



International Confederation of Dietetic Associations

ICDA GUIDE FOR COLLABORATIONS WITH SPONSORSHIPS

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Version 2: Updated by Gallegos, D. Smith, MA, Hall, K. (2023)

Ratified by the ICDA Board: April 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Confederation of Dietetic Associations (ICDA) is a non-profit, non-government organisation which constantly maintains its independence and integrity. This is why the ICDA guidelines for sponsorship and collaboration with the broader food, nutrition and health companies has the objective of increasing the ICDA's potential through funds and/or services for companies and other entities while maintaining its integrity and independence, as well as the professional standing of its members.

This guide is for ICDA as it continues to operate in an increasingly complex and changing international food and nutrition space where funding by and collaborations with entities need to be considered using a risk management framework. National Dietetic Associations may have their own sponsorship and collaboration guidelines that reflect the mission, values and goals of that association within their country context. These guidelines are not designed to replace these but rather seek to:

- Provide additional best-practice international guidance that could be used by NDAs to further risk manage sponsorship and collaborations;
- Provide a model for an approach for NDAs who currently do not have guidelines.

We encourage NDAs to use these in conjunction with their own country-specific guidelines when hosting the International Congress of Nutrition and Dietetics. They can also be used to assist with developing an NDA specific approach. ICDA will use these when approached by entities for collaboration or in seeking sponsorship for activities.

A wide range of options exist for companies and other entities to collaborate with the ICDA (and NDAs). This type of collaboration can support both the ICDA's objectives as well as those of the collaborating entity. ICDA understands that forming new partnerships is a positive step towards promoting its objectives and aspirations.

For the above reasons, the ICDA will not sign sponsorship and/or collaboration agreements with organisations, entities or companies that have objectives, marketing strategies or practices that contradict, hinder or obstruct the ICDA's mission or values, or the ethics of the profession.

This document provides guidance around entities "that contradict, hinder or obstruct the ICDA's mission or values, or the ethics of the profession". These guidelines have been prepared with reference to the WHO Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Conflicts of Interest for Nutrition Programmes at Country Level (<https://www.who.int/nutrition/consultation-doi/comments/en/>)

As a peak body for dietetic associations across the globe any decisions regarding collaborations and sponsorships need to uphold the shared values and goals of these associations. To this end this means that collaborations and sponsorships need to support the following ethos:

“the right of all to enjoy **healthy, nutritious and sustainable foods** and diets that support the health and wellbeing of individuals, the population across the lifecycle” and the planet.

The three potential impacts for ICDA are impact on:

- Reputation
- Independence
- Integrity

Potential risks include those situations where financial, in-kind or other considerations compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of ICDA. This would include reputational risk to the ICDA as well as the potential for inappropriate influence over the activities of ICDA.

The risk/benefit assessment will include consideration of:

- The characteristics of the entity and the affiliations/relationships of the external entity
- The type of engagement that might be entered and the potential benefits and risks to the reputation of ICDA and the profession more broadly
- The extent to which the collaboration/partnership is necessary to reach the desired goals
- Scientific validity and professional appropriateness
- Ethical soundness and sustainability issues
- Compatibility of organisational and brand issues

Risk Management Strategies

For engagements with ICDA will ensure the following. At the NDA level the same or similar risk management strategies could be undertaken.

- Publish a list of all funding sources for ICDA projects and initiatives on its website and in annual reports.
- Publish a list of all organizations providing in kind support to ICDA projects and initiatives.
- Where practical, publish results of details of decisions made by the ICDA regarding external partnerships and case studies of risk/benefit assessment.

- Agreements with external stakeholders that ensure the independence of the research with respect to design, implementation, analysis and dissemination.
- Will respect and uphold decisions not to accept financial contributions for a particular engagement.
- Ensure full disclosure and transparency of funding arrangements and potential conflicts of interest as part of publications, presentations and events.

2. COLLABORATION TYPES

Partnership is defined as:

Joint participation in an activity, project or event, where the organisation, entity, company or foundation is involved in direct collaboration with the ICDA, which furthermore provides its support.

