



news release

IFPMA launches Note for Guidance to help those acting on behalf of biopharmaceutical companies live up to its ethical business principles

GENEVA, 22 October 2020: The International Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) published today a [Note for Guidance on how to foster ethical relationships with third party intermediaries in the biopharmaceutical sector](#). IFPMA's mission rests on the establishment and promotion of ethical principles for the industry as a whole and anyone acting on its behalf, in line with societal expectations.

Third party intermediaries play an important role in supporting the activity of biopharmaceutical companies and in improving ongoing access for patients and healthcare professionals to innovative, reliable and effective medicines and vaccines. They can operate as clinical research organizations, distributors, wholesalers, distribution or sales agents, consultants, brokers, commission agents, and/or independent sales representatives. They serve an integral role in the biopharmaceutical sector and health systems and therefore hold a critical mission to act with fairness and foster patient trust.

The Note for Guidance aims to complement the [2019 IFPMA Code of Practice](#) and provides best practices for companies when working with third party intermediaries, such as adopting a dedicated risk management program as part of their overall compliance program and code of ethics. This would include, among others, identifying whether there is a particular risk profile for corruption, based on a review of the intermediary's internal policies and controls for bribery or all types of corruption. This should cover common business activities such as travel/accommodation, gifts, hospitality, sponsorship or grants, sales and marketing, procurement processes, and many more.

The guidance also advises that a check should be conducted as to whether the third party intermediary has appropriate promotion policies in place consistent with the product information, accurate, fair, balanced, not misleading, and substantiated in order to help foster trust and confidence in science and medicine.

Marking the launch of the Note for Guidance at the 2020 APEC Business Ethics for SMEs Virtual Forum, IFPMA DG Thomas Cueni said: "Trust is like a piece of paper – crumple it, and you will have a difficult time to smoothen it out. The IFPMA Ethos is centered around trust. Trust stipulates that we are accountable for our actions and decisions, including ethical partnerships with, and the appropriate oversight of, anyone that acts on our behalf". "I hope this guidance will help us all in the healthcare ecosystem better live up to ethical expectations others rightly have of us, be it for a company or an external third party", he added.

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IFPMA hopes the guidance may serve as a key reference document in the formation of APEC guidance and/or the modernization of the APEC Principles, in line with recently launched [Vision 2025 roadmap](#), which invites stakeholders to strengthen ethical relationships in the healthcare sector.

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Note to the editor

About APEC Business Ethics for SMEs Virtual Forum

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum whose member economies aim to create greater prosperity by accelerating regional economic integration and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth. Held from 13 to 27 October, the 2020 APEC Business Ethics for SMEs Virtual Forum, includes over a dozen unique sessions with major outcomes that feature leaders from government, industry associations and companies, healthcare professionals and providers, patient organizations, academic institutions, and other leading health, trade, and anti-corruption organizations.

About IFPMA

IFPMA represents research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's 2 million employees research, develop and provide medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

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