

# Friends of the Earth

## Local Group Guidelines for Positive Relationships with Companies

### **BEFORE ACTING ON THESE GUIDELINES:**

**YOU MUST FIRST CONTACT YOUR NETWORK DEVELOPER TO DISCUSS ANY PROPOSED RELATIONSHIP, TRANSACTION OR DONATION FROM OR WITH A COMPANY.**

You can find their details at [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/staff\\_support.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/staff_support.html)

### 1. Introduction

Friends of the Earth (FOE) has been campaigning to change corporate behaviour since it was formed 30 years ago. Largely this has involved campaigning against corporate policies and practices that damage or threaten our environment and quality of life. However FOE believes that it needs to go further than simply highlighting the unsustainable practices of corporations; we need to transform the way business works and thinks. This requires us to be both positive as well as negative in our engagement with the commercial sector.

A 'positive company relationship' is *any* relationship that any part of FOE may have with any type of commercial enterprise; such a relationship may involve funding, the use of FOE's logo or other forms of endorsement.

These guidelines have been produced following extensive stakeholder consultations with FOE staff, Boards, local group members and financial supporters. They apply to FOE local groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and compliment the guidelines that exist for FOE nationally (copies of which are available on request from the Local Campaigns Department). FOE local groups are autonomous, other than the relationship that exists between licensee and licensor in the Local Groups Licence. This licence legally outlines the use of the FOE name and logo. Other than observing the terms of name and logo usage, FOE Local Groups are free to raise funds and form relationships as they wish. This document aims to preserve FOE's reputation both locally and nationally whilst guiding groups towards forming positive relationships with companies, where they wish to do so.

**FOE recommends that a cautious approach to any positive relationships with companies should be adopted.** FOE nationally follows an almost identical set of Corporate Guidelines. It is not intended that these will lead FOE to generate huge sums of money for the organisation. Local groups and individual supporters are and will remain the lifeblood of FOE and corporate partnerships with ethical companies will only ever make up a tiny proportion of FOE income.

### 2. All Friends of the Earth's positive relationships with companies should adhere to the following principles and processes:

- a) FOE's reputation for independence and integrity, perceived and real, must be maintained at all times.
- b) FOE should only enter into such relationships in either of two circumstances: i) where clear campaigning objectives can be achieved, and ii) where no adverse campaigning implications are involved. Specifically this means that local groups (and any other part of FOE) may not enter into any type of relationship with a company against which FOE is currently campaigning, anywhere in the world.
- c) In as far as possible, a range of checks should be made to judge a company's environmental performance and commitment to the environment. The type (Step 2 or Step 3, outlined below) and number of checks will depend on the depth of the proposed relationship - the sum of money involved, the use of FOE's name, the size of the company and the financial benefit. For instance, a business that operates

exclusively within the territory of one local group and whose activities have no adverse effect on FOE's campaigning wishes to give that group a sum of £1000. This donation should be appropriate and after following Step 2 the local group may accept the money. However, where a business operates in a number of locations, or where its activities may possibly have an adverse effect on FOE's campaigning, or where funding is in excess of £1000 the Local Group should follow more a rigorous checking process and follow guidance in Step 3.

No set of guidelines can cover every single relationship, so a case by case approach should be followed where necessary. The issue of corporate relationships is a sensitive one within FOE and consequently the Activism Team receives many queries from local groups seeking advice on entering into relationships. Very often the public and media make no distinction between FOE national and local groups so it seems sensible that we act consistently.

### **3. Step by Step Guidance on making your decision**

Steps 2 and 3 below suggest a practical guide on how to proceed with any corporate relationship. Because corporate relationships can be such a contentious issue, we encourage groups to first consider:

**Step 1** - funding and support from non-corporate sources.

**and then**

**Step 2** (gives guidance on funds that are relatively small, locally sourced and are from companies whose activities are very unlikely to have an adverse effect on FOE's campaigning).

**or**

**Step 3** (gives guidance on funds that exceed £1000, and /or come from a company operating in more than one locality and/or you suspect that their activities may have an adverse effect on FOE's campaigning).

**And don't forget to contact your Network Developer before you begin this process and at each stage so that they are able to help you follow the guidelines correctly.**

### **Step 1 – Finding Non Corporate Money**

*All Friends of the Earth Local Groups are licenced to FOE Limited, a company, and will therefore not be eligible for many funds given out by charities and other organisations. A little research at the start into the donor's criteria for giving will save you a lot of time.*

