



SIO Corporate Sponsorship Policy

Recommended by the 2011 Conference Committee

Approved by the SIO Board of Directors September 28, 2011

The Social Investment Organization recognizes that corporate engagement on corporate social responsibility issues is an important activity of the members of the SRI industry in Canada. Our members engage with companies on a regular basis to obtain information on their CSR policies and practices, and to encourage them to improve their CSR performance. Therefore, the SIO can play a useful role in providing a forum for engagement between the corporate sector and our members on issues of broad significance to the SRI industry.

That said, it is also important to recognize that the SIO represents the interests of the financial and investment industry, not the corporate sector. This principle is illustrated by SIO's long-standing policy to accept non-financial corporations for membership only in the organizational category, not in the upper membership levels of associate, supporting and sustaining membership. While we welcome corporate participation in the SIO, we also recognize it is not our key membership base, which we will preserve for companies, consultants and advisors in the financial industry, and investors. SIO wishes to avoid a conflict of interest in which corporate issuers may receive endorsement for socially responsible investment.

On the question of sponsorship, we will welcome corporate sponsors to our conferences, meetings and events, but there are limits to corporate participation. Events will seek to balance corporate advocacy with SRI or NGO viewpoints. Plenary sessions at our conferences will seek to balance discussion of corporate advocacy with ESG advocacy. Corporate CSR presentations are welcome in breakout sessions, but are not acceptable in plenaries, just as investment product presentations should also be avoided at plenaries.

Corporations are not eligible for Hosting (plenary) sponsorships at SIO conferences or events. Hosting (plenary) sponsorships will be reserved for companies operating within the financial industry.

Corporations may be considered for Supporting (non-plenary) sponsorships, which would entitle them to sponsored breakout sessions and other sponsorship benefits, but not plenaries.

Corporations will be subject to ESG screening and integration analysis, and will be approved by the SIO Conference Committee, or other SIO Committee overseeing the conference or event. The SIO Conference Committee or other SIO event committee will employ the resources of research providers and other SIO-member companies to evaluate whether the corporation under consideration is an ESG leader as recognized widely by the SRI industry. Approval of each company will rest with the SIO Conference Committee or other SIO event committee.

Small capitalization companies not normally covered by SIO-member research providers will be evaluated on the basis of their overall contribution to social and environmental sustainability. The SIO Conference Committee or other SIO event committee will approve such companies for sponsorship.

Trade associations may also be considered for supporting (non-plenary) sponsorship on the basis of their overall contribution to social and environmental sustainability. The SIO Conference Committee or other event committee will approve such trade associations for sponsorship.

SIO-member companies are encouraged to invite corporations to speak in plenaries, breakouts or other SIO events. Such corporations will not be subject to the ESG screening and integration analysis.

Topics and speakers will be arranged in collaboration with SIO staff and the conference committee. And in planning the overall balance of a conference, meeting or event, SIO staff and volunteers should ensure that presentations by corporate issuers do not dominate the discussion. Care will be taken by staff and volunteers to ensure that the marketing, graphic identity and branding of conferences and events emphasize the role of the members and the financial industry, not the corporate sector.

Observation of these principles will enable SIO to engage with the corporate sector at its conferences, meetings and events, without jeopardizing the independence of the organization to pursue ESG advocacy on behalf of its members in the financial and investment industries.