



# BOCONGO

BOTSWANA COUNCIL OF  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

## NGO Code of Conduct

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Code of Conduct drafted by the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO).

### 1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Code of Conduct:** is defined as a "prevailing standard of moral and social behaviour".

**Sector:** shall mean the "NGO sector".

**NGO:** is a legally formed autonomous organisation that possesses non-profit making status and whose primary motivation is to improve the wellbeing of the people.

**Note:** definition of any other word contained in this document will be read with the same meaning and interpretation as may be contained in the Constitution or written laws of Botswana.

### 2. PREAMBLE

We, the NGOs operating in Botswana, take cognisance that the social, economic and political transformation in Botswana and the process of globalisation are creating new opportunities and demands on the NGO sector. NGOs need to remain relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people they serve and to respect their cultural values and human rights. NGOs must be transparent in their actions and accountable for resources they use. In developing this Code of Conduct, the NGOs are guided by Botswana's Vision 2016, which states that (a) Botswana will be a society distinguished by the pursuit of excellency through a culture of discipline, (b) Botswana of the future will be a community oriented democracy, and (c) Botswana of 2016 will emphasise the accountability of all citizens from the state president down to community leaders for their actions and decisions.

The Code of Conduct will enable NGOs to respond to the challenges of sustaining democratic and participatory institutions and strengthening an enabling environment in which people can determine collectively or individually their destiny. In view of this,

NGOs reaffirm their commitment to:

- i. Sustain and adhere to the basic principles of democracy, social justice, equality, human rights and good governance.
- ii. Protect the integrity of their independence and autonomy.
- iii. Remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.
- iv. Promote the application of best practices within the context of sustainable human development.
- v. Support and encourage people's participation in the development process as the norm or the policy and not an option or a privilege.

**3. From the above premise,** NGOs commit themselves to achieve the goals set out in the preamble and implement the guidelines set out below in the Code of Conduct.

### **3.1 Establishing an Enabling Environment**

NGOs commit themselves to:

- i. Promote an enabling environment that will facilitate the respect, protection and sustenance of the freedom of association, expression and conscience.
- ii. Promote and sustain an enabling environment in which communities can effectively participate in development issues that affect their lives.
- iii. Establish an enabling environment for staff to be creative and resourceful to the best interest of the organisation, their beneficiaries and for their own growth and development based on mutual trust, honesty, and personal commitment.

### **3.2 Values**

- i. While NGOs will remain diverse entities pursuing different interests, they commit themselves to pursue and sustain institutional values that are based on the desire to improve the welfare of the people and enhance people's awareness of their development needs and rights.
- ii. Institutional values shall also be derived from the search for excellence, respect of culture and history of the people and promotion of people centred sustainable development.
- iii. Individual values of board members, staff, volunteers and partners shall not compromise the integrity of institutional values.

### **3.3 Transparency**

The NGO sector commits itself to ensure that NGO management institutions including Boards of Directors, Boards of Trustees, Executive Committees, Councils and secretariats shall remain transparent in all their functions.

### **3.4 Governance**

i. NGOs shall ensure the existence of democratic management institutions and that the people who serve in them are democratically elected through a participatory process.

ii. NGOs shall ensure that, once people are elected to positions of power or authority, they do not perpetuate their stay and should demonstrate high moral values and integrity.

iii. Adequate political and social space shall be given to NGOs, staff and project beneficiaries for them to determine their niche, roles and responsibilities in society and development in general.

iv. Management institutions shall be guided by basic principles of social justice, political wisdom and the ability to accept the shifting balance of power from institutions to people and communities.

v. All NGOs shall develop clear policies and management guidelines as the basic foundations for best practices.

vi. NGO leaders shall avoid potential conflict of interest between their political and NGO interests.

### **3.5 Accountability**

NGOs reaffirm their commitment to:

i. Be accountable for their actions and decisions, not only to donors and governments but also to project beneficiaries and staff.

ii. Be accountable for financial resources received from donors, government, members, other partner organisations or self-generated activities.

### **3.6 Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation**

NGOs take cognisance that resource mobilisation poses great challenges to the sustainability of NGO interventions. In view of this, NGOs commit themselves to:

i. Be transparent in their fundraising practices to all stakeholders.

ii. Involve communities in all fundraising being done on their behalf or in their names.

iii. In the event that an NGO intends to raise funds from more than one donor and in the interest of being transparent, to provide the appropriate information to all interested parties of their intention to do so.

iv. Avoid diverting funds to purposes other than that for which the funds were raised.

v. Ensure that financial support does not compromise their independence, autonomy and hence their ability to speak for the people.

### **3.7 Financial Management**

NGOs commit themselves to adhere to professional standards of accountancy and audit procedures as stipulated in law and in particular to:

i. Fulfil all statutory financial management and reporting requirements.

ii. Establish proper and effective financial management policies, procedures and systems.

iii. Establish an effective financial monitoring system through proper accounting systems.

### **3.8 Management of Human Resources**

i. NGOs shall recognise and respect that staff are individually different, resourceful in their own way and display loyalty to the institution in different forms.

ii. Staff rights, dignity and freedom of association, conscience and expression shall be respected and protected. It is these elements that make people different but bind them together by a common understanding of why they are pursuing common goals in the NGO sector.

iii. NGOs shall develop and implement clear policies, guidelines and procedures that relate to staff welfare, development and safeguarding of their rights.

iv. Staff recruitment, promotion and opportunities for development and training shall be given to all staff on the basis of merit and qualifications.

v. NGOs will initiate, where possible and practical, incentives that will help them to retain professional and technically qualified staff.

### **3.9 NGO Management**

To be effective partners in the development process, NGOs shall ensure that they will take the initiative to:

i. Define clearly management and staff roles and responsibilities to avoid conflicts within the organisation. Such roles shall be properly documented and communicated to all concerned.

