

Senior arrangements, Systems and Controls

Chapter 10

Conflicts of interest



10.1 Application

Application to funeral plan distribution

10.1.-5 **G** This section applies to a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* in accordance with the tables in Part 3 of **SYSC 1 Annex 1**.

Application to insurance intermediaries

10.1.-4 **G**

- (1) Subject to **SYSC 10.1.-3R**, this section applies to a *firm* carrying on *insurance distribution activities* in accordance with the tables in Part 3 of **SYSC 1 Annex 1**. Certain *rules* are disapplied where the *firm* is subject to the provisions in the *IDD Regulation* (see **SYSC 10.1.-3R**).
- (2) Where a provision in this section applies to an *insurance intermediary*, it applies in relation to the carrying on of *insurance distribution activities*.

10.1.-3 **R** The *rules* and *guidance* in the table below do not apply to a *firm* when carrying on *insurance distribution* in relation to *insurance-based investment products* (see **SYSC 10.1A** for the provisions of the *IDD Regulation* on conflicts of interest).

Subject	Rule or guidance
Types of conflict	SYSC 10.1.4R, SYSC 10.1.4AG, SYSC 10.1.4BR, SYSC 10.1.4CR(1), (2) and (5) and SYSC 10.1.5G.
Record of conflicts	SYSC 10.1.6R, SYSC 10.1.6AG, SYSC 10.1.6AAR and SYSC 10.1.6BG
Disclosure of conflicts	SYSC 10.1.8R(1)(b), (2)(b) to (2)(d) and SYSC 10.1.9AR
Conflicts policy	SYSC 10.1.10R
Contents of policy	SYSC 10.1.11R, SYSC 10.1.11AG, SYSC 10.1.11AAR and SYSC 10.1.11BG

Application to a common platform firm

10.1.-2 **G** For a *common platform firm*:

- (1) the *MiFID Org Regulation* applies, as summarised in **SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2G**, **SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2-AR** and **SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2-BR**; and
- (2) the *rules* and *guidance* in the table below apply:

Subject	Applicable rule or guidance
Provision of services	SYSC 10.1.2G
Identifying conflicts	SYSC 10.1.3R
Types of conflicts	SYSC 10.1.5G
Managing conflicts	SYSC 10.1.7R
Conflicts policy	SYSC 10.1.12G

(3) ■ SYSC 10.1.7AR (Proportionality – insurance distribution activities), ■ SYSC 10.1.8R (Disclosure of conflicts) and ■ SYSC 10.1.11ABR (Contents of policy) also apply in relation to the carrying on of *insurance distribution activities*.

Application to a MiFID optional exemption firm and to a third-country firm

10.1.-1 **G** For a *MiFID optional exemption firm* and a *third country firm*, the rules and guidance in this chapter apply to them as if they were *rules* or as *guidance* in accordance with ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2CR(1).

General application

10.1.1 **R** (1) This section applies to a *firm* which provides services to its *clients* in the course of carrying on *regulated activities* or *ancillary activities* or providing *ancillary services* (but only where the *ancillary services* constitute *MiFID business*).

(2) This section also applies to a *UK UCITS management company*.

[Note: The provisions in ■ SYSC 10.1 also implement articles 27 and 28 of the *IDD*, articles 74(1) and 88 of *CRD* and as applied under the discretion in the third paragraph of article 95(2) of the *UK CRR*, *BCD* article 22 and *BCD* Annex V paragraph 1]

10.1.1A **R** This section also applies to:

- (1) a *full-scope UK AIFM* of:
 - (a) a *UK AIF*; and
 - (b) [deleted]
 - (c) a *non-UK AIF*; and
- (2) [deleted]

Requirements only apply if a service is provided

10.1.2 **G** (1) The requirements in this section only apply where a service is provided by a *firm*. The status of the *client* to whom the service is provided (as a *retail client*, *professional client* or *eligible counterparty*) is irrelevant for this purpose.

[Note: recital 46 to the *MiFID Org Regulation*]

For the avoidance of doubt, a reference to “service” in this section includes all *insurance distribution activities*.

SRD requirements

10.1.2A **R** The requirements in this section apply to an *SRD asset manager* with regard to its engagement activities covered by the *SRD*.