- Campaigning can be tricky to raise money for. However, fundraising to produce information materials, educational work and money to carry out research is easier.
- Local Volunteer Bureaux, Councils for Voluntary Service, Local Authority Community Grants Officers and Local Agenda 21 Officers should all be able to advise you on locally available sources of money. Your nearest branch of British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Groundwork or Wildlife Trust may give useful pointers.
- Examples of national funders who may give to FOE local groups include the Countryside Commission, Energy Saving Trust, The Community Fund (formerly the National Lottery), Millennium Awards and Environment Wales.
- For further info there are useful funding websites: [www.funderfinder.com](http://www.funderfinder.com) (provides fundraising advice), [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org) (advice and info), [www.charitychoice.co.uk](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk) (lists environmentally related charities that may be worth investigating), [www.fundraising.org.uk](http://www.fundraising.org.uk) (subscribe to the online UK Fundraising Newsletter)
- Raise the funds yourself through events or doing work, e.g. Birmingham FOE got paid £1,000 by the Local Authority to deliver flyers on recycling to residents. You might sell advertising space in your newsletter, organise raffles and sell merchandise (e.g. see our Local Groups Merchandise at [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/trading.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/trading.html) or make the most of your Local Group discount in the Friends of the Earth Shop – [www.foe.co.uk/shop](http://www.foe.co.uk/shop)).

- Local Group Support Fund: every licenced FOE group is entitled to apply for money from this fund. It is meant as a one off (i.e. one grant only for any particular purpose) and can be applied for at any time – see [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/fundraising.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/fundraising.html)).
- Identify your group as wishing to be a recipient of fundraising events e.g., Rag Weeks, marathons etc.
- Try to cultivate potential individual donors by involving them in your days of action and campaigns. Also, keep them informed of your successes.
- Run a targeted recruitment campaign to find a member with fundraising experience and skills. Business In The Community target professionals to share their skills with not for profit organisations. The training organisation ‘Working for a Charity’ ([www.wfac.org.uk](http://www.wfac.org.uk)) place students wanting relevant skills on placement into the voluntary sector. REACH provides professionals and executives to community groups who need them. Send a member on one of the many free or discounted one day fundraising courses run by Volunteer Bureaux and Councils for Voluntary Service.
- Tie-in fundraising events with national days: World Oceans Day, Environment Week, Car Free Day.
- Optimise public giving and membership by ensuring a high public profile after local successes and during big campaigns.
- Make sure your group has a standing order form for members and supporters.

## Step 2 – ‘Safer’ Corporate Relationships

*If you are looking for or thinking of accepting corporate money that:*

1. **Is less than £1000 and/or**
2. **Is from a company operating in a single locality and/or**
3. **You are fairly confident that the company’s activities are *unlikely* to have adverse effects on FOE’s campaigning.....**

...then funds sought under these categories are *less* likely to have adverse effects for FOE’s campaign aims and therefore require less thorough checking than we recommend in **Step 3** below (e.g.a health food shop, cycle shop, bookshop, organics seller or printer are most unlikely to have an adverse effect on our campaigning; **but** a timber merchant, supermarket or motor trader selling electric vehicles may have an adverse effect that should be taken into consideration). Careful judgement and caution should be practiced at all times and we recommend that you go through as many of the Step 3 checks as you feel necessary.

**If you are not sure whether your proposal falls under Step 2 or Step 3, please chat to your Network Developer to get their advice and if in doubt, please assume that the potential relationship / transaction / donation falls under Step 3.**

*Once you have done some checks:*

It is recognised that some judgement is required when looking at campaigning impacts in particular. Seek advice along the way from your Network Developer who will be happy to help and please let them know if you decide to go ahead with the relationship.

*Everything seems ok?*

- ***Define the relationship clearly***  
If you do go ahead you should be very clear of the ‘deal’ that you are entering into with the company. Completing the ‘Company Agreement Form’ at the end of this document will help you do this. **Please send a copy of this form to your Network Developer for their records.**
- ***Letting others use FOE’s logo?***  
If FOE’s logo or name are to be used you **must** first contact your Network Developer to get permission for this. Under the terms of the Local Groups Trade Mark Licence Agreement, you must seek permission to let others use FOE’s name and/or logo.
- ***Sharing your successes and failures***  
Share your good fortune with other local groups by telling your story on your local group website or by asking your Network Developer about writing a web news story or Change your world article.

## Step 3 – ‘Riskier’ Corporate Relations

*If you are looking for or thinking of accepting corporate money that:*

1. Exceeds £1000 and/or
2. Comes from a company operating in more than one locality and/or
3. You are concerned that their activities may have adverse effect on FOE’s campaigning

*We strongly recommend you carry out most or all of the following checks:*

- Check with your Network Developer to see if the company has already given to another local group.
- Request their Annual Report & Accounts to see what they say about themselves and who their partners/parent company/subsidiary companies may be. Remember that a company’s policies and interests may change rapidly so ensure the information you collate is up to date.
- Ask other local charities, Non-Governmental Organisations, environmental groups.
- Make use of the numerous websites that provide information on the ethical/social responsibility and status of companies: e.g.
  - [www.corporatewatch.org](http://www.corporatewatch.org) is very useful. They will even carry out searches on individual companies for you for free, or for an amount that you find affordable.
  - [www.ftse4good.com](http://www.ftse4good.com)
  - [www.ethicalconsumer.org/boycotts/boycotts\\_list.htm](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/boycotts/boycotts_list.htm) and Ethical Consumer Magazine is also available as a good source of info
  - [www.corporateinformation.com](http://www.corporateinformation.com) generates useful links to check companies
- Friends of the Earth’s website [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk) has corporate pages that focus on some of the companies being directly campaigned against currently but we’d advise you to also check with us to see whether we are (or have been) campaigning against the particular company.