- ii. Mainstream participatory management processes in all functions of the organisation to enhance ownership and the quality of decision-making.
- iii. Encourage the creation of new leaders and improvement of existing leadership.
- iv. Articulate their organisational vision, mission, values and objectives and have them understood by all stakeholders.

### **3.10 Capacity Building**

NGOs commit themselves to build and strengthen their capacity given the increased demand for services, new and challenging roles and responsibilities and in particular:

- i. Focus on strategic priority areas such as project development and management, fundraising, human resource development and technology.
- ii. Ensure that programmes contain components of capacity building and strengthening, especially with regard to human resources.
- iii. Establish partnerships between and among them in order to tap into expertise that already exists within the NGO sector.
- vii. Empower their staff and project beneficiaries in decision-making by decentralising decision-making and skills training.

### **3.11 Networking, Co-ordination, Co-operation and Communication**

Networking, co-ordination, co-operation and communication among and between NGOs is based on shared values, visions and objectives. NGOs commit themselves to improve co-operation and networking, especially through the sectoral networks and in particular to:

- i. Promote and support networking modalities that will facilitate the reduction of competition and duplication of activities.
- ii. Support and promote networking activities that facilitate information sharing and exchange of experiences among and between the various stakeholders. Information sharing should not compromise institutional confidentiality where necessary.
- iii. Improve communication with staff, project beneficiaries and other stakeholders as a strategy of ensuring that everyone has the right information on projects and other activities.
- iv. Take into account the principle of the right to know while considering access to information by stakeholders.
- v. Improve co-ordination among themselves, especially when dealing with common issues of concern and/or the same community groups. These will minimise competition, reduce duplication and increase efficient resource use.

vi. Develop voluntary strategies to improve co-ordination among NGOs. However, improved co-ordination should not mean compromising individual institutional independence, rights and freedoms.

### **3.12 Partnership**

Recognising the need to build and strengthen sustainable partnerships based on equality, trust and honesty, NGOs will:

i. Respect individual institutional values, policies, visions and objectives and will work together to find solutions and to achieve agreed goals using their complementary but different skills and experiences.

ii. Support and promote partnerships that facilitate the pooling of resources, sharing power in decision-making, planning, promoting effective co-ordination and being accountable to each other.

iii. Sustainable partnerships should result in shared vision, responsibility and accountability.

### **3.13 Representation at National, Regional and International Fora**

i. NGO representation in national, regional and international fora will always be based on an organisation's primary mandate and programme focus.

ii. NGOs will ensure proper consultations among the sector members on key issues in order to ensure a fair national representation of the NGO sector views.

iii. NGO representatives to such forums have an obligation to report back to the NGO community on the outcomes of their mission.

### **3.14 Programme Development and Management**

NGOs have a moral responsibility to ensure that projects they initiate are sustainable and economically viable, and in particular such projects will:

i. Be responsive to community needs and aspirations and contribute to their overall development directly or indirectly. Such projects should not be donor driven.

ii. Not be detrimental to the well being of the communities.

iii. Promote and support effective community participation by empowering communities to take responsibility and ownership.

iv. Provide enough political and social space for communities to determine the modes of implementation and project management relevant to them.

#### **4. The management of the Code of Conduct**

The management of the Code of Conduct will be vested with people of high moral and social integrity, who respect the rule of law, human rights and subscribe to the principles of participatory methodologies. The people will serve in the following institutions:

i. Trustees: An independent body, composed of three eminent persons, will be established as a Board of Trustees.

ii. The Board of Trustees will be the custodian of the Code of Conduct.

iii. The Board of Trustees will oversee the implementation and management of the Code of Conduct and specifically focus on policy issues and not day to day operations unless otherwise required.

iv. The Board of Trustees will be assisted by an NGO Task Force.

v. The Task Force will be composed of seven NGO representatives elected by all NGOs at an NGO Forum.

vi. The NGO forum will be convened by the Board of Trustees with assistance from the secretariat.

vii. The Task Force will be responsible for creating awareness of the Code of Conduct among NGOs and other stakeholders; ensuring the mainstreaming of the Code of Conduct in all NGO operations and functions; monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process; facilitating the management of conflict resolutions; receiving and hearing complaints from NGOs and other stakeholders in relation to the Code of Conduct and thereafter recommending action to be taken by the complainant and the NGO itself; and recommending any changes of the Code of Conduct to the NGO Forum.

viii. The elections of the members of the Board of Trustees and the Task Force shall be conducted in a democratic and participatory manner and in accordance with the guidelines agreed and contained in the Code of Conduct operational guidelines.

ix. The operation and management of both the Board of Trustees and the Task Force, including election procedures, powers and limits, and the day to day administration of both bodies will be developed and contained in the Code of Conduct operational guidelines.

x. Once a year, the Task Force, with the assistance of the secretariat, shall organise an NGO Reflection Forum where NGOs will collectively review their performance with regard to the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

xi. The Code of Conduct will apply to all NGOs operating in Botswana and will be linked to the National NGO Policy.

xii. Amendments of the Code of Conduct shall only be done after the approval of the majority of NGOs attending an NGO forum specially constituted to review the Code of Conduct.

xiii. BOCONGO will be the secretariat of the Code of Conduct.

## **5. The Monitoring and evaluation of the code of conduct**

Monitoring and evaluation will focus on the way in which the Code of Conduct is impacting peoples' behaviour and organisational culture and how they are conducting business in light of the requirements of the Code of Conduct in general.

- i. NGOs individually and collectively shall be responsible for monitoring themselves and their performance in relation to the requirements of the Code of Conduct.
- ii. The management and the staff shall voluntarily monitor and evaluate their own performance and that of their organisations.