

# **WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR: guidelines for LSHTM staff**

**June 2001**

## **Introduction**

In the face of increasing public sector collaboration with the private sector, an ad hoc group<sup>1</sup> of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine staff has been considering what principles should guide staff in such collaborations. These guidelines<sup>2</sup> have been drawn up by Gill Walt, Ruairi Brugha and Barbara Judge, in response to the increasing opportunities for LSHTM staff to undertake research in collaboration with the private commercial sector.

While recognising the support and intellectual stimulation that might occur from such partnerships, staff are concerned to avoid arrangements that might compromise the School's intellectual principles, freedom of enquiry and public mission. These draft guidelines lay out some of the issues staff may want to consider before embarking on working with the private sector.

An appendix of experiences of staff provides additional insight into some of the positive aspects of collaborations, as well as some of the concerns.

It would be helpful to get feedback from those who have had some experience with industry collaboration in research, to see how far these guidelines might or might not

## **Preamble**

The mission of the School is to contribute to the improvement of health worldwide through the pursuit of excellence in research, postgraduate teaching, advanced training and consultancy in international public health and tropical medicine. In working towards its mission, the School collaborates with many different organisations, and bases its relationships with other organisations on principles which promote sound, and independent science; proper use and stewardship of all funds; and benefits to society that are greater than those to the School alone.

## **Pre-requisites to considering a collaboration**

1. LSHTM should be clear about how the potential collaboration fits within its overall mission and priorities, and consider the following issues:
  - Initiation, whether internal or external, may influence the control and direction of the project. [For example, Stanford University differentiates between collaborations where the intellectual direction of the research comes from the private sector, with the staff member overseeing the project; and collaborations where university staff initiate the partnership].
  - The centrality of the project to LSHTM's research goals and priorities.
  - The advantages (explicit and implicit) to the private sector partner of working with LSHTM

3. LSHTM should avoid participating in indirect collaboration unless it is comfortable with a direct relationship with the partners
  - Indirect relations may occur when LSHTM serves as an advisory group for another project in which LSHTM does not directly participate. There may be advantages to indirect relationships, for example, as a way of maintaining scientific independence, but these should be entered into with open eyes. They should be subject to the same criteria as for entering a direct collaboration. As is the case in some of the new global public-private partnerships, advisory roles that involve multiple collaborators including international health agencies entail less risk than indirect single-partner collaborations.
- 4.

6. Private partners should be informed that the relationship will be made a matter of public record
  - To meet the highest standards of conduct, both LSHTM and partners must be comfortable with disclosing the nature of the relationship in the public domain.
  - LSHTM must ensure that any stand taken on issues of public health importance is not in any way compromised by other interests or activities of the private sector partner.
  - LSHTM staff should always seek advice from the Head of Department and Dean, and be prepared to declare any financial gain, current or future, potential or actual, resulting from the collaboration, except where it is part of School policy (eg in relation to consultancy fees).
  - LSHTM should assess how its name will be used, and whether such usage is consistent with the School's mission and public role. Both partners should agree how the collaboration might be publicised, and LSHTM should have the opportunity to review and approve if and how its name might be used.
  - LSHTM should assess how any collaboration might be portrayed by the media, and whether this might be damaging to the School's reputation.
  - Questions around endorsements of products must be identified early, negotiated and agreed. Normally LSHTM, as an institution, does not endorse specific products.
  
7. Mechanisms should be put in place to protect independence and objectivity
  - The current group (see names at the end) should be called upon to advise on, or oversee collaborations where requested, and act as an appeal body in case of disagreement.

### **LSHTM Screening and Monitoring Procedures**

8. Potential collaborations should be reviewed and monitored using existing processes – through an amendment to the Pink Form, which shows that the chief investigator has read these guidelines. LSHTM researchers embarking on partnerships should draw on the ad hoc group to:
  - Examine the proposed collaborations and advise LSHTM staff on whether the partner fulfils the pre-requisites for a collaboration with LSHTM
  - Advise staff on the negotiable and non-negotiable terms and conditions for such a collaboration
  - Review the proposed collaboration, prior to LSHTM entering into a contract

## **Appendix: Staff experiences working with the private sector**

Some members of staff have been involved in research collaborations with industry in a variety of different projects. The points below come from short extracts describing experiences (from Alison Grant, Liz Corbett; Jo Lines, Kara Hanson, Sylvia Meek; Steve Bennett; David Bradley; Ruth McNerney; Debby Watson-Jones; Brendan Wren; Simon Croft; Neil Stoker and Shabbar Jaffar). The large majority have been positive, but some have posed restrictions, or had negative effects. In reviewing these different experiences, a number of broader concerns were raised.