[Note: article 3g(3) of *SRD*]

Identifying conflicts

10.1.3 **R** A *firm* must take all appropriate steps to identify and to prevent or manage conflicts of interest between:

- (1) the *firm*, including its managers, employees and *appointed representatives* (or where applicable, *tiered agents*), or any *person* directly or indirectly linked to them by *control*, and a *client* of the *firm*; or
- (2) one *client* of the *firm* and another *client*;

that arise or may arise in the course of the *firm* providing any service referred to in **SYSC 10.1.1R** including those caused by the receipt of inducements from third parties or by the *firm's* own remuneration and other incentive structures.

[Note: article 23(1) of *MiFID* and articles 27 and 28(1) of the *IDD*]

Types of conflicts

10.1.4 **R** For the purposes of identifying the types of conflict of interest that arise, or may arise, in the course of providing a service and whose existence may damage the interests of a *client*, a *management company* must take into account, as a minimum, whether the *firm* or a *relevant person*, or a *person* directly or indirectly linked by *control* to the *firm*:

- (1) is likely to make a financial gain, or avoid a financial loss, at the expense of the *client*;
- (2) has an interest in the outcome of a service provided to the *client* or of a transaction carried out on behalf of the *client*, which is distinct from the *client's* interest in that outcome;
- (2A) in the case of a *management company* providing *collective portfolio management services* for a *UCITS scheme*, (2) also applies where the service is provided to, or the transaction is carried out on behalf of, a *client* other than the *UCITS scheme*;
- (3) has a financial or other incentive to favour the interest of another *client* or group of *clients* over the interests of the *client*;
- (4) carries on the same business as the *client*; or in the case of a *management company*, carries on the same activities for the *UCITS scheme* and for another *client* or *clients* which are not *UCITS schemes*; or

- (5) receives or will receive from a *person* other than the *client* an inducement in relation to a service provided to the *client*, in the form of monies, goods or services, other than the standard commission or fee for that service.

The conflict of interest may result from the *firm* or *person* providing a service referred to in ■ SYSC 10.1.1 R or engaging in any other activity or, in the case of a *management company*, whether as a result of providing *collective portfolio management services* or otherwise.

[Note: article 17(1) of the *UCITS implementing Directive*]

10.1.4A G Other *firms* (except *common platform firms*, *UCITS management companies* and *insurance intermediaries*) should take account of the *rule* on the types of conflicts (see ■ SYSC 10.1.4 R) in accordance with ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.3R.

10.1.4B R For the purposes of identifying the types of conflict of interest that arise, or may arise, in the course of carrying on *insurance distribution activities* or *funeral plan distributions* and whose existence may damage the interests of a *client* ("A"), a *firm* must assess whether:

- (1) the *firm* or a *relevant person*, or a *person* directly or indirectly linked by *control* to the *firm*; or
- (2) (in the case of conflicts between A and another *client*) the other *client*,

has an interest in the outcome of the *insurance distribution activities* or *funeral plan distribution*, which meets the following criteria:

- (3) it is distinct from A's interest in the outcome of the *insurance distribution activities* or *funeral plan distributions* ; and
- (4) it has the potential to influence the outcome of the activities to the detriment of A.

10.1.4C R For the purpose of carrying out the assessment in ■ SYSC 10.1.4BR, a *firm* must take into account, as a minimum, whether the *firm* or a *relevant person*, or a *person* directly or indirectly linked by *control* to the *firm*:

- (1) is likely to make a financial gain, or avoid a financial loss, at the expense of the *client*;
- (2) has a financial or other incentive to favour the interest of another *client* or group of *clients* over the interest of the *client*;
- (3) carries on the same business as the *client*;
- (4) receives or will receive from a *person* other than the *client* an inducement in relation to a service provided to the *client*, in the form of monies, goods or services, other than the standard commission or fee for that service; or

(5) is substantially involved in the management or development of *policies*, in particular where such a *person* has an influence on the pricing of those policies or their distribution costs.

10.1.5 **G** The circumstances which should be treated as giving rise to a conflict of interest cover cases where there is a conflict between the interests of the *firm* or certain *persons* connected to the *firm* or the *firm's group* and the duty the *firm* owes to a *client*; or between the differing interests of two or more of its *clients*, to whom the *firm* owes in each case a duty. It is not enough that the *firm* may gain a benefit if there is not also a possible disadvantage to a *client*, or that one *client* to whom the *firm* owes a duty may make a gain or avoid a loss without there being a concomitant possible loss to another such *client*.