*Once you have done some checks:*

Contact your Network Developer for added information. They will then, in all likelihood, refer the query on to the relevant campaign team (regarding current FOE policies and campaign strategies) or the communications team (regarding the usage of FOE’s logo). A process of investigation will then take place and the outcomes of this will be fed back to the group. FOE does not have the resources to conduct intensive screening of each potential relationship and so this investigation is likely to take the form of exploring existing knowledge about the company, for example potential campaigning conflicts with other local groups. As a result, we are likely to treat potential relationships with transnational companies with great caution. Should it transpire that the company you are approaching has an adverse effect on FOE’s campaigning, then these guidelines would preclude that relationship from going ahead

*Everything seems ok?*

Once it is agreed that a partnership with the company will have no negative effects on FOE’s campaigns or bring FOE into disrepute you may proceed, provided that you make sure you:

- **Define the relationship clearly**  
If you do go ahead you should be very clear of the ‘deal’ that you are entering into with the company. Completing the ‘Company Agreement Form’ at the end of this document will help you do this. **Please send a copy of this form to your Network Developer for their records.**
- **Letting others use FOE’s logo?**  
If FOE’s logo or name are to be used you *must* first contact your Network Developer to get permission for this. Under the terms of the Local Groups Trade Mark Licence Agreement, you must seek permission to let others use FOE’s name and/or logo.
- **Sharing your successes and failures**
- Share your good fortune with other local groups by telling your story on your local group website or by asking your Network Developer about writing a web news story or Change your world article.

### **If a relationship (under Step 2 or Step 3) proceeds:**

- a) The local group's name and/or the local group's logo may only be used in association with a company, its products or services, with express written permission from central Friends of the Earth. Any agreement will detail usage of the name and logo and other information about the relationship. The reason for this clause is that FOE needs to be *extremely* careful if it chooses to endorse any company, product or service to the public. Judgement is called for in giving this permission: for instance, if a cycle shop of good repute wished to say that it was supported by a local group then that is not likely to be a problem, however if a motor trader selling electric cars wished to say this then further consideration would be needed.
- b) FOE should not receive payment purely for endorsing a product or service through the application of its logo or association of its name.
- c) The group must set out the terms of the relationship by completing the standard 'Company Agreement Form'. For your information, all national relationships necessitate a written contract or heads of agreement containing 'get-out' and termination clauses, the ability to criticise the partner's performance if campaign reasons arise, no unreasonable conditions on FOE and access to relevant environmental and financial information
- d) In the event that there is a disagreement between the local group and national FOE regarding whether the local group should enter into a specific corporate relationship, then the Chair of the Board's Engagement Committee and the Director of Fundraising, Communications and Activism will seek to arbitrate and resolve the situation to the satisfaction of all parties. Should there still be disagreement then the matter will be handed over to a sub-group of Limited Board members consisting of the Chair, Chair of Finance Committee and a locally-elected member. The decision of this Board sub-group will be final and binding on all parties.

### **Given the above principles and processes, Friends of the Earth will:**

- a) work with companies to find positive solutions to environmental problems;
- b) publicly endorse the products and/or services of companies whose environmental performance and commitment to the environment support our campaign aims, including the usage of FOE's logo;
- c) benefit financially from partnerships with companies whose environmental performance and commitment to the environment support our campaign aims;
- d) benefit financially from companies whose activities have no adverse effect on FOE's campaigns.

## Friends of the Earth Local Group Company Agreement Form

This form should be completed when your local group have made a decision to enter into a relationship with a company. It will help both parties define who will be responsible for delivery, what has been agreed and what each party hope to gain from the relationship. A relationship with a company should only be entered into after the local group has followed the checking processes outlined in the Local Groups Guidelines For Positive Relationships with Companies.

1. This agreement is made between \_\_\_\_\_ Friends of the Earth and \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement is specific to the above mentioned parties and cannot be assigned or transferred to another party without prior consent from the FOE local group

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Briefly describe below the nature of the proposed relationship:

To provide more detail, please specify who will do what and list agreed actions and timescales:

***FOE Local Group:***

***Company:***

3. Expected Outcomes - please outline below what both parties hope to achieve from the relationship:

***FOE Local Group:***

***Company:***

4. Termination of Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_ Friends of the Earth has the right to withdraw from the relationship outlined above should they feel that this agreement has been breached. Notice of termination will be given in writing and will take effect immediately.