



## **INTERNATIONAL CODE OF LOBBYING ETHICS**

Lobbying essentially entails advocating the views and interests of an individual or entity to government officials to help ensure more informed policy decision are made by such public officials. Lobbying is an integral and important part of the democratic process and must be considered to be a fundamental right in any democracy. Government officials are continuously making public policy decisions that affect the vital interests of individuals, corporations, labour organizations, religious groups, charitable institutions and other entities. Public officials need to receive factual information from affected interests and to know such parties' views in order to make informed policy judgements. In exercising their rights to try to impact public policy, interests often choose to employ third-party professional representatives to monitor developments, advise them on legislative or regulatory strategies and advocate their positions. In other instances, individuals or entities use the services of lobbyists through their membership in trade associations, professional societies and other membership organizations.

For purpose of this Code, the term “lobbyist” is intended to be broadly interpreted to cover any individual who is retained or employed for monetary or other compensation to engage in activities involving efforts to influence public officials serving in a legislative body or in a regulatory agency, office or ministry in the Executive Branch of a government (e.g. the Office of the President or Prime Minister, a Governor, a Finance Minister, or a member of a regulatory body), or an intergovernmental body.

To help preserve and advance public trust and confidence in democratic institutions and the public policy advocacy process, professional lobbyists have a strong obligation to act always in the highest ethical and moral manner in their dealings with all parties. Lobbyists also have a duty to advance public understanding of the lobbying profession.

AALEP has adopted this International Code of Lobbying Ethics [along with other signatory lobbyists' organizations e.g. the American League of Lobbyists] to provide basic guidelines and standards for lobbyists' conduct. This Code is intended to apply to independent lobbyists who are retained to represent third party clients' interests and to lobbyists employed on the staff of corporations, labour organizations, associations and other entities where their employer is in effect their “client”. Lobbyists are strongly urged to comply with this Code and to seek always to practice the highest ethical conduct in their lobbying endeavours.

## **ARTICLE I. HONESTY & INTEGRITY**

A lobbyist should conduct lobbying activities with honesty and integrity.

- 1.1. A lobbyist should be truthful in communicating with public officials and with other interested persons and should seek to provide factually, correct, current and accurate information.
- 1.2. If a lobbyist determines that the lobbyist, or the lobbyist's client (including his or her employer) has provided a public official or other interested person with factually inaccurate information of a significant, relevant, and material nature, the lobbyist should promptly provide (or ensure that the lobbyist's client promptly provides) the factually accurate information to the interested person.
- 1.3. If a material change in factual information that the lobbyist or lobbyist's client provided previously to a public official causes the information to become inaccurate and the lobbyist knows the public official may still be relying upon the information, the lobbyist should provide (or ensure that the lobbyist's client promptly provides) accurate and updated information to the public official.

## **ARTICLE II- COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, REGULATIONS & RULES**

A lobbyist should comply with all laws, regulations and rules applicable to the lobbyist.

- 2.1. A lobbyist should be familiar with laws, regulations and rules applicable to the lobbying profession and should not engage in any bribery or other corrupt activities in violation of such laws, regulations and rules.
- 2.2. A lobbyist should comply with all campaign finance laws, regulations and rules. Additionally, a lobbyist should remain informed on updates in campaign finance laws that affect their rights and responsibilities to participate in the democratic political process.
- 2.3. A lobbyist should not intentionally cause a public official to violate any law, regulation or rule applicable to such public official.

## **ARTICLE III- PROFESSIONALISM**

A lobbyist should conduct lobbying activities in a fair and professional manner.

- 3.1. A lobbyist should have at least a basic understanding of the legislative and governmental process and such specialized knowledge as is necessary to represent clients or an employer in a competent, professional manner.
- 3.2. A lobbyist should maintain the lobbyist's understanding of governmental processes and specialized knowledge through appropriate methods such as continuing study, seminars and similar sessions in order to represent clients or an employer in a competent, professional manner.
- 3.3. A lobbyist should treat others- both allies and adversaries- with respect and civility.
- 3.4. A lobbyist should participate in continuing education and training programmes, including those addressing compliance with laws, rules, and ethical standards applicable to the profession, on an annual or other reasonable periodic basis.