[Note: recital 45 to the *MiFID Org Regulation*]

Record of conflicts

10.1.6 **R** A *management company*, an *insurance intermediary* and a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* must keep and regularly update a record of the kinds of service or activity carried out by or on behalf of that *firm* in which a conflict of interest entailing a material risk of damage to the interests of one or more *clients* has arisen or, in the case of an ongoing service or activity, may arise.

[Note: article 20(1) of the *UCITS implementing Directive*]

10.1.6A **G** Other *firms* (other than *common platform firms* and *insurance intermediaries*) should also take account of the *rule* on records of conflicts (see **SYSC 10.1.6 R**) in accordance with **SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2BR**, **SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2CR** and **SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.3R**.

10.1.6AA **R** An *insurance intermediary* and a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* must ensure that its management body receives on a frequent basis, and at least annually, written reports on all situations referred to in **SYSC 10.1.6R**.

10.1.6B **G** A *firm* (other than a *common platform firm* and an *insurance intermediary*) should read **SYSC 10.1.6AAR** as if "should" appeared in that rule instead of "must".

Managing conflicts

10.1.7 **R** A *firm* must maintain and operate effective organisational and administrative arrangements with a view to taking all reasonable steps to prevent conflicts of interest as defined in **SYSC 10.1.3 R** from adversely affecting the interests of its *clients*.

[Note: article 16(3) of *MiFID* and article 27 of the *IDD*]

Proportionality – insurance distribution activities

10.1.7A **R** Where a *firm* carries on *insurance distribution activities*, the arrangements in ■ SYSC 10.1.7R must be proportionate to the activities performed, the *policies* sold and the type of *insurance distributor* the *firm* is or uses.
[Note: article 27 of the *IDD*]

Disclosure of conflicts

10.1.8 **R** (1) If arrangements made by a *firm* under ■ SYSC 10.1.7 R are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to the interests of a *client* will be prevented, the *firm* must clearly disclose the following to the *client* before undertaking business for the *client*:
(a) the general nature or sources of conflicts of interest, or both; and
(b) the steps taken to mitigate those risks.
(2) The disclosure must:
(a) be made in a *durable medium*;
(b) clearly state that the organisational and administrative arrangements established by the *firm* to prevent or manage that conflict are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that the risks of damage to the interests of the *client* will be prevented;
(c) include specific description of the conflicts of interest that arise in the provision of *funeral plan distribution*, *insurance distribution activities*, *investment services* or *ancillary services*;
(d) explain the risks to the *client* that arise as a result of the conflicts of interest; and
(e) include sufficient detail, taking into account the nature of the *client*, to enable that *client* to take an informed decision with respect to the service in the context of which the conflict of interest arises.
(3) This *rule* does not apply to the extent that ■ SYSC 10.1.21 R applies.

[Note: 23(2) and (3) of *MiFID* and article 28(2) and (3) of the *IDD*]

10.1.8A **R** [deleted]

10.1.9 **G** *Firms* should aim to identify and manage the conflicts of interest arising in relation to their various business lines and their *group's* activities under a comprehensive *conflicts of interest policy*. In particular, the disclosure of conflicts of interest by a *firm* should not exempt it from the obligation to maintain and operate the effective organisational and administrative arrangements under ■ SYSC 10.1.7 R. While disclosure of specific conflicts of interest is required by ■ SYSC 10.1.8 R, an over-reliance on disclosure without adequate consideration as to how conflicts may appropriately be managed is not permitted.

- 10.1.9A **R** A *firm* must treat disclosure of conflicts pursuant to ■ SYSC 10.1.8R as a measure of last resort to be used only where the effective organisational and administrative arrangements established by the *firm* to prevent or manage its conflicts of interest in accordance with ■ SYSC 10.1.7R are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to the interests of the *client* will be prevented.

Conflicts policy

- 10.1.10 **R**
- (1) A *management company*, an *insurance intermediary* and a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* must establish, implement and maintain an effective *conflicts of interest policy* that is set out in writing and is appropriate to the size and organisation of the *firm* and the nature, scale and complexity of its business.
 - (2) Where the *management company*, or *insurance intermediary* or *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* is a member of a *group*, the policy must also take into account any circumstances, of which the *firm* is or should be aware, which may give rise to a conflict of interest arising as a result of the structure and business activities of other members of the *group*.