While the ICDA recognises that partnerships are fundamental for advancing the ICDA's objectives, any entity that partners with the ICDA must not compromise the independence of the ICDA's decision-making processes in any way. The independence and formulation of internal policies, policy judgement and the ICDA's annual activities must not be influenced by the economic support of the partnership entity.

The partnership can include financial considerations derived from ICDA's provision of services or from the use of the mention "With the collaboration of the ICDA".

Sponsorship is defined as:

The ICDA will accept financial considerations, services and/or products from companies or other entities for the organisation of conferences, workshops or social events that the ICDA organises.

The ICDA will only sign sponsorship agreements with entities that have points of view and/or practices that do not contradict the ICDA's mission or values. The ICDA will only accept contributions that do not compromise its fundamental principles and do not limit its capacity to address any internal matter freely.

Granting use of the logo (ICDA endorsement):

The food or pharmaceutical industries, or other public or private institutions of interest may apply to use the ICDA logo in their communication campaigns, advertising or product packaging in exchange for financial support.

Granting use of the logo must differentiate whether the campaign or communication action is aimed at a healthcare professional or at the general public. In the case of campaign or communication action being aimed at a healthcare professional, the collaboration will be governed within the contents of this document.

If the campaign or communications action is aimed at the general public, a governing master document will be used to describe the use of the logo.

Risks associated with potential opportunities for collaborations and partnerships with external entities can be classified based on 1. the extent of the engagement and 2. their relationship to the core values of ICDA (Table 1).

Table 1: Risk level by extent of engagement

Level	Extent of Engagement
High Risk	Engagements involving funding for initiatives, or substantial in-kind contributions, endorsement of brands or products, participation of organisation members in steering committees or governance structures, provision of data and/or resources. This would cover partnerships and endorsements.
Medium Risk	Funding for attendance at meetings, honoraria or gifts, funding of events associated with ICDA, representation at ICDA conferences (funding/hosting a sponsored session, exhibiting at a booth). This would cover sponsorships.
Low Risk	Minor engagements – formal dialogue with a representative of the organisation, joint submissions, joint positions on committees
Minimal Risk	Other activities with external parties such as attending meetings hosted by the organisation

3. DIRECTIVES FOR COLLABORATION WITH ENTITIES

1. The ICDA has the responsibility of maintaining its professional independence and the integrity of its members, and will ensure that it maintains these in any relationship with any entity. Any collaboration with the ICDA must be capable of demonstrating that the sponsorship does not exercise any influence on ICDA's own policies and practices. A risk assessment should be undertaken for each collaboration or engagement.
2. Collaboration must only be sought with entities that have a philosophy or code of beliefs (ethics) that is acceptable to the ICDA.
3. Private sponsorship can only take the form of financial support for specific projects or activities.
4. Every application made by an entity to use the ICDA's name and/or logo must be submitted in writing to the ICDA Secretary.
5. The ICDA's name and logo must not be used by any entity without the express written permission of the ICDA.
6. There must be a clear separation between the ICDA's message and that of the entity, if is applicable.
7. The ICDA reserves the right to include any important information, the omission of which would represent a distorted vision of any dietetic or nutritional aspect or aspect relating to the profession of ICDA members.
8. The entity will finance all direct or indirect costs associated with the collaboration.
9. All financial transactions must be handled by the person responsible in the ICDA Secretariat, or its legal representative.
10. The ICDA reserves the right to reject new partnerships or sponsorships or to terminate the existing partnerships or sponsorship if it does not adhere to the conditions listed above.

Entities and their risk

The table below provides some examples of entities and their level of risk.

