

# ON GETTING INFLUENCE RIGHT

## TRUSTED DIALOGUE SERIES

**Overview** – Businesses are critical actors in the policy-making process. Through their interactions with government, they enable public decision-makers to learn about opportunities and trade-offs, consider the costs and benefits of business, and ultimately facilitate good decision making on a given policy issue. As such, the engagement between business and government is a natural part of the democratic process.

Corporate engagement practices have crucial implications on how societies achieve progress towards sustainable economic growth, the efficient use of economic resources and the consequent impacts on social well-being. On the one hand, these activities have the power to promote much-needed advancements towards more informed and ultimately better policies. On the other hand, experience shows that without the necessary safeguards, corporate influence can also lead to corruption, decisions on essential public policies that have hidden harmful impacts, failure to achieve sustainability objectives, as well as reputational damages to both governments and companies.

### How do we get influence “right”?

Getting influence “right” is a pressing challenge, both for business and government. Businesses are increasingly expected to engage more in finding solutions to society’s most pressing issues and are facing greater scrutiny than ever before from all stakeholders, notably their own employees, investors, media and the public. This has significantly raised expectations on business to commit to standards and act with transparency and integrity when engaging with the policy-making process.

Yet, ongoing scandals fueled by commercial pressures, a lack of integrity, or the lack of a common understanding of corporate responsibility, show that critical gaps remain between corporate pledges and actual political engagement practices, seeding instability in the market and broader distrust in society. Although some governments have rules to direct engagement with the private sector, there is no global standard to advise, assist and facilitate business in ‘getting influence right’. As such, private sector actors need comprehensive political engagement standards for businesses to better assess the impact of their influence, avoid reputational risks, and ensure they meet their long-term strategic goals.

### Our approach

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*The OECD “Trusted Dialogue on Getting Influence Right” aims to identify core principles of responsible corporate political engagement and develop implementation guidelines on responsible political engagement for the private sector. Through convening a community of government and business representatives, the project will discuss key political engagement issues facing relevant sectors and stakeholders.*

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The ‘Getting Influence Right’ project aims to produce a modern instrument, easily accessible and providing practical guidance for companies and their representatives on how to engage with governments responsibly over the policymaking process. Among other measures, the **Principles on Responsible Political Engagement for the Private Sector**<sup>1</sup> will clarify what policies could be implemented to manage and prevent conflict of interest, ensure integrity in lobbying practices and political financing, and uphold the transparent and neutral use of data to inform advice to policymakers.

To achieve this goal, the OECD will convene a set of meetings of the Trusted Dialogue Group on Getting Influence Right, each supported by a background policy paper covering key engagement issues facing key sectors and industries.

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<sup>1</sup> The Principles on Responsible Political Engagement for the private sector will complement the updated OECD Recommendation of the Council on Lobbying and Influence, scheduled for 2023. This new Recommendation updates the OECD Recommendation on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying (2010), which was the first international set of guidelines providing guidance on how to promote fair and equitable access to the public decision-making process.



## Who should participate to the Trusted Dialogue Group on Getting Influence Right?

The Group is open to **lobbying and government affairs practitioners** from companies, trade and business associations, law firms, lobbying and public affairs consulting firms lobbying the national level, the EU level or at the global level, as well as to **senior managers, ethics officers, compliance officers and ESG specialists** in charge of overseeing ethics and political engagement policies within these entities.

The Group will also welcome representatives from the public sector, including **integrity practitioners and public officials who are commonly the target of influence and engagement practices** from the private sector, to get their insights on current influence practices and main loopholes in influence-related regulations (lobbying, political finance) and standards for the private sector, such as lobbying codes of conduct.

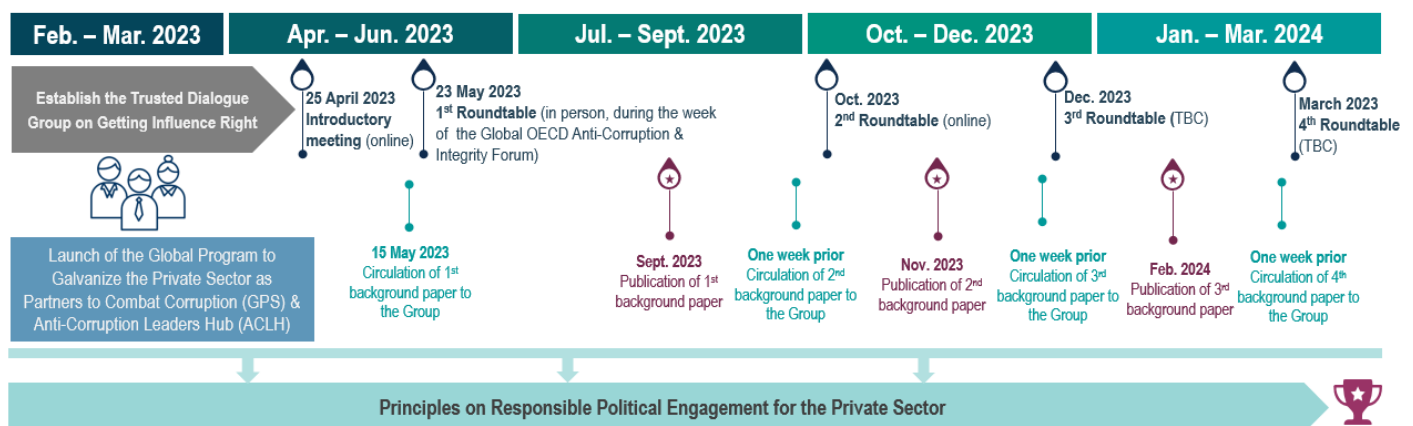
	<b>Private sector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house government &amp; corporate affairs professionals from companies and business / trade associations;</li> <li>Lobbying &amp; public affairs practitioners from law firms, lobbying / public affairs / consulting firms</li> <li>Company ethics officers, compliance officers and ESG officers</li> <li>Senior managers with oversight responsibilities of corporate political engagement policies</li> </ul>	<b>Focus on four key sectors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Health</li> <li>✓ Environment and climate change</li> <li>✓ Technology</li> <li>✓ Finance and Insurance</li> </ul>
	<b>Public sector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity practitioners (e.g., lobbying commissioners and oversight entities, electoral management bodies)</li> <li>"Lobbied" public officials (e.g., Members of Parliament, cabinet advisors from key ministries)</li> </ul>	

## What is the timeline of this project?

The OECD will set up the Trusted Dialogue Group on Getting Influence Right with a first meeting in Spring 2023. The Group will reconvene throughout the year, with a mix of in person and online meetings.

All meetings of the Group will be held under Chatham House Rules. Some meetings will include an additional public session open to interested stakeholders outside the Group.

The **Principles on Responsible Political Engagement** will be launched during the **2024 edition of the OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum**.



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