[Note: article 18(1) of the *UCITS implementing Directive*]

Contents of policy

- 10.1.11 **R**
- (1) The *conflicts of interest policy* must include the following content:
 - (a) it must identify in accordance with ■ SYSC 10.1.3 R, ■ SYSC 10.1.4 R, ■ SYSC 10.1.4BR and ■ SYSC 10.1.4CR (as applicable), by reference to the specific services and activities carried out by or on behalf of the *management company*, *insurance intermediary* or *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution*, the circumstances which constitute or may give rise to a conflict of interest entailing a material risk of damage to the interests of one or more *clients*; and
 - (b) it must specify procedures to be followed and measures to be adopted in order to manage such conflicts.
 - (2) The procedures and measures provided for in paragraph (1)(b) must:
 - (a) be designed to ensure that *relevant persons* engaged in different business activities involving a conflict of interest of the kind specified in paragraph (1)(a) carry on those activities at a level of independence appropriate to the size and activities of the *management company* and of the *group* to which either of them respectively belongs, and to the materiality of the risk of damage to the interests of *clients*;
 - (aa) (for an *insurance intermediary* or a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution*) be designed to ensure that the *insurance distribution activities* or *funeral plan distribution* are carried out in accordance with the best interests of the *client* and are not biased due to conflicting interests of the *insurance intermediary*, the *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* or another *client*; and

- (b) include, for an *insurance intermediary* or a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution*, where appropriate, the following, and for a *management company*, such of the following as are necessary and appropriate for the *management company* to ensure the requisite degree of independence:
- (i) effective procedures to prevent or control the exchange of information between *relevant persons* engaged in activities involving a risk of a conflict of interest where the exchange of that information may harm the interests of one or more *clients*;
 - (ii) the separate supervision of *relevant persons* whose principal functions involve carrying out activities on behalf of, or providing services to, *clients* whose interests may conflict, or who otherwise represent different interests that may conflict, including those of the *firm*;
 - (iii) the removal of any direct link between the remuneration of *relevant persons* principally engaged in one activity and the remuneration of, or revenues generated by, different *relevant persons* principally engaged in another activity, where a conflict of interest may arise in relation to those activities;
 - (iv) measures to prevent or limit any *person* from exercising inappropriate influence over the way in which a *relevant person* carries out services or activities;
 - (v) measures to prevent or control the simultaneous or sequential involvement of a *relevant person* in separate services or activities where such involvement may impair the proper management of conflicts of interest; and
 - (vi) (for *insurance intermediaries* or *firms* carrying on *funeral plan distribution*) a gifts and benefits policy which determines clearly under which conditions gifts and benefits can be accepted or granted and which steps are to be taken when accepting and granting gifts and benefits.
- (3) If the adoption or the practice of one or more of those measures and procedures does not ensure the requisite level of independence, a *management company* must adopt such alternative or additional measures and procedures as are necessary and appropriate for the purposes of paragraph (1)(b).
- (4) If one or more of the measures and procedures in paragraph (2) is not appropriate for the purposes of paragraph (2)(aa), an *insurance intermediary* or a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution* must adopt such alternative measures and procedures as are necessary and appropriate.
- (5) The procedures and measures provided for in paragraph (1)(b) must be appropriate to the size and activities of an *insurance intermediary* or a *firm* carrying on *funeral plan distribution*, the *group* to which it may belong and to the risk of damage to the interests of the *client*.