Table 2: Risk level of external entities

Types of organisations	Characteristics of external entities
<p>Level 1 High Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tobacco industry including: companies directly engaged in the production, manufacture, distribution and selling of tobacco or tobacco products (including e-cigarettes)* • The alcohol industry including: companies directly engaged in the production, manufacture, distribution and selling of alcohol products.* • The sugar-sweetened beverage industry including: companies directly engaged in the production, manufacture, distribution and selling sugar-sweetened beverage products.* • The quick service restaurant industry including companies that are involved in the production, distribution and selling of foods that substantially do not align with the food-based Dietary Guidelines • The gambling industry: including companies directly engaged in the provision of gambling services • The weapons/armaments industry • Any organisation that has violated nutrition-related international, national or regional laws, agreements or norms (e.g. violator of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes) • Any organisation that has violated international human rights, such as the right to health, the rights of the child or the right to food • Political parties • Industries substantially involved in illegal activities • NGOs (e.g philanthropic organisations, community groups, think tanks) that receive a substantial degree e.g more than 10% of their revenue/funding from or that have substantial links (e.g. through governance arrangements, registered lobbyists) to any of the above-mentioned sources <p>**[supermarkets and other general retailers that sell these items as part of a much broader range are not included here]</p>
<p>Level 2 Medium Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and non-alcoholic beverage manufacturers (including related associations and peak bodies), excluding those focussed exclusively on wholegrains, fruit and vegetable products, pulses/legume and nuts) • Manufacturers, distributors and retailers of infant and young child feeding milks, formulas and foods

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food service providers (including full-service restaurants, cafes, caterers, institutional foodservice providers – as well as related associations and peak bodies) • Supermarkets and general food retailers (including related associations and peak bodies) • Food distributors (including food importers, exporters, aggregators, online food delivery, food rescue and foodbanks) excluding those focussed exclusively on wholegrains, pulses/legumes or fruit and vegetable products • Food growers and the agricultural industry (including related associations and peak bodies) • The pharmaceutical industry, including manufacturers and retailers of pharmaceuticals or medical equipment • The agribusiness industry, including manufacturers and retailers of agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides, fertilizers • Producers and providers of weight management equipment and weight loss services and products • Manufacturers, retailers and distributors of child feeding equipment including bottles, teats, and other feeding paraphernalia • Funding bodies deriving their funds from the taxation of unhealthy products or the quarantining of funds (for example from lotteries) • NGOs (e.g. philanthropic organisations, community groups, think tanks) that receive a substantial degree e.g. more than 10% of their revenue/funding from or that have substantial links (e.g. through governance arrangements, registered lobbyists) to any of the above-mentioned sources
Level 3 Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food manufacturers, distributor and retailers focussed exclusively on whole grain, fruit and vegetable products • Private health service providers, health insurance companies • Sport and fitness clubs and sporting goods manufacturers • Automobile industry, road building industry, automobile fuel companies, transport companies, logistics companies • Property development companies • Banks, financial institutions including related associations and peak bodies • Toy manufacturers, distributors and retailers • Religious organisations • NGOs (e.g. philanthropic organisations, community groups, think tanks) that receive a substantial degree e.g. more than 10% of their revenue/funding from or that have substantial links (e.g. through governance arrangements, registered lobbyists) to any of the above-mentioned sources
Level 4 Minimal risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government departments, public authorities and government agencies • Universities and research institutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other NGOs, professional associations, private sector organizations and philanthropic organisations not included in other levels
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4. PROCEDURE FOR EVALUATING A COLLABORATION PROPOSAL

Partnership and sponsorship opportunities will be assessed and approved case by case by the ICDA Board of Directors or delegated officers.

Both the ICDA Board of Directors and officers shall be supported by a group of review and positioning experts, who shall issue a non-binding position on the suitability (or not) of the collaboration for the ICDA.

Procedure

1. The entity's collaboration application must be made in writing to the Secretary of the ICDA. Based on the risk matrix (Table 3) if the engagement is high risk and the entity is high risk the Secretary has the right to reject the approach.
2. This documentation must at least contain the following information:
 - The nature and main activities of the entity
 - The nature of its products and/or services
 - Its objectives and ethics
 - The means used to promote its products and/or services, or the consequences of these processes and whether they are compatible with the principles outlined in this document and with the ICDA's mission, values and goals.
 - Proposal for control mechanisms of the collaboration (for example, reports) that record the actions in which the ICDA collaborates, so that the latter is kept informed at all times.
 - Furthermore, it shall take into account the ICDA's degree of control on the project (for example, editorial control of written material, use and position of the logo).
3. The Secretary of the ICDA shall issue, if applicable, a proposal to the entity regarding the financial considerations, services and/or products that the agreement will signify. If the entity has made a proposal, the Secretary will assess it and, if necessary, negotiate an agreement that fits the demand.
4. The group of review and positioning experts shall issue a position using the documentation requested (without knowing the financial consideration agreed upon) and take into account the principles mentioned above, as well as the scientific evidence and current legality in relation to dietetic and nutritional aspects.
5. The Board of Directors will vote without any knowledge of the financial consideration, after having received the following documentation:

- Summary of the collaboration proposal (without specifying the financial consideration, services and/or products agreed upon)
- Position of the group of review and positioning experts.
- Background questionnaire (See Appendix 1)

The agreement will be approved by simple majority.