## **ARTICLE IV- CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

A lobbyist should not continue or undertake representations that may create conflicts of interest without the informed consent of the client or potential client involved.

- 4.1. A lobbyist should avoid advocating a position on an issue if the lobbyist is also representing another client on the same issue with a conflicting position.
- 4.2. If a lobbyist's work for one client on an issue may have a significant adverse impact on another client's interests, the lobbyist should inform and obtain consent from the other client whose interests may be affected of this fact even if the lobbyist is not representing the other client on the same issue.
- 4.3. A lobbyist should disclose all known conflicts to the client or prospective client and discuss and resolve the conflict issues promptly.
- 4.4. A lobbyist should inform the client if any other person is receiving a direct or indirect consulting fee from the lobbyist due to or in connection with the client's work and the amount of such fee or payment.

## **ARTICLE V- DUE DILIGENCE AND BEST EFFORTS**

A lobbyist should vigorously and diligently advance and advocate the client's or employer's interests.

- 5.1. A lobbyist should devote time, attention, and resources to the client's or employer's interests that are commensurate with client expectations, agreements, and compensation.
- 5.2. A lobbyist should exercise loyalty to the client's or employer's interests.
- 5.3. A lobbyist should keep the client or employer informed regarding the work that the lobbyist is undertaking and, to the extent possible, should give the client the opportunity to choose from various options and strategies.

## **ARTICLE VI- COMPENSATION AND ENGAGEMENT TERMS**

- 6.1. A lobbyist who is retained by a client should have a written agreement with the client regarding the terms and conditions for the lobbyist's services, including the amount of and basis for compensation. The agreement should include the subject of expenses, and the lobbyist should charge only those expenditures made on behalf of the client and in furtherance of the objective pursued on the client's behalf.
- 6.2. The fees charged by a lobbyist should be reasonable, taking into account the facts and circumstances of the engagement.
- 6.3. Upon termination of representation, a lobbyist should take steps to the extent reasonably practical to protect an employers' or client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the employer or client, allowing time for employment of another lobbyist, and surrendering papers and property to which the employer or client is entitled.

## **ARTICLE VI- CONFIDENTIALITY**

A lobbyist should maintain appropriate confidentiality of client or employer information.

- 7.1. A lobbyist should not disclose confidential information without the client's or employer's informed consent.
- 7.2. A lobbyist should not use confidential client information against the interests of a client

or employer or for any purpose not contemplated by the engagement or terms of employment.

## **ARTICLE VII- PUBLIC EDUCATION, TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC SERVICE**

- 8.1. A lobbyist should seek to ensure better public understanding and appreciation of the nature, legitimacy and necessity of lobbying in the democratic governmental process, including the inherent right of all interests in a democracy to explain and advocate their views and concerns to government and to use professional lobbyists to assist them in exercising this right in their dealings with public officials.
- 8.2. A lobbyist should, consistent with the lobbyists' duties of client confidentiality and loyalty, support transparency in lobbying activities to help public understanding of and trust in the lobbying profession and the governmental process.
- 8.3. A lobbyist is encouraged to devote a not insubstantial amount of time each year to providing lobbying or related services to persons or organizations that are pursuing objectives that advance the public good, but who do not have the resources to compensate lobbyists to represent them in that endeavour.

## **ARTICLE IX- DUTY TO GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS**

In addition to fulfilling duties and responsibilities to the client or employer, a lobbyist should exhibit proper respect for the governmental institutions before which the lobbyist represents and advocates clients' interests.

- 9.1. A lobbyist should not intentionally act in any manner that will undermine public confidence and trust in the democratic governmental process.

**Adopted by the Association of Accredited Lobbyists to the European Union (AALEP)  
Board of Directors on 27 March, 2012**