



MERCi

Ethical Funding Policy

1.0 Statement of Intent

This policy has been drawn up to govern the activities of MERCi and its associated projects such that they remain in line with these overall aims. It is designed as a checking tool to ensure that the needs of the organisation are balanced against its principles.

1.1 Evolution of the Policy

MERCi is a dynamic organisation always seeking to push out the boundaries of its activities. As such any policy must be sensitive to the changing nature of what MERCi does. This policy has been developed using input from friends, members and staff.

This policy is a set of principles that can be used to evaluate the correct course of action within a certain situation. As time goes on a body of precedents will grow up around each principle. In this way the policy will remain reflective of the needs of MERCi and all who are involved with it. It is the role of the management committee to periodically evaluate MERCi's activities and check they are in line with all existing policy.

1.2 How the policy works

Below are a number of areas that have been identified as having a possible ethical angle that needs to be considered. Under each heading an explanation of MERCi's position has been provided in terms of overall principles.

1.3 General Proviso

Any group or individual considered to be breaking any of MERCi's other policies, especially the equal opportunities policy, will as a result be exempt from any of the activities covered by this policy. However before this exemption comes into force there will be attempt on MERCi's part to raise awareness with this group or individual around the area that we feel is breaking our policy.

2.0 Who Funds MERCi?

MERCi does not accept any funding from companies directly involved in activities that run contrary to our overall aims. These include companies who block or actively work against social justice, companies who's activities harm the environment, companies who block or work against community empowerment and companies who do not use or subscribe to the principles of human scale development .

It is impossible to produce an exhaustive list of the areas that MERCi would consider to be contrary to our aims. However as a starting point companies involved in any of the areas below would definitely be seen as working against our aims:

Animal testing, the fur trade, genetic engineering, petroleum, human rights abuses, intensive farming, manufacture of hazardous products or chemicals, military contracts, mining, ozone depleting chemical production, nuclear power, pesticide production, road building, third world debt, third world marketing, tobacco, tropical hardwood sales, water pollution.



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MERCi receives most of its funding from statutory bodies or charitable trusts. We accept this funding because it is intended to promote work that contributes to our aims and because it is necessary to MERCi's operation. We do recognise however that statutory bodies are not necessarily ethical just by virtue of being statutory bodies. In recognition of this we always attempt to promote good practice by disseminating our methods and asking for ethical policies from the bodies we are involved with.

However we recognise that occasionally trusts are set up with the express purpose of making an otherwise unethical company seem more ethical and responsible through positive advertising: the greenwash effect. We therefore do not accept money off any charitable trust if it is a requirement of grant receipt to advertise any company or organisation whose activities run contrary to our aims.

3.0 Who can MERCi be in partnership with?

In this context partnership means any work that MERCi does whereby the responsibility for the end result of that work is jointly owned between MERCi and another group.

MERCi will not work in partnership with any organisation, either company, statutory, voluntary or community based who's purpose is contrary to our aims. Please see section above for reference of what this means to us, and how we would determine this.

MERCi will aim to be in partnership with organisations that are working towards the same or similar aims and are using a similar approach. It will also aim to work with organisations, which may have not considered such issues, but who are willing to listen and possibly change their practices through dialogue with MERCi. However this does not apply to organisations that directly work against what we are trying to do.

4.0 Who MERCi will accept as tenants?

MERCi offers office space in Bridge 5 Mill only to groups that are directly working within one or more of the fields that we wish to promote. Office space within the building is limited and offered at very low rates. This is specifically because MERCi wishes to promote a particular approach to sustainable development. We wish to encourage different types of groups to work together and therefore offer space to small business, charities, voluntary and community groups. We also wish to support innovative approaches to our overall aims both in terms of what a group is trying to achieve and how they are trying to achieve it. As a result of this we reserve the right to refuse space to a group that is working towards sustainable development in preference to another group that MERCi feels is taking a more innovative or ethical approach.

5.0 Who MERCi will allow to use Bridge 5 Mill's resources?

The resources owned by MERCi and within Bridge 5 Mill are available only for groups who are working towards our aims in some way. They are not for use by any group whose activities go against these aims. These resources include meeting rooms for hire, various equipment and other resources such as our UK Online suite.



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Within this framework these resources are intended for groups who cannot access such resources by other means. In this way we can meet a real need and maximise the impact that our resources have. As a result most of our resources are available free of charge to community or un-funded groups.

6.0 Unforeseen situations

The list of areas above is in no way exhaustive and it is clear that many more questions will arise in the course of MERCi's development than have been covered within this policy. To try to develop a policy that did cover all such areas would be an endless process and result in an unwieldy policy. The above statements of principle are meant as a working guide to assist in making decisions about these unforeseen situations.

In general it is the case that MERCi would wish to avoid supporting or working with any organisation that was working against our overall aims. The only exception to this might be an organisation that MERCi considered to be making a genuine effort to re-adjust its operations in line with our principles of sustainable development.