6. The Secretary of the ICDA will notify the members of the Board of Directors the result of the vote and financial consideration agreed upon with the entity, if applicable.
7. When the collaboration is approved, the agreement will be drawn up into a contract between the ICDA and the entity and signed by both authorised parties. The agreement will outline the duration, financial consideration agreed upon, if applicable, the joint activities and the objectives that the agreement pursues.
8. The contract mentioned above will be made available to ICDA members, on request.

The following matrix provides some guidance as to how to categorise each type of entity and the level of risk.

Table 3: Matrix guidance of risk

Type of engagement	Classification of external entity (see Table 2)			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
High risk	Do not engage	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	No approval required but individuals to be aware of potential risks
Medium risk	Do not engage	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to ICDA Board for assessment and approval	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	No approval required but individuals to be aware of potential risks
Low risk	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for approval	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	No approval required but individuals to be aware of potential risks
Minimal risk	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for approval	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	Prepare risk/benefit assessment refer to Board for assessment and approval	No approval required but individuals to be aware of potential risks

5. EXAMPLE SCENARIOS FOR NDAs

Case Study 1

Entity: A major manufacturer of sugar-sweetened beverages (soft drink/soda/pop)

Partnership

A major manufacturer of sugar-sweetened beverages has approached your NDA to be a partner. They will fund your annual conference and ongoing professional development. They want their logo to be on the website and on all materials that are developed. This is a high risk entity and a high risk activity.

Reject: sugar-sweetened beverages are not recommended as part of a healthy diet. Affiliation with this company will confuse the public and could be seen as an endorsement of their products by dietitian-nutritionists. It will make high level advocacy difficult to limit these products in the food supply.

Sponsorship

A major manufacturer of sugar-sweetened beverages would like to purchase a booth at the national conference and sponsor a workshop on childhood obesity. This is a high risk entity and a medium risk activity and requires a risk assessment.

Country A: This NDA does not want any affiliation with these companies as it represents high risk for their members who are strongly advocating for the removal of these products from the food supply and/or on taxes that would limit their purchase. They reject any participation to show their products including any beverages that are not sugar-sweetened as this still creates brand awareness and does not meet sustainability guidelines.

Country B: This NDA rejects the proposal for sponsorship of the workshop on childhood obesity as it contradicts the current evidence. They will allow the company to have a booth but the company will only be able to display water products.

Country C: This NDA accepts the proposal for sponsorship of the workshop negotiating that the speaker will be selected by the scientific committee and the speaker will be fully informed of the entity funding their participation. Their logo will not be displayed on any materials. A statement will be made at the beginning of the workshop that explicitly indicates what funding was received and how it was used. The company will be allowed to display their products in a booth but will only be permitted to display artificially sweetened and water products.

Engagement

A major manufacturer of sugar sweetened beverages is hosting a roundtable to discuss the evidence on the contribution of sugar-sweetened beverages to diets and their sustainability. This is a high risk entity and on paper a low risk activity. However, the risk will be dependent on the outcomes.

Country A: Declines the invitation after asking for more information on:

- Other attendees
- Outcomes
- Attribution

Based on the lack of balance of attendees who are independent of the companies and who have not been funded previously by the companies for research, the outcome will be a publicly available document and the individual and the NDA will be recorded, this was deemed a high risk activity.

Country B: Accepts the invitation. They are sending a high ranking member of the NDA with a PhD and a strong track record of advocacy. They have negotiated that unless they are completely comfortable with the outcome they will not be listed as contributing. They reserve the right to publicly criticise the outcome if it contradicts the NDA's values and mission.

