

Gift acceptance policy

Introduction

The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta (the “Order”) raises funds from members, private and public donations. Sources of funds vary according to different countries, entities of the Order, types of projects and circumstances. This policy sets out the main principles governing the Order’s approach to gift acceptance. It establishes expectations as to the steps to be taken to ensure that the Order is not exposed to undue reputational or compliance risk.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all Melitense entities and volunteers acting on behalf of the Order as well as to all other entities directly or indirectly controlled by the Order. It should be applied in compliance with legal requirements and regulations locally in force. Should some of the requirements contained in this policy be less restrictive than local law, entities should adopt the more restrictive local requirements.

Overarching principles

- Entities of the Order should not accept gifts from donors if doing so risks compromising the reputation of the Order or otherwise adversely affects the Order’s works.
- In respect of fundraising, entities of the Order should comply with all local legislation and established best practice in the jurisdictions in which they are incorporated or operate.
- Entities of the Order should exercise caution in allowing donors to be seen as associated with the Order, mindful of the potential motivations of donors for any such visible association.

Expectations of entities

Taking account of the principles above, it is expected that all entities of the Order, if engaged in fundraising, should maintain a local policy on gift acceptance. This should establish the individual or committee responsible for oversight of gift acceptance (normally the entity’s board or equivalent), as well as any delegation of decision-making to executive management (if applicable).

The local gift acceptance policy and procedures should:

- Reflect the ethos of the Order. *While each donor relationship should be considered on its own merits, entities should presume against engaging with those whose funds originate from sectors likely to be at odds with Catholic teaching. This may include, but not be limited to, armaments or pornography.*
- Comply with any local legislation governing fundraising. *All relevant staff should be familiar with this legislation. Consideration should also be given to anti money-laundering (AML) requirements, and the Order’s AML policy.*
- Establish a process for screening donors. *This should be based both on an assessment of risk, as well as the value of a proposed donation, taking account of the cumulative effect of donations from the same donor.*
- Require due diligence on donors, proportionate to the value of the gift and perceived risk. *This may involve (inter alia) a search of publicly available data, reference to the Grand Magistry, or the use of specialist search and assessment firms. Thresholds at which different procedures apply may be helpful in determining the most appropriate approach.*
- Ensure that records are maintained of prospective donors screened. *These records must be maintained in compliance with GDPR (or equivalent local legislation) and should document the reason for the conclusion reached.*
- Establish a policy on anonymous donations. *Such donations are prohibited in some jurisdictions, or governed by statutory provisions (including maximum values). In any case, anonymous donations should be treated with additional caution, and accepted only when the entity can be satisfied that the donation is from a legal and acceptable source.*