

# Editorial Policy Guidance on Use of BBC News brands by BBC Global News Ltd for marketing events

(Last Updated: April 2018)

The purpose of this guidance note is to assist BBC Global News Ltd (“GNL”) in ensuring the reputation of BBC News is maintained where a BBC News brand (e.g. “BBC News”, “BBC World News”, “BBC.com/news”) is used in connection with marketing events. It applies to:

- any event which includes use of a BBC News brand, and
- any news or current affairs content within any other type of event.

## EDITORIAL GUIDELINES ISSUES

*This guidance note should be considered in conjunction with the following Editorial Guidelines:*

- **Impartiality**  
See [Editorial Guidelines Section 4.2.2](#):  
News in whatever form must be treated with due impartiality, giving due weight to events, opinion and main strands of argument.
- **Editorial Integrity and Independence from External Interests**  
See [Editorial Guidelines Appendix 5: Guidelines for BBC Commercial Services on Editorial Integrity and Independence from External Interests Section 2.1](#):  
We must be independent of arrangements which could undermine our editorial integrity, independence or impartiality.
- **Conflicts of Interest**  
See [Editorial Guidelines Section 15](#)
- **Advertising and Sponsorship**  
See [Advertising and Sponsorship Guidelines for BBC Commercial Services](#)

## GUIDANCE IN FULL

- Mandatory Referral
- Principles
- GNL Events
- Third Party Events
- Use of BBC News Talent

## MANDATORY REFERRAL

**Any proposal to use a BBC News brand for marketing purposes in connection with any Global News Ltd off-air sponsored event, or any third party event, must be approved by a senior editorial figure who will consider whether:**

- **the proposal would compromise the BBC’s impartiality, editorial integrity or independence or otherwise bring the BBC into disrepute**

## **Editorial Policy may be consulted at any stage of the event planning or production.**

### PRINCIPLES

Marketing and off-air activities must not compromise the BBC's impartiality, editorial integrity or independence. They:

- must not promote or endorse an organisation, product, service or trademark,
- must not bring the BBC into disrepute and
- should meet consumer expectations of the BBC brand

A third party must not influence the content of any marketing or other off-air activities in such a way as to impair the responsibility and editorial independence of the BBC.

An event cannot be sponsored if the content it promotes cannot be sponsored.

### GNL EVENTS

- The location of any marketing event must not compromise the impartiality or independence of the BBC. Consult a senior editorial figure before hosting an event at premises belonging to any government, for example an embassy or consulate. Where the event is staged to support sponsored editorial content it would not normally be appropriate to host an event at the sponsor's premises.
- Events to promote the overarching BBC News brand should not be sponsored.
- Outside the UK it may be acceptable to take a sponsor for a non-editorial element, such as a drinks reception. The event must not be broadcast or published online and the sponsor should be appropriate, meeting the requirements in this guidance.
- Any sponsor branding must be consistent with the [BBC Masterbrand Guidelines](#) and [BBC World Service Group Brand Guidelines](#). Distinction must always be maintained at the event between the sponsor and GNL. For example, BBC staff should not be involved in sponsor activities, such as handing out sponsor-provided leaflets.
- Sponsor activity at GNL events should be approved by GNL.
- A sponsor representative can participate in a BBC event to support content they have sponsored, provided this does not distort the editorial content so that it becomes a vehicle for the purpose of promoting the sponsor or its interests. References to the sponsor's products, services, trademarks or activities must not be promotional or unduly prominent.

For example, it would not be appropriate for the CEO of an energy company to participate in a debate on sustainable energy technology, but it may be possible for them to take part in a debate on diversity in the workplace provided their contribution was not promotional of their company or its products or services.

## THIRD PARTY EVENTS

### *Event Sponsorship*

- It is not normally appropriate for GNL to be the only sponsor of an event organised by or on behalf of a third party.
- Sponsorship is not appropriate alongside sponsors that cannot advertise on commercial BBC News services.
- Subject to the other provisions of this guidance, it would be acceptable for a commercial BBC News service, such as BBC World News, to be designated the only “media sponsor” amongst a group of multiple other sponsors.

