

# Eight Criteria from Cohen, et al. for Accepting Tobacco Industry Funding, Compared to the Governance of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World

## COHEN, ET AL. CRITERION

## FOUNDATION FOR A SMOKE-FREE WORLD GOVERNANCE

### 1 Transparency and Independence

The funding mechanism should be transparent and independent.

The Foundation's bylaws and **funding agreement** are publicly available on its website and fully disclosed in public materials. Pursuant to these documents, the Foundation's funder is prohibited from influencing or directing how funds are used, what the research agenda is, and is not involved in any way in the Foundation's operations.

### 2 Competitive Funding Process

A competitive funding process should be in place to ensure high-quality science.

The Foundation's bylaws require it to employ a competitive funding process to ensure that funding decisions are based on explicit, well-established scientific criteria.

### 3 Ownership of Data and Freedom to Publish

Research endeavors should have scientific integrity to enable data and results to be used broadly.

To safeguard the integrity of each research endeavor, the Foundation ensures that grant recipients are free to publish their findings, studies, and results as submitted to the Foundation, regardless of whether those findings are unfavorable to the product being tested or any commercial interest.

### 4 Independent Research Agenda

To ensure unbiased and relevant research results, the research agenda should be set independently of the tobacco industry and other interested parties.

The Foundation's research agenda was established wholly independently from the tobacco industry and is in no way related to funding projects that benefit tobacco companies. Rather, the Foundation's research agenda was developed through a public process that included widely solicited input from the tobacco control community and an open public comment period. It was reviewed and approved by the Foundation's independent Scientific and Technical Advisory Council and Board of Directors.

### 5 Governance

The credibility of a funding entity is enhanced when there is a transparent and effective governance structure. A Board of Directors would oversee the operation of all aspects of the funding agency and programs, without requiring approval from the sponsor.

As described in the Foundation's **bylaws**, all aspects of the Foundation's activities and research programs are overseen by an independent Board of Directors. The staff and board function completely independently of the Foundation's funder, with no industry representation on the board. As the funder specifically agreed, it is precluded in our bylaws and by the funding agreement from seeking to influence any such actions.

### 6 Protection Against Conflict of Interest

There should be a written conflict of interest policy and mechanisms for enforcement.

The Foundation maintains a robust written conflict of interest policy, including mechanisms for enforcement, which is publicly available on the Foundation's website. The policy requires disclosure of not only relevant financial relationships, but also interests in any tobacco and/or nicotine containing products company or in any commercial entity involved in the tobacco reduction or cessation field or that otherwise may be affected by the scientific research conducted or funded by the Foundation.

### 7 Industry Public Relations Gains that Counteract Public Health

Industry public relations gains realized from the funding of research that counteract public health should be minimized.

The Foundation's **bylaws** strictly prohibit Foundation's research agenda being used to advance the image of the tobacco industry or any other industry or commercial entity. In addition, as part of its mission around tobacco industry transformation, the Foundation will be publishing an independent assessment of the tobacco industry's activities in relation to tobacco control, which is free to be critical of industry participants.

### 8 Feasibility

Short-term and long-term feasibility of achieving the various models should be disclosed in order to have a realistic vision of what might be possible.

The Foundation will regularly commission third-party reports on progress towards reducing deaths and harm from smoking and eliminating smoking worldwide. The Foundation commissioned a **global survey** on smoking trends and perceptions, and released results and data for consideration regarding the impact of existing programs, potential barriers to success and areas for further exploration and progress.

1. i Cohen JE, Zeller M, Eissenberg T, Parascandola M, et al. Criteria for evaluating tobacco control research funding programs and their application to models that include financial support from the tobacco industry. *Tob Control* 2009; 18(3): 228-34. Published online June 2009. DOI:10.1136/tc.2008.027623 (Accessed October 27, 2017). <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/18/3/228>.
2. In a 2012 publication, The National Academies of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine) also called for a similar independent third-party research foundation structure for tobacco control research. This report can be accessed at: Institute of Medicine. 2012. *Scientific Standards for Studies on Modified Risk Tobacco Products*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/13294>.