[Note: articles 18(2), 19(1) and 19(2) of the *UCITS implementing Directive*]

- 10.1.11A** **G** Other *firms* (except *common platform firms*, *UCITS management companies* and *insurance intermediaries* and *firms carrying on funeral plan distribution*) should take account of the *rules relating to conflicts of interest policies* (see ■ SYSC 10.1.10 R and ■ SYSC 10.1.11 R) in accordance with ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2BR, ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2CR and ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.3R.
- 10.1.11AA** **R** An *insurance intermediary* and a *firm carrying on funeral plan distribution* must assess and periodically review, on at least an annual basis, the *conflicts of interest policy* established in accordance with ■ SYSC 10.1.10R and ■ SYSC 10.1.11R and should take all appropriate measures to address any deficiencies (such as over reliance on disclosure of conflicts of interest).
- 10.1.11AB** **R** A *common platform firm*, in relation to its *insurance distribution activities*, must:
- take into account the factors set out in ■ SYSC 10.1.4BR(4) and ■ SYSC 10.1.4CR(5) when complying with article 33 of the *MiFID Org Regulation* (as applied as a rule by ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2-AR or 3.2-BR(2)); and
- include the measure set out in ■ SYSC 10.1.11R(2)(b)(vi) in the list of measures to be adopted, where necessary, when complying with article 34 (3) of the *MiFID Org Regulation* (as applied as a rule by ■ SYSC 1 Annex 1 3.2-AR or 3.2-BR(2)).
- 10.1.11B** **G** A *firm* (other than a *common platform firm*, an *insurance intermediary* and a *firm carrying on funeral plan distribution*) should read ■ SYSC 10.1.11AAR as if “should” appeared in that rule instead of “must”.
- 10.1.12** **G** In drawing up a *conflicts of interest policy* which identifies circumstances which constitute or may give rise to a conflict of interest, a *firm* should pay special attention to the activities of investment research and advice, proprietary trading, portfolio management and corporate finance business, including underwriting or selling in an offering of securities and advising on mergers and acquisitions. In particular, such special attention is appropriate where the *firm* or a *person* directly or indirectly linked by *control* to the *firm* performs a combination of two or more of those activities.
- [Note: recital 47 to the *MiFID Org Regulation*]
- 10.1.13** **G** [deleted]
- 10.1.14** **G** [deleted]
- 10.1.15** **G** [deleted]

Application of conflicts of interest rules to non-common platform firms when producing investment research or non-independent research

10.1.16 **R**

The rules relating to:

- (1) types of conflict (see ■ SYSC 10.1.4 R);
- (2) records of conflicts (see ■ SYSC 10.1.6 R); and
- (3) *conflicts of interest policies* (see ■ SYSC 10.1.10 R and ■ SYSC 10.1.11 R);

also apply to a *firm* which is not a *common platform firm* when it produces, or arranges for the production of, *investment research* that is intended or likely to be subsequently disseminated to *clients* of the *firm* or to the public, and when it produces or disseminates *non-independent research*, in accordance with ■ COBS 12.2.

Additional requirements for a management company

10.1.17 **R**

A *UK UCITS management company*, when identifying the types of conflict of interests for the purposes of ■ SYSC 10.1.4 R, must take into account:

- (1) the interests of the *firm*, including those deriving from its belonging to a *group* or from the performance of services and activities, the interests of the *clients* and the duty of the *firm* towards the *UCITS scheme* it manages; and
- (2) where it manages two or more *UCITS schemes*, the interests of all of them.

[Note: article 17(2) of the *UCITS implementing Directive*]

10.1.18 **G**

For a *UK UCITS management company*, references to client in ■ SYSC 10.1.4 R and in the other *rules* in this section should be construed as referring to any *UCITS scheme* managed by that *firm* or which it intends to manage, and with or for the benefit of which the relevant activity is to be carried on.

Structure and organisation of a management company

10.1.19 **R**

A *UK UCITS management company* must be structured and organised in such a way as to minimise the risk of a *UCITS scheme's* or *client's* interests being prejudiced by conflicts of interest between the *UK UCITS management company* and its *clients*, between two of its *clients*, between one of its *clients* and a *UCITS scheme*, or between two such *schemes*.

[Note: articles 12(1)(b) and 14(1)(d) of the *UCITS Directive*]

Avoidance of conflicts of interest for a management company

10.1.20 **R**

A *UK UCITS management company* must try to avoid conflicts of interest and, when they cannot be avoided, ensure that the *UCITS schemes* it manages are fairly treated.