Case Study 2

Entity: A major manufacturer of infant and toddler formulae

Partnership

A major manufacturer of infant formula has approached your NDA to be a partner. They will fund your annual conference, your journal and ongoing professional development. They want their logo to be on the website and on all materials that are developed. This is a high risk entity and a high risk activity.

Reject: There are strict international guidelines for the marketing of infant formula as this marketing significantly disrupts breastfeeding practices which are known produce better infant and maternal outcomes. The impacts are profound in less industrialised countries where formula consumption contributes to high infant mortality rates. Affiliation with this company will confuse the public and could be seen as an endorsement of their products by dietitian-nutritionists.

Sponsorship

A major manufacturer of infant and toddler formula would like to purchase a booth at the national conference and sponsor a workshop on breastfeeding This is a high risk entity and a high risk activity but there could be a number of approaches that would reduce the risk.

Country A: This NDA does not want any affiliation with these companies as it represents high risk for their members and the public. They reject any participation to show their products including any toddler formula which are cross-branded to infant formula for brand awareness.

Country B: This NDA rejects the proposal for sponsorship of the workshop on breastfeeding as it contradicts the current evidence and the international guidelines for the marketing of infant formula. They will allow the company to have a booth but the company will only be able to illustrate formula that have been developed for specific medical conditions and form part of medical nutrition therapy.

Country C: This NDA accepts the proposal for a booth at the conference and rejects the workshop but negotiates that the company will pay for an international speaker to attend the conference. The agreement is made that the company will have no influence over who is selected, the speaker needs to know about and agree to the payment of their airfare, accommodation, and registration to the conference. Their logo will not be displayed on any materials. A statement will be made at the beginning of the workshop that explicitly indicates what funding was received and how it was used. There will also be a statement that promotes breastfeeding as the infant feeding of choice and that formula and toddler milks are not recommended for consumption by well children.

Engagement

A major manufacturer of infant formula is hosting a roundtable to discuss the evidence on the contribution infant formula to the health and wellbeing of infants. This is a high risk entity and on paper a low risk activity. However, the risk will be dependent on the outcomes.

Country A: Declines the invitation after asking for more information on:

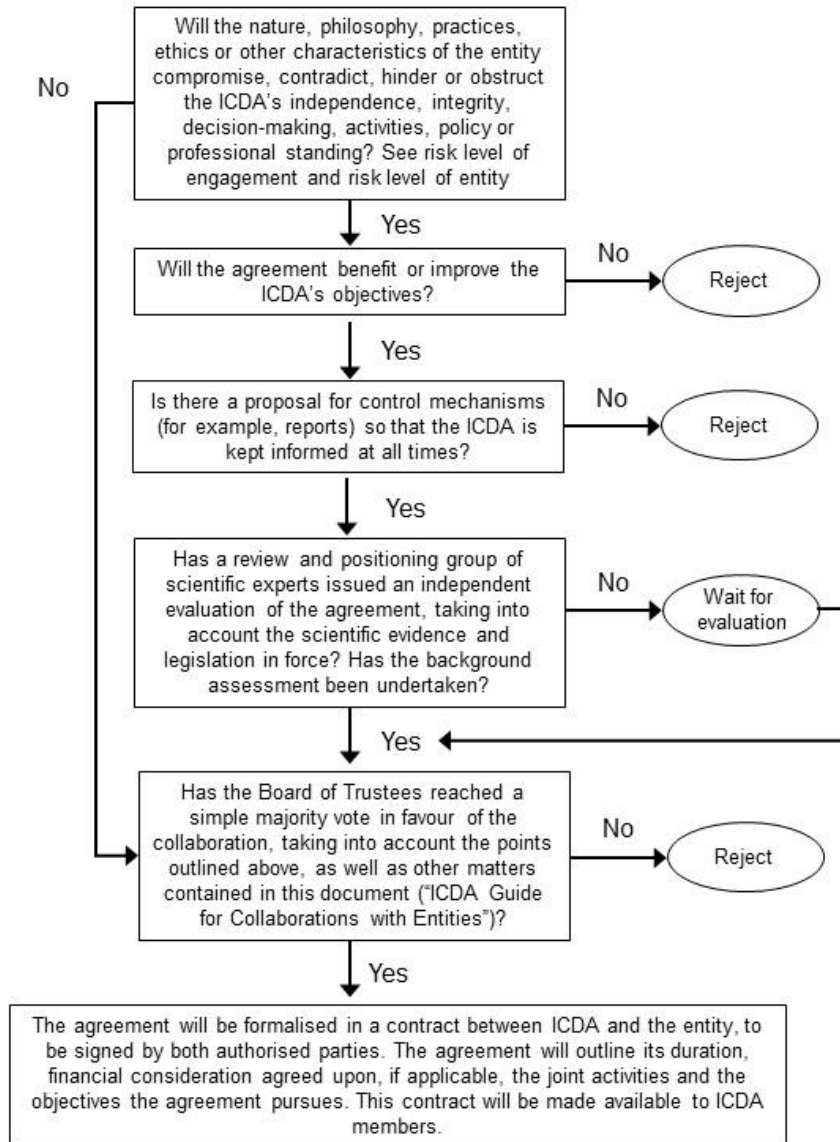
- Other attendees
- Outcomes
- Attribution

