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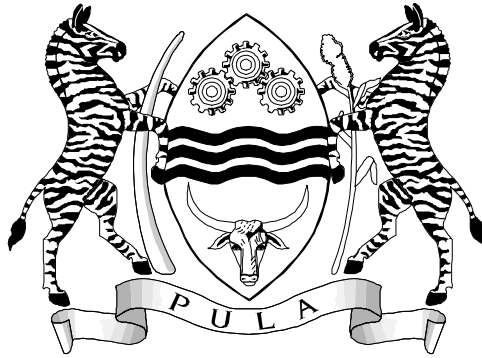
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# **THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA**

## **NATIONAL POLICY FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

**Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs  
[February 2001]**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BCC	Botswana Christian Council
BCD	Botswana Council for the Disabled
BNYC	Botswana National Youth Council
BOCCIM	Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of Non - Governmental Organisations
BONASO	Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations
CORDE	Co-operation for Research, Development and Education
FONSAG	Forum on Sustainable Agriculture
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LO	Liaison Officers
MCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MLG	Ministry of Local Government
MLHA	Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs
MMEWA	Ministry of Mineral, Energy and Water Affairs
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSP	Ministry of State President
MWTC	Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
RDC	Rural Development Council
SADC-CNGO	Southern African Development Community - Council of Non- Governmental Organisations
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Government of Botswana recognises the strategic role and complementary contribution of NGOs programmes in national development. In view of these, the Government takes cognisance of the urgent need to address and articulate the needs of the NGO sector in order to realise its potential.
- 1.2 It is on this premise that the Government has developed the NGO policy. The policy provides a general framework to guide current and future development by the NGO sector and articulates the relationship and partnership modalities with government and other development partners.

## **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **2.1 The Socio-Economic Environment**

- 2.1.1 Botswana has a population of 1.533<sup>1</sup> million people with a growth rate of 2.8%<sup>2</sup> per annum. At independence the population was largely rural and mainly along the Eastern part of the country. With the expansion of economic activity the pattern of settlement has rapidly changed since 1970's. There is now a growing concentration of the population around major urban centres and villages. 47%<sup>3</sup> of the population live under the poverty datum line. Poor communities can be found in both urban and rural areas. The degree of poverty has been attributed to an unequal wealth distribution and or lack of access to factors of production.
- 2.1.2 In the past the major basis of economic growth has been mining especially diamond as well as tourism, cattle, motor industries, and manufacturing. Community utilisation of natural resources, has also begun to make a meaningful contribution to the national economy.

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<sup>1</sup> Botswana Human Development Report 1997, UNDP

<sup>2</sup> NDP -8 , 1997

<sup>3</sup> Botswana National Human Development Report, 1997, UNDP and Government of Botswana.

- 2.1.3 Botswana's average annual growth rate in GDP was 4.2%<sup>4</sup> between 1993 and 1994. This growth has been affected by changes in international markets especially with diamonds causing a declining trend of 4.5% per annum<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.1.4 In spite of its good economic performance issues of poverty; unemployment and the impact of HIV/AIDS pose major challenges to sustainable human development. Poverty and unemployment are associated with the unequal distribution of wealth and hence affect the quality of human resources.
- 2.1.5 According to the Botswana Human Development Report, " a major constraint faced by government has been the "limitation in implementation capacity"<sup>6</sup>. This limitation has been associated with a general lack of sufficient skilled manpower to meet current demand both in public and private sector. Therefore the establishment of a policy framework to facilitate strengthening and expanding NGOs' participation in national development is strategic to the sectors role in complementing current efforts in addressing the issues of poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS.

## **2.2 The Situation of NGOs in Botswana**

- 2.2.1 Botswana has a large and growing NGO sector that is anchored in the development of the nation and guided by the principles of democracy, social justice, good governance and sustainable development. The majority of NGOs found in Botswana today are a result of post-independence development and their formation was based on community needs.
- 2.2.2 Some NGOs are sectoral in nature while others are multisectoral. Those that are sectoral do not engage in more than one sectoral activity. Those that are multisectoral engage in different development initiatives such as health, education, capacity building and institutional strengthening, social welfare and environmental conservation among others. Notwithstanding the contribution that they have made to

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<sup>4</sup> Botswana Human Development Report 1997 , UNDP

<sup>5</sup> Productive Awareness Handbook, BNPC 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Human Development Report, 1997 Pg. 63

national development over the years, the current challenge facing NGOs is how best the government development programmes can be linked with those of the sector in a manner that will enhance and benefit the people of Botswana.

2.2.3 The sustainability of NGOs has mainly depended on donor funding over the last three decades. International NGOs and governments from developed nations have been supporting indigenous NGOs work in different areas of social welfare, poverty alleviation, disability, cultural development, environmental management, training and development of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises etc. Support has often taken the form of funds, personnel, equipment and technical assistance.