[Note: articles 12(1)(b) and 14(1)(d) of the *UCITS Directive*]

- 10.1.21** **R** **Disclosure of conflicts of interest for a management company**
- (1) Where the organisational or administrative arrangements made by a *UK UCITS management company* for the management of conflicts of interest are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to the interests of the *UCITS scheme* it manages or of its *Unitholders* will be prevented, the *senior personnel* or other competent internal body of the *firm* must be promptly informed in order for them to take any necessary decision to ensure that in all cases the *firm* acts in the best interests of the *scheme* and of its *Unitholders*.
- (2) A *UK UCITS management company* must report situations referred to in (1) to the *Unitholders* of the *UCITS scheme* it manages by any appropriate *durable medium* and give reasons for its decision.

[Note: articles 20(2) and 20(3) of the *UCITS implementing Directive*]

- 10.1.22** **R** **Collective portfolio management investment firms**
- A *collective portfolio management investment firm* which manages investments other than for an *AIF* or *UCITS* for which it has been appointed as manager, must obtain approval from its *client* before it invests all or part of the *client's* portfolio in *units* or *shares* of an *AIF* or *UCITS* it manages.

[Note: article 12(2)(a) of the *UCITS Directive* and article 12(2)(a) of *AIFMD*]

- 10.1.23** **R** **Additional requirements for an AIFM**
- An *AIFM* must take all reasonable steps to identify conflicts of interest that arise, in the course of managing *AIFs*, between:
- (1) the *AIFM*, including its managers, *employees* or any person directly or indirectly linked to the *AIFM* by *control*, and an *AIF* managed by the *AIFM* or the investors in that *AIF*; or
 - (2) an *AIF* or the investors in that *AIF*, and another *AIF* or the investors in that *AIF*; or
 - (3) an *AIF* or the investors in that *AIF*, and another *client* of the *AIFM*; or
 - (4) an *AIF* or the investors in that *AIF*, and a *UCITS* managed by the *AIFM* or the investors in that *UCITS*; or
 - (5) two *clients* of the *AIFM*.

[Note: article 14(1) first paragraph of *AIFMD*]

- 10.1.24** **R** An *AIFM* must take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest and, when they cannot be avoided, manage, monitor and (where applicable) disclose those conflicts of interest in order to prevent them from adversely affecting the interests of the *AIFs* and their investors, and to ensure that the *AIFs* it manages are fairly treated.

[Note: article 12(1)d of *AIFMD*]

- 10.1.25 **R** An *AIFM* must:
- (1) maintain and operate effective organisational and administrative arrangements, with a view to taking all reasonable steps designed to identify, prevent, manage and monitor conflicts of interest in order to prevent them from adversely affecting the interests of the *AIFs* and their investors;
 - (2) segregate, within its own operating environment, tasks and responsibilities which may be regarded as incompatible with each other or which may potentially generate systematic conflicts of interest; and
 - (3) assess whether its operating conditions may involve any other material conflicts of interest and disclose them to the *AIF's* investors.

[Note: article 14(1) second and third paragraphs of *AIFMD*]

- 10.1.26 **R** If the organisational arrangements made by the *AIFM* to identify, prevent, manage and monitor conflicts of interest are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to investors' interests will be prevented, the *AIFM* must:
- (1) clearly disclose the general nature or sources of conflicts of interest to the investors before undertaking business on their behalf; and
 - (2) develop appropriate policies and procedures.

[Note: article 14(2) of *AIFMD*]

Subordinate measures for alternative investment fund managers

- 10.1.27 **G** Articles 30 to 37 of the *AIFMD level 2 regulation* provide detailed rules supplementing the provisions of article 14 of *AIFMD*.

10.1A IDD Regulation – Conflicts of interest

Application

- 10.1A.1 **G** The *IDD Regulation* applies directly to a *firm* when carrying on *insurance distribution* in relation to *insurance-based investment products*. The relevant articles relating to conflicts of interest are set out in this section for information only.