Based on the lack of balance of attendees who are independent of the companies and who have not been funded previously by the companies for research, the outcome will be a publicly available document and the individual and the NDA will be recorded, this was deemed a high risk activity.

Country B: Accepts the invitation. They are sending a high ranking member of the NDA with a PhD and a strong track record of advocacy. They have negotiated that unless they are completely comfortable with the outcome they will not be listed as contributing. They reserve the right to publicly criticise the outcome if it contradicts the NDA's values and mission.

5. DECISION ALGORITHM

Decision algorithm in relation to collaborations of entities with the ICDA (partnerships or sponsorships)



6. BIBLIOGRAPHY CONSULTED

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WHO Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Conflicts of Interest for Nutrition Programmes at Country Level
(<https://www.who.int/nutrition/consultation-doi/comments/en/>)

7. GLOSSARY

Partnership: Joint participation in an activity, project and/or event, where an organisation, entity, company or foundation collaborates directly with the ICDA, which provides its support.

Sponsor: Person or entity that supports an event, activity or organisation financially and/or by providing products and/or services, especially those related to publicity.

Grant use of logo: Use of an entity's logo by a company or institution (private or public) that wishes to add it as part of their communication and/or advertising campaign and/or product packaging in exchange of a financial benefit and for a limited time only.

Position Paper:

Report that documents a person or entity's position on a specific matter and the argument behind their stand. This report is based on facts and provides a solid foundation to support the chosen position.

Private Sponsor:

Private Institution that supports an event, activity or organisation financially and/or by providing products and/or services, mainly from the food and pharmaceutical industries.

Appendix 1: Background Questionnaire to accompany each proposal

	<p>The organisation is a</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Level 4</p>
	<p>The type of engagement is</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Minimal risk</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Low risk</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Medium risk</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>High risk</p>
	<p>If the organisation is Level 1 the proposal needs to be tabled at the Board for confirmation of decline</p> <p>If the activities are minimal risk then the activities need to be tabled at the Board but do not need sign off</p> <p>If the organisation is Level 4 and low risk the proposal needs to be tabled at the Board for sign off</p> <p>If the organisations are either Level 2/ Level 3/Level 4 and the activities are Low, medium or high risk the background questions need to answered and the full proposal with the background questions but without the financial arrangements need to be presented to the Board for a decision</p>
1.	Does the company/collaborator's values/products align with the values and ethos of ICDA?
2.	Are there any other unrelated activities from this company/collaborator that could be potentially harmful to ICDA or any of its member organisations

3.	Is there a recent annual report including corporate social responsibility of the company/collaborator? If yes append or provide weblink
4.	Is there a dietitian working or associated with the company/collaborator? If so in what capacity?
5.	Are there any risks associated with ICDA or its member associations being aligned with the company/collaborator?
6.	What is the added value or benefits for ICDA or its member associations?
7.	Will the collaboration require any additional ICDA resources?
8.	What controls will be in place to ensure that ICDA has the power of veto for any unsuitable messages or activities?
9.	Is the proposal/collaboration/partnerships something that the members would generally endorse?