

# Mecommed Guidance

on Virtual and Hybrid Events

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## Introduction:

Within Mecomed, we are aiming to manage the impact of COVID-19 by keeping an eye on the longer-term changes that may significantly alter the future of educational events. Previously, Healthcare Professionals (“HCPs”), and the Healthcare industry as a whole, were relying heavily on conferences, congresses, symposiums, and other face-to-face meetings to share new scientific education and engage with other Healthcare Professionals.

Replacing face-to-face sessions with live virtual event platforms enables a continuous sharing of medical and scientific knowledge and related benefits of face-to-face meetings, which ultimately benefit the patient. With this new practice, a number of questions arise regarding the application of the Mecomed Code of Ethical Business Practice (the “Code”), therefore the Mecomed Compliance Committee has developed the following guidance applicable to virtual events.

**This guidance is not intended to replace or supersede any national laws or regulations or professional codes. Under no circumstances shall this guidance be considered as waiver of any of the Mecomed principles as set forth in the Code, namely:**

1. The Principle of Image and Perception
2. The Principle of Separation
3. The Principle of Transparency
4. The Principle of Equivalence
5. The Principle of Documentation

## Applicability of Mecomed Code of Ethical Business Practices:

Member Companies may invite HCPs to virtual or hybrid Company-Organized events and provide financial and/or in-kind support to Virtual or Hybrid Third-Party Organized Educational Events, in accordance with Part 1, Chapter 1 of the Mecomed Code. For the avoidance of doubt, Member Companies must not directly support the attendance of HCPs to Virtual or Hybrid Third-Party Organized Educational Events. Please refer to Part 1, Chapter 4.3 of the Code for the procedures related to Indirect Sponsorships.

## Definitions:

### Virtual Events:

Event consists of virtual exhibitions, presentations, panel discussions or live clinical procedures (e.g., hands-on sessions, surgery simulations, live surgeries, etc.) and their broadcasting to an audience which is not physically in attendance.

### Hybrid Events:

Event consists of exhibitions, presentations, panel discussions or live clinical procedures (e.g., hands-on sessions, surgery simulations, live surgeries, etc.) where the attendance is a mix of speakers and HCPs attending either physically or virtually.

\* All other capitalized terms shall be as defined in the glossary of the Code.

## Company Organized Events:

### 1. Guidance on Meals at Virtual Company Organized Events:

The practice of providing meals during Virtual Company Organized Events has given rise to some concerns specifically related to the COVID-19 response. In order to carefully consider and manage the provision of meals to HCPs during Virtual events organized by a Mecomed Member, the Mecomed Compliance Committee issues the following guidance for the below two categories:

#### **Meals to HCPs in their hospitals or clinics during the event can only be provided when the following conditions are met:**

- Local laws and regulations as well as the internal guidelines of the relevant Healthcare Organizations (“HCO”) allow such support.
- The Member Company hosting the event has identified a legitimate business need for providing meals during the Virtual event.
- Member Companies create an internal process to control meal ordering and delivery, addressing health and safety issues, in addition to ensuring that the meals are not used as an inappropriate inducement.
- Any activity in which Member Companies provide meals should follow the following requirements:
  - Member Companies may provide reasonable hospitality to HCPs participating in legitimate business meetings or educational activities as described and allowed in the Mecomed Code provided that any hospitality offered is subordinate in time and focus to the Event purpose.
  - Meal delivery is arranged for delivery at the invited HCP’s place of business, i.e., hospital or clinic, only;
  - The Virtual event, excluding any time reserved for meals, is a minimum of 2 hours in duration;
- Number of recipients:
  - In the case of a company-conducted virtual hands-on training, providing meals to an individual or a group is allowed;
  - In the case of a company educational or promotional event, providing meals are limited to a group of HCPs only. For the avoidance of doubt, a group should not be less than 3 HCPs;
- Invited HCPs must confirm their attendance before the event. Member Companies must track attendance to ensure that only appropriate recipients of the Virtual training/education program are receiving the meals;
- Only meal delivery is permitted. Providing cash or cash equivalents (e.g., restaurant or meal delivery service vouchers or gift cards) are not permitted.

#### **Meals to HCPs in their homes:**

- Home deliveries are not allowed in any circumstances.

## 2. Transparency for Virtual & Hybrid Events at Company Organized Events:

- **Employer Notification - (sponsorship of attendance only):**
  - For Company Organized Virtual Events, invitations to HCPs to participate in Company Organized Virtual Educational Events do not require Employer Notification.
  - For Company Organized Hybrid Events, Employer Notification is required whenever a Member Company sponsors travel, meals or accommodation for a Healthcare Professional.
- **Employer Notification - (arrangement with consultants):**
  - Whenever a Member Company sponsors/engages Healthcare Professional in a Company Organized Event or Procedure Training as a Consultant, Employer Notification is required.

## Third-Party Organized Educational Events:

### 1. Transparency for Virtual & Hybrid Events at Third-Party Organized Educational Events:

- **Employer Notification (arrangement with consultants):**

Whenever a Member Company sponsors/engages Healthcare Professionals in Third-Party Organized Educational Events or Procedure Training as a Consultant, Employer Notification is required.
- **Educational Grant Disclosure:**

Member Companies shall document and disclose all Educational Grants provided for Virtual and Hybrid events in accordance with the disclosure guidelines outlined in Part 2 of the Mecomed Code. The disclosure guidelines are therefore an integral part of the Code and need to be interpreted as such.

### 2. CVS Scope at Third-Party Organized Educational Virtual & Hybrid Events:

- **Third-Party Educational Virtual Events:**

CVS approval is not required; however, Member Companies must ensure they participate and/or support Third Party Educational Virtual Events in line with the Mecomed Code.
- **Third-Party Educational Hybrid Events:**

CVS approval is required, Member Companies must not support any Third Party Educational Hybrid Events without CVS approval.  
Please refer to Part 1, Chapter 2 of the Mecomed Code for the CVS assessment Criteria.

### 3. Arrangements with Consultants at Third Party Virtual & Hybrid Events:

- Please refer to Part 1, Chapter 5 of the Mecomed Code.

### 4. Promotional and Educational Items Provided to HCOs/HCPs at Virtual & Hybrid Events:

- Please refer to Part 1, Chapter 9 of the Mecomed Code

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On Behalf of Mecomed Compliance Committee:

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