
Business Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Introduction

The term "business gifts" in this policy includes entertainment as well as gift items. We expect all employees to conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty at all times and to maintain high standards of propriety and professionalism. This includes avoiding laying themselves open to suspicion of dishonesty or putting themselves in a position of conflict between their official duty and private interest

Employees should be aware that gifts and hospitality, offered by contractors, suppliers, service providers and others, might place an employee in a vulnerable position. Even when offered, and accepted, in innocence, others may misconstrue the intention behind such gifts.

It is important to take particular care about any gift or hospitality from a person or organisation that has, or is hoping to have, a contract with us. Although it is conventional in some parts of the private sector, and in other countries, for businesses to exchange gifts, this is not a normal practice within INASP.

Gifts inevitably affect future dealings with the donor. Without realising it, employees may make more of an effort for those who give gifts and the bigger the gift, the bigger the potential for problems. Gifts, no matter how small, may be construed as persuading the recipients to act in some way they may not otherwise do.

Expressions of gratitude that make employees in any way dependent on the giver are not acceptable in any circumstances. If refusal is likely to offend then the gift should be clearly donated to charity.

Cultural differences need to be taken into account if employees work abroad or deal with individuals from abroad: if this applies, guidance should be sought from the Executive Director.

In the interests of openness and integrity, and in order to protect individual employees from accusations of impropriety, INASP will maintain a central register of gifts and hospitality accepted.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our standards and provide advice and guidance for employees in respect of giving or receiving gifts or hospitality. The policy applies even when no reimbursement from INASP is sought.

This policy is non-contractual, and sets out the way in which INASP wishes to manage the giving and receiving of gifts and hospitality.

Legal considerations

The Bribery Act 2010, effective from July 2011, introduces general offences of offering or receiving bribes, a specific offence of bribing a foreign public official, and a new criminal offence of failure by a commercial organisation to prevent a bribe being paid for or on its behalf.

Main principles

The main principles behind this policy are:

- The conduct of an individual should not create suspicion of any conflict of interest between official duty and private interest
- Individuals acting in an official capacity should not give the impression to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom they deal or to their colleagues that they have been, may have been, or may in the future be, influenced by a benefit to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.

It is a disciplinary offence for employees to accept, or indicate that they may accept, any benefit as an inducement or reward that leads them, or may lead them, in an official capacity to take any action or not to take action; to show favour or disfavour to anyone; or to fail to disclose that they have received such gifts and/or hospitality as required by this policy.

Accepting gifts

You may accept modest gifts without reference to their managers where refusal is likely to cause offence. For illustration purposes "modest" will apply to items only up to a retail value of £100.

Promotional or advertising items bearing the donor's logo and/or name (such as mouse pads, pens, diaries or umbrellas) may be accepted, as may coffee, tea, soft drinks and similar refreshments of modest value.

More substantial or expensive offerings must be returned. The recipient of an unsolicited gift of a more substantial nature, or of frequent gifts, must return them with a polite explanation that our rules do not allow their acceptance; if this is likely to cause offence, then it may be that the gift(s) can be accepted and donated to charity.

In certain circumstances, where the gift is made as a token of the donor's gratitude for an exceptionally high standard of service, there may be a case made for acceptance of the gift by the individual on behalf of the organisation. Prior to accepting such gifts, written permission must be sought from the Executive Director.

Accepting hospitality

You may on occasion be offered conventional hospitality, including invitations to social events organised by another body for promotional or influential purpose.

However, offers which exceed the norm of conventional hospitality should not be accepted, in particular:

- significant hospitality offered in substitution for fees or other work done
- inducements that could lead to a contractual position between us and a supplier, contractor or consultant
- substantial offers of social functions, travel or accommodation
- repeated acceptance of meals, tickets and invitations to sporting, cultural or social events, particularly from the same source.

Employees invited to attend business conferences, presentations or recreational events for the purpose of general business discussions or information may also be offered accommodation and/or transportation.

This may be accepted provided that it is reasonable under the circumstances, and that it:

- is consistent with normal business practices, ie close to the standard normally accepted by the organisation
- is not an improper business inducement
- would not embarrass INASP if disclosed publicly
- is not in poor taste or at a venue that would reflect poorly on INASP (eg unsavoury or sexually oriented events, or events otherwise in violation of our commitment to mutual respect)
- does not occur frequently enough to suggest an improper motive.

If you have any doubt about whether to accept hospitality offered, you should refer the matter to the Executive Director.

Offering gifts and/or hospitality

There will be circumstances where it may be appropriate to provide gifts or hospitality, e.g. where it may strengthen business relationships, show gratitude to a volunteer or someone who has carried out

work for us for a nominal fee; or if service has been carried out to an exceptional standard. Where this is deemed appropriate, prior approval should be obtained from the Executive Director, who should be told who the gift is for, why it should be given, the nature of the intended gift and its value. There is an exemption for small gifts of up to £10 for each person.

When presenting business gifts or hospitality, you should ensure that these:

- are consistent with good business practices and local law
- have a business purpose
- are not an improper business inducement
- would not embarrass INASP if disclosed publicly
- are not in poor taste or at a venue that would reflect poorly on INASP (e.g. unsavoury or sexually oriented events, or events otherwise in violation of our commitment to mutual respect)
- are modest in cost, quantity and frequency..

Special laws and rules apply to gifts to government employees and it is our policy to strictly comply with all such restrictions. Gifts to such employees may constitute criminal acts, regardless of whether they are paid for with business or personal funds. We do not condone corrupt practices in any form, including bribery.

Gifts of cash or cash equivalents, such as gift certificates, must not be offered.

If you give gifts or supply hospitality which have not been approved in advance by the Executive Director, you will not be reimbursed for the cost and disciplinary action may be taken. If the unauthorised gift or hospitality was paid for by INASP, you may be required to refund this.

Strictly forbidden

The following are strictly forbidden:

- giving or receiving money or other cash equivalent as a business gift
- giving or receiving gifts or hospitality that are too costly or frequent to be within the customs of the marketplace
- giving any gifts or hospitality to reward a government employee
- giving or receiving gifts or hospitality that influence or give the appearance of influencing business judgement
- offering a gift or hospitality when it is known that it would violate the recipient's policy to accept it
- giving or receiving entertainment, such as tickets to a sporting event, where a representative of the organisation offering the gift will not be accompanying the recipient to the event.

Last Review	INASP Board	12 June 2012
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