Identifying conflicts

- 10.1A.2 **UK** 3(1) For the purposes of identifying, in accordance with [■ SYSC 3.3.5R, ■ SYSC 3.3.13R, ■ SYSC 10.1.3R and ■ SYSC 10.1.8R], in so far as those rules apply to the insurance-based investment products, the types of conflicts of interest that arise in the course of carrying out any insurance distribution activities related to insurance-based investment products and which entail a risk of damage to the interests of a customer, insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall assess whether they, a relevant person or any person directly or indirectly linked to them by control, have an interest in the outcome of the insurance distribution activities, which meets the following criteria:
- it is distinct from the customer's or potential customer's interest in the outcome of the insurance distribution activities;
 - it has the potential to influence the outcome of the distribution activities to the detriment of the customer.
- Insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall proceed in the same way for the purposes of identifying conflicts of interest between one customer and another.
- 3(2) For the purposes of the assessment pursuant to paragraph 1, insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall take into account, by way of minimum criteria, the following situations:
- the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking, a relevant person or any person directly or indirectly linked to them by control is likely to make a financial gain, or avoid a financial loss, to the potential detriment of the customer;
 - the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking, a relevant person or any person directly or indirectly linked to them by control has a financial or other incentive to favour the interest of another customer or group of customers over the interest of the customer;

the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking, a relevant person or any person directly or indirectly linked by control to an insurance intermediary or an insurance undertaking is substantially involved in the management or development of insurance-based investment products, in particular where such a person has an influence on the pricing of those products or their distribution costs.

[Note: article 3 of the *IDD Regulation*]

Conflicts policy

10.1A.3 UK

4(1) For the purposes of [■ SYSC 3.3.8R, ■ SYSC 3.3.9R, ■ SYSC 10.1.3R, ■ SYSC 10.1.7R and ■ SYSC 10.1.7AR], in so far as those rules apply to insurance-based investment products, insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall be expected to establish, implement and maintain an effective conflicts of interest policy set out in writing and appropriate to their size and organisation and the nature, scale and complexity of their business.

Where the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking is a member of a group, the policy shall also take into account any circumstances, of which the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking is or should be aware, which may give rise to a conflict of interest arising as a result of the structure and business activities of other members of the group.

[Note: article 4(1) of the *IDD Regulation*]

Contents of policy

10.1A.4 R

4(2)The conflicts of interest policy established in accordance with paragraph 1 shall include the following content:

with reference to the specific insurance distribution activities carried out, the circumstances which constitute or may give rise to a conflict of interest entailing a risk of damage to the interests of one or more customers;

procedures to be followed and measures to be adopted in order to manage such conflicts and prevent them from damaging the interests of the customer.

[Note: article 4(2) of the *IDD Regulation*]

10.1A.4 EU

10.1A.5 UK

The procedures and measures referred to in Article 4(2)(b) shall be appropriate to the size and activities of the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking and of the group to which they may belong, and to the risk of damage to the interests of the customer.

The procedures to be followed and measures to be adopted in accordance with Article 4(2)(b) shall include, where appropriate, the following:

effective procedures to prevent or control the exchange of information between relevant persons engaged in activities

involving a risk of conflict of interest where the exchange of that information may damage the interests of one or more customers;

the separate supervision of relevant persons whose principal functions involve carrying out activities on behalf of, or providing services, to customers whose interests may conflict, or who otherwise represent different interests that may conflict, including those of the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking;

the removal of any direct link between payments, including remuneration, to relevant persons engaged in one activity and payments, including remuneration, to different relevant persons principally engaged in another activity, where a conflict of interest may arise in relation to those activities;

measures to prevent or limit any person from exercising inappropriate influence over the way in which insurance distribution activities are carried out by the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking or their managers or employees or any person directly or indirectly linked to them by control;

measures to prevent or control the simultaneous or sequential involvement of a relevant person in separate insurance distribution activities where such involvement may impair the proper management of conflicts of interest;

a gifts and benefits policy which determines clearly under which conditions gifts and benefits can be accepted or granted and which steps are to be taken when accepting and granting gifts and benefits.

5(2) Where insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings can demonstrate that the measures and procedures referred to in paragraph 1 are not appropriate to ensure that the insurance distribution activities are carried out in accordance with the best interest of the customer and are not biased due to conflicting interests of the insurance intermediary, the insurance undertaking or another customer, insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall adopt adequate alternative measures and procedures for that purpose.

[Note: article 5 of the *IDD Regulation*]

Disclosure of conflicts

10.1A.6 UK

6(1) Insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall avoid over-reliance on disclosure to ensure that disclosure to customers, pursuant to [■ SYSC 3.3.13R and ■ SYSC 10.1.8R], in so far as those rules apply to insurance-based investment products, is a measure of last resort that can be used only where the effective organisational and administrative arrangements established by the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking to prevent or manage conflicts of interest in accordance with [■ SYSC 3.3.8R, ■ SYSC 3.3.9R, ■ SYSC 10.1.3R, ■ SYSC 10.1.7R and ■ SYSC 10.1.7AR], in so far as those rules apply to insurance-based investment products are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to the interests of the customer will be prevented.

