



## **Code of Practice for Trade Associations**

This Code of Practice for Trade Associations has been developed by the Trade Association Forum in conjunction with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills as a direct result of the Heseltine Review Report 'No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth' Recommendation No. 66 which was subsequently accepted by the Government. The Code builds on the *Best Practice Guide for Trade Associations*, originally published in 2006. It aims to set out the ethical and other standards that a modern Trade Association should apply. This Code is designed to complement rather than replace any existing Codes of Practice or Conduct which are applicable to specific sectors, organisations or groups.

**November 2013**

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## **Introduction**

The Trade Association Forum already helps member trade associations to raise the quality of their work by identifying and developing best practice and enabling the sharing of information and experience among members.

One element in best practice is a Code of Practice, and this document is intended to help those associations that do not already have such a code, or would like to test an existing code against a TAF model.

We believe that in addition to helping member associations demonstrate best practice to their stakeholders, adoption of a code of practice by the Trade Association Forum will also demonstrate to our wider stakeholders (Government, Parliament, regulatory bodies and others) that we are prepared to behave appropriately and to set standards for the quality of our work, and be judged by them. We further believe that this will enhance the credibility of the Forum in seeking to influence policy in the UK, in Europe and elsewhere.

# The Code

## Principles of Conduct

- We will seek to achieve the highest standards and will offer our services honestly and honourably in a fair manner, and encourage our member companies and stakeholders to do the same.
- We shall behave in a professional manner and will respect the reputation of our sector and the other organisations with which we liaise.
- We will undertake to promote co-operation within the sector or sectors in which we work, and between members, customers and suppliers. In doing this, we will seek to identify and apply good practice.
- We will commit to improving the performance and reputation of the sector or sectors in which we work.
- We will endeavour to maintain and improve the quality of our work through constant review of our aims, activities and outcomes, and the cost-effectiveness of every activity. Where there is a proven and positive cost or benefit to doing so, we will aspire to seek appropriate certification or accreditation under a recognised quality assurance scheme.
- We will follow the rules of any public body to which we make representation and, where appropriate, seek guidance from the public body on any rules of relevance.
- We will pay our bills promptly, and encourage the same of our members and suppliers.

## Integrity

- We are committed to maintaining the highest degree of integrity in all our dealings with potential, current and past members as well as other stakeholders.
- We recognise that our member companies may be in direct competition. We will strive to avoid showing any preference towards any member company over another and endeavour to maintain an independent position in our dealings with them.
- We will ensure that all relevant competition laws are respected by our members in their dealings with us and each other, where such dealings have been facilitated by us.
- We will never offer any financial or other inducement, including direct and indirect payments, offers of employment or substantial gifts or entertainment, to any member, prospective member or holder of public office in an attempt to influence any decision making process which may affect our organisation or our industry in any way.

## Transparency and Openness

- We are clear and precise about our identity and any industry or sector that we may represent.

- We will endeavour to represent the common interests of all members.
- Where there is diverging opinion within the membership, we will seek to present a balanced case respecting the different interests involved. Where appropriate we will work with non-members and other associations in allied sectors on matters of joint concern.
- We will clearly declare any relevant financial or other links to public office holders in order to ensure that he or she is protected from any potential conflict of interest.
- We will use reasonable endeavours to ensure the truth and accuracy of any statements made or information provided to any third party in order to never knowingly make false or misleading claims or misrepresent the views of others.

### **Confidentiality**

- We will always try to maintain commercial confidentiality, and also protect all personal information received in the course of providing business services.
- We shall take reasonable endeavours to safeguard the confidences of all members and past members and shall not disclose these confidences to their disadvantage or prejudice unless the member has released such information for public use or has given permission for disclosure.

### **Discriminatory Conduct**

- We will strive to take reasonable care that all professional duties are conducted without causing offence on the grounds of gender, race, religion, disability or any other form of discrimination or unacceptable reference.

We understand, respect and abide by this Code issued by the Trade Association Forum:

Signed By: ..... Date: .....  
*(Chief Executive /Chairman/President)*

Printed Name: .....

Organisation: .....