2.2.4 NGOs are currently experiencing a decline in donor support and undefined government and private sector support. The decline in donor support is as a result of the exit of major donors from Botswana. Those that remain have substantially reduced their support for various reasons including global recession and the assumption that Botswana has its own resources to meet development costs. The situation has had a negative impact on the participation and contribution of NGOs in national development and promotion of social welfare. In particular donors are no longer willing to fund administrative costs such as personnel and equipment.

2.2.5 The unstable financial situation of NGOs is also partially as a result of lack of defined government and private sector support to these organisations due to the absence of a national NGO policy.

2.2.6 This policy will help to mobilise resources for NGOs. One of the innovative ways that will encourage private sector support to NGOs is tax exemption for funds donated to NGOs.

### **2.3 The Process Leading to the Policy Development**

2.3.1 BOCONGO was formed in 1995, due the realisation by NGOs themselves that their development efforts were uncoordinated and fragmented. The government of Botswana also encouraged and supported the formation of Botswana Council of NGOs – BOCONGO.

The mandate of BOCONGO is to co-ordinate the NGO movement in Botswana and to facilitate the establishment of an enabling environment for NGO work. The Council is also responsible for networking, capacity building, and the mobilisation of resources for NGO sector. Since then both the government and the Council has endeavoured to strengthen the relationship, partnership and to create an enabling environment between NGOs and the government for equal participation in development.

2.3.2 In 1996, the Government invited NGOs to participate and make submission to NDP-8. This initiative marked a new era of collaboration and partnership building between the government and the NGOs. The initiative has opened a window of opportunity for the improvement of relationships between NGOs with District Councils and other local authority institutions.

2.3.3 The Government's commitment to the development of an NGO policy is further articulated in NDP-8 i.e. "*a comprehensive policy on NGOs will be formulated during NDP 8, which will form the basis for government's relationship with NGOs, and spell out how NGO activities are co-ordinated*"<sup>7</sup>.

2.3.4 The Government has expanded on the above commitment to work with NGOs in Vision 2016 by stating that "*NGOs are playing an important role in the development process, and their existing foundation and experiences should be harnessed for the future implementation of the vision's strategies. Their capacities should be strengthened as key partners in development, to effectively compliment government and private sector activities*"<sup>8</sup>.

### **3. RATIONALE FOR AN NGO POLICY**

The rationale for this policy is based on the following premise: -

3.1 National development is the responsibility of all people including government, NGOs and other sectors. This responsibility should be

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<sup>7</sup> National Development Plan 8 , 1997 pg. 448

<sup>8</sup> Vision 2016,1996 pg.64



- influenced by clear national policies that identify the roles and responsibilities of the various national development partners.
- 3.2 Effective participation and hence contribution by the NGO sector to the development process is enabled by the existence of democratic institutions, social justice, sound economic management and prudence, and political wisdom. *Botswana is proud to have all of these preconditions of sustainable development.*
  - 3.3 NGOs are an important sector in national development. As with government and the private sector, they are strategic institutions that facilitate the development and sustenance of a vibrant democracy. Experience has also shown that NGOs are key in promoting peoples participation. As the economy unfolds, the role of NGOs will continue to increase and expand. By creating alliances with government and the private sector, the NGO sector will strengthen the environment in which real democracy can flourish. This underlines the need for a healthy civil society that is supported by NGOs, the private sector and the Government.
  - 3.4 By supporting NGOs, Government and the business community will be investing in the future of a vibrant economy and hence the nation - and the activities of NGOs make up a powerful civil society that builds social stability, public trust, and the respect for the rule of law.
  - 3.5 The NGO sector has been involved in development beyond traditional social welfare activities. These organisations have played an active role in rural development, policy advocacy and community capacity building initiatives. Their contributions went largely unrecognised until the early 1990's. The first explicit recognition of the role of the sector is articulated in NDP-7 that states:-

*“Much relevant work is done by communities themselves through traditional community institutions, self help activities e.g. development committees and non-governmental organisation. Government aims to facilitate and support efforts to work with such organisations,*

*but not supplant them”<sup>9</sup>*

3.6 The creation of an enabling environment for NGOs is highly dependent on the successful implementation of this policy. Past experience has shown that without a clearly defined policy:-

3.6.1 Relationships between NGOs, government and the private sector are difficult and in most times strained.

3.6.2 Access to information, services and support from government and other stakeholders is not guaranteed and sometimes denied.

3.6.3 There is no clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and procedures for making strategic decisions.

These affect the development process and hence a policy framework will be essential to address the situation.

#### **4. DEFINITