

European Respiratory Society (ERS) framework for collaboration and interaction with industry partners

The European Respiratory Society (ERS) is an international organisation that brings together physicians, healthcare professionals, scientists and other experts working in respiratory medicine. ERS is one of the leading medical organisations in the respiratory field, with a growing membership representing over 160 countries.

The mission of ERS is to alleviate suffering from respiratory disease and promote lung health through research, the sharing of knowledge and through medical and public education.

ERS is involved in promoting scientific research and providing access to high-quality educational resources. It also plays a key role in advocacy – raising awareness of lung disease amongst the public and politicians with the ultimate goal of improving patient outcomes.

The independence and integrity of ERS is highly valued as an important asset in the ‘respiratory community’; respiratory professionals can use ERS tools and materials and participate in ERS events with the knowledge that the content is current, balanced and of the highest quality.

ERS also acknowledges the independent relationships that exist between healthcare professionals and the private sector, recognising the scientific/clinical necessity they represent in the development of new diagnostics and therapies. Collaborations with industry, who are also stakeholders in the respiratory field, are clearly of a high value. Advances in respiratory medicine would not be possible without the collaborations between academia, healthcare professionals, patients and industry.

The relationship of the society with its industry partners (where industry relates to any company manufacturing or supplying a product or service to the respiratory healthcare sector) is transparent. The collaborations and agreements undertaken with industry partners are an essential aspect of the operation of the society and it is therefore important that they:

- offer equal opportunities to all industry partners
- Are not exclusive to any one partner
- operate within a clear set of parameters that protect the interests of all stakeholders and ensures that ERS remains an unbiased beacon for respiratory health/disease
- are flexible and make allowances for differing levels of interaction with partners dependent on the nature and requirement of the collaboration
- allow for ERS educational materials to remain independent and balanced
- have clear goals and reported outcomes
- respect the laws and regulations of the country in which the collaboration or agreement is taking place

This document sets out the guidelines for interaction between ERS and industry partners.

Opportunities for industry partners to collaborate with ERS

Science

Scientific collaborations are categorised as those activities led by ERS or its members (with involvement of ERS) that collect, share and maintain research data in support of the advancement of respiratory medicine.

ERS accepts financial support from industry partners in the form of sponsorship and scientific grants to help realise these initiatives. For all initiatives, the scientific committee and objectives will be determined by ERS. Access to data and reporting clauses agreed with industry partners will be clearly outlined in all agreements.

Education

Educational collaborations are those activities lead by ERS that share practical and theoretical knowledge and experience that are eligible for continuous medical education (CME) accreditation and are aimed at improving a healthcare professional's medical skills and patient outcomes.

ERS accepts support from industry partners in the form of sponsorship and medical grants to help realise these initiatives. In all aspects, the content and objectives of the educational programme will be developed solely by ERS.

ERS also accepts support in the form of equipment and devices to support practical training and demonstrations. In all cases where there is more than one product available for treatment and diagnosis of a respiratory condition, ERS will approach multiple companies for such support. Devices and equipment will be returned to the provider following their use, as appropriate.

Advocacy

The advocacy interests of the society are exclusively supported by ERS as it is the wish of the society that our calls to government are those of ERS members and officers only.

The European Lung Foundation (ELF) is also fully funded by ERS, however, donations are accepted on the provision that they are of an unrestricted nature. It is of paramount importance that ELF remains a completely neutral platform for patients and that its activities are not directed by sources of funding.

Provision of marketing services

Services provided to industry partners that directly relate to their commercial interests are considered promotional activities. Such activities include the purchase of exhibition space, industry organised symposia, advertising, and sponsorship of items and features at the ERS International Congress. Agreements in this field are commercial agreements, and the content, design and purpose of these activities are governed by the industry partner. Although equal opportunity will be given to all contributors from the private sector, agreements are entered into with individual companies for their own promotional benefit and this is not considered a *partnership* with an individual commercial organisation.

If you have any further queries on this subject, please contact: Corporate_Relations@ersnet.org