6(2)For the purposes of a disclosure of conflicts of interest insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall do all of the following:

- provide a specific description of the conflict of interest in question;
- explain the general nature and sources of the conflict of interest;
- explain the risks to the consumer that arise as a result of the conflict of interest and the steps undertaken to mitigate those risks;
- clearly state that the organisational and administrative arrangements established by the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking to prevent or manage the conflict of interest are not sufficient to ensure, with reasonable confidence, that risks of damage to the interests of the customer will be prevented.

[Note: article 6 of the *IDD Regulation*]

Review of conflicts policy

10.1A.7 UK

7(1)For the purposes of [■ SYSC 3.3.8R, ■ SYSC 3.3.9R, ■ SYSC 10.1.3R, ■ SYSC 10.1.7R and ■ SYSC 10.1.7AR], in so far as those rules apply to insurance-based investment products, insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall assess and periodically review, on an at least annual basis, the conflicts of interest policy established in accordance with Article 4 and take all appropriate measures to address any deficiencies.

[Note: article 7(1) of the *IDD Regulation*]

Record keeping

10.1A.8 UK

7(2)Insurance intermediaries and insurance undertakings shall keep and regularly update a record of the situations in which a conflict of interest entailing a risk of damage to the interests of a customer has arisen or, in the case of an ongoing service or activity may arise.

Senior management of the insurance intermediary or insurance undertaking shall receive on a frequent basis, and at least annually, written reports on the situations referred to in the first subparagraph.

[Note: article 7(2) of the *IDD Regulation*]

10.2 Chinese walls

Application

- 10.2.1 **R** This section applies to any *firm*.

Control of information

- 10.2.2 **R**
- (1) When a *firm* establishes and maintains a *Chinese wall* (that is, an arrangement that requires information held by a *person* in the course of carrying on one part of the business to be withheld from, or not to be used for, *persons* with or for whom it acts in the course of carrying on another part of its business) it may:
- (a) withhold or not use the information held; and
 - (b) for that purpose, permit *persons* employed in the first part of its business to withhold the information held from those employed in that other part of the business;
- but only to the extent that the business of one of those parts involves the carrying on of *regulated activities*, *ancillary activities* or, in the case of *MIFID business*, the provision of *ancillary services*.
- (2) Information may also be withheld or not used by a *firm* when this is required by an established arrangement maintained between different parts of the business (of any kind) in the same *group*. This provision does not affect any requirement to transmit or use information that may arise apart from the *rules* in *COBS*.
- (3) For the purpose of this *rule*, "maintains" includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that the arrangements remain effective and are adequately monitored, and must be interpreted accordingly.
- (4) [deleted]

Effect of rules

- 10.2.3 **G** ■ SYSC 10.2.2 R is made under section 137P of the *Act* (Control of information rules). It has the following effect:
- (1) acting in conformity with ■ SYSC 10.2.2 R(1) provides a defence against proceedings brought under sections 89(2), 90(1) and 91(1) of the Financial Services Act 2012 (Misleading statements, Misleading impressions and Misleading statements etc. in relation to benchmarks) - see sections 89(3)(b), 90(9)(c) and 91(3)(b); and
 - (2) [deleted]

(3) acting in conformity with ■ SYSC 10.2.2 R (1) provides a defence for a firm against FCA enforcement action, or an action for damages under section 138D of the Act, based on a breach of a relevant requirement to disclose or use this information.

Attribution of knowledge

10.2.4 **R** When any of the rules of COBS or CASS apply to a firm that acts with knowledge, the firm will not be taken to act with knowledge for the purposes of that rule if none of the relevant individuals involved on behalf of the firm acts with that knowledge as a result of arrangements established under ■ SYSC 10.2.2 R.

10.2.5 **G** When a firm manages a conflict of interest using the arrangements in ■ SYSC 10.2.2 R which take the form of a Chinese wall, individuals on the other side of the wall will not be regarded as being in possession of knowledge denied to them as a result of the Chinese wall.

