Rowing and/or sport of rowing into disrepute;
- not jeopardise the good reputation of the club or event; and,
- not give rise to doubts about the integrity or impartiality of British Rowing.

All those involved in securing the agreement should make sure they act with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality when entering into an agreement.

## **Independence**

The club or event should retain control and responsibility in relation to its policies and practices. Sponsorship and partnership marketing arrangements must not give the impression that the commercial relationship has affected policy decisions e.g. crew selection.

## **Transparency**

The nature of any commercial relationship must be transparent and clear to all the club or event's stakeholders.

## **Bribery**

When entering agreements, due diligence must be carried out to ensure there is not a risk, or a possible public perception of bribery taking place.

## **Selecting a sponsor or partner**

In general, sponsorship and partnership marketing agreements:

- should be seen to add value;
- cannot be given by third party organisations which are involved in significant commercial negotiations with British Rowing or are regulated by it;
- should be sought in an open and even handed manner between organisations in a particular field, using the appropriate procurement methods to secure the contractual arrangements; and
- must not bring adverse publicity to the club or event.

Clear criteria should be developed against the appropriateness of a sponsor or partner that can be judged on a case by case basis. These might include:

- relevance of the sector for the specific messaging;
- its demographic relevance and synergy with the audience;
- its ethics (e.g. child labour);
- its financial record (is the organisation viable or currently under investigation for example by the Competition Commission, HMRC or Charity Commission); and
- its relationship with the club or event (e.g. is it involved in any significant commercial negotiations with us).

It is also prudent to monitor public opinion towards sponsors or partners on an ongoing basis.

When looking for sponsorship and marketing partnerships, it is important to ensure that the benefits for potential sponsors or partners are clearly defined. It is prudent to explore and understand the marketing objectives of a potential partner and to create a robust proposal that reflects these objectives. Benefits will depend on the details of a campaign or activity and might include:

- Brand enhancement and alignment
- Advertisement and distribution
- Employee engagement and business networking

### **Legal, decent, honest and truthful**

All advertising which occurs as part of the sponsorship or partnership arrangement must be legal, decent, honest and truthful. Advertising (for example, at an event a sponsor funds and expects to brand in return) should follow the regulations of the Advertising Standards Authority.

**To be legal**, advertising should comply with the laws, regulations or market practices of the UK, and other relevant countries if the product is to go overseas.

**To be decent**, advertising should not offend against good taste or decency. Advertising should avoid salacious or indecent themes and should not include any sexual innuendo or stereotyping which is likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Care should be taken to avoid causing offence on the grounds of race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Advertising should not promote smoking or exploit children. It should not play on fear unless it is clearly in the public interest to do so (e.g. a campaign on the health consequences of doping).

**To be honest**, advertising should not exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge or inexperience of consumers.

**To be truthful**, advertising must not make false claims or mislead consumers.

### **Prohibited Categories**

The following categories of organisations are not suitable for British Rowing Affiliated Clubs or Events to enter into sponsorship arrangements with:

#### **Pornography and Sexual Services (such as escort agencies)**

Receiving sponsors and partnership marketing from companies who sell pornography (such as R18 videos), sex change lines, sexually explicit publications and websites, sex toys and sexual services is not allowed.

#### **Tobacco and E-Cigarettes**

Sponsorship and partnership marketing agreements with tobacco and e-cigarette manufacturers and smoking accessory companies (such as lighters, rolling papers and pipes) are not allowed.

#### **Payday Lending**

Sponsorship and partnership marketing agreements with payday lending companies are not allowed.

### **Categories with Specific Rules**

The following categories of organisations require additional consideration before British Rowing Affiliated Clubs or Events enter into sponsorship agreements with them:

#### **Pharmaceutical and supplement companies**

Extra care would need to be taken when working with these types of companies given the nature of the products that they produce, which may be on the World Anti-Doping Code's Prohibited List. These companies should be reviewed on a case by case basis and, where relevant, following additional advice from British Rowing or UK Anti-Doping. It might, for

example, be acceptable to receive sponsorship from a sub-brand of a company, rather than the main company.

### **Consideration of Juniors**

Where children are the main stakeholder, there is an additional responsibility to ensure that any sponsorship or partnership with any particular company is appropriate for children. This would include companies such as adhesive and aerosol manufacturers; those which sell contraceptives and family planning products and services; firework manufacturers; gambling; and alcohol. Health and beauty product manufacturers may also be deemed inappropriate.

The Advertising Standards Agency publishes Advertising Codes which may be helpful in assessing the suitability of a particular partner. These codes are available at:

<https://www.asa.org.uk/codes-and-rulings/advertising-codes.html>