### *Event Organiser*

- GNL should not have any marketing association with events to support organisations that cannot advertise on commercial BBC News services or could give rise to doubts about the impartiality, editorial integrity or independence of the BBC. It is not appropriate to have any marketing association with events to support political parties and political organisations.
- It is not normally acceptable for GNL to have a marketing association with an event organised or funded by a single government or to jointly organise an event with one. A possible exception might be where an event was organised by a government funded tourism or trade board and the subject of the event is not predominately about the host country.
- It could be acceptable to be involved with an international body that represents many governments, if the objectives of the body do not deal with current events and issues, including material dealing with political or industrial controversy or with current public policy.
- It is not normally appropriate to be involved with a lobby or campaigning group.
- To avoid any impression of endorsement GNL should not normally have a marketing association with events funded or organised by a single organisation (e.g. an airline or bank). (Event organisers are obviously not caught by this restriction.)
- It may be acceptable for GNL to have a marketing association with events to support a trade body or a group of organisations with no corporate or organisational connection.
- In order not to damage the BBC’s reputation for impartiality, it is not appropriate to have a marketing association with events to support a trade body or a group of organisations where the body represents or holds only **one** significant strand of opinion on an issue dealing with political or industrial controversy or with current public policy.

*Matters of political or industrial controversy are political or industrial issues on which politicians, industry and/or the media are in debate. Matters relating to current public policy need not be the subject of debate but relate to a policy under discussion or already decided by a local, regional or national government or by bodies mandated by those public bodies to make policy on their behalf, for example non-governmental organisations, relevant European institutions, etc.*

### *Type of Event*

- While controversial subject matter or speakers do not rule out GNL involvement, GNL should be satisfied that a broad range of perspectives and opinions on controversial subjects will be covered or discussed.
- **It should be brought to the attention of the senior editorial figure where:**
  - **the event is organised by or for a government, or**
  - **the subject matter or identity of speakers at the event is controversial or could raise questions about the BBC's impartiality, editorial integrity or independence.**

### *Location*

- Third party events should not normally be held on BBC premises to avoid an impression of endorsement.
- To protect the reputation of the UK Public Services, it is not normally appropriate to hold a third party event on BBC Public Service premises in the UK.

### *Credits and Use of BBC Logos*

- Market norms should be considered when deciding what credit is appropriate. For example, if all the other organisations will be named "sponsors", the BBC should normally be called one too.
- BBC logos should not be used in a way that implies endorsement of a third party, whether the logos are used at an event or in accompanying literature and publicity. The positioning of the logo should make it clear that GNL is *associated with* the event only.
- The logo should not normally be used more prominently than those of other similar sponsors of the event.
- Any use of a BBC logo by a third party must be consistent with the [BBC World Service Group Brand Guidelines](#) and subject to signature of a BBC logo licence.

### *Editorial Coverage*

- The BBC is free to cover third party events with which GNL has a marketing association, but there must not be any contractual obligation to provide editorial coverage for any third party events or organisations that GNL has a marketing association with. Editorial decisions should be made solely on editorial grounds by editorial teams.
- Any advertising of or marketing for a third party event with which GNL has a marketing association should not reference any BBC editorial coverage of the event.

### *Content Sponsors' Events*

- The BBC must maintain editorial responsibility for third party events or sections of events that are staged in support of or based around BBC editorial content.

- The sponsor must not give the impression that they “own” the related BBC content; rather the context should be one of being associated with the content.
- It is not normally appropriate for a sponsor’s event to take place on BBC premises

#### USE OF BBC NEWS TALENT

- Where BBC News presenters or correspondents/reporters are being engaged independently (e.g. through their agent) of their existing commitments to the BBC they are subject to the [Editorial Guidelines on Conflict of Interests](#) and are responsible for obtaining approval for their involvement.
  - In other circumstances (i.e. where their involvement is part of their contractual commitments to the BBC), **GNL must ensure the senior editorial figure approves their participation, who will consider:**
    - whether the subject matter or speakers would bring the BBC into disrepute or compromise the BBC’s impartiality, editorial integrity or independence;
    - whether the speakers represent a cross-section of strands of opinion; and
    - how many sessions the presenter would be involved in. The more presenter involvement with an event there is, the greater the risk of a perception that the BBC endorses an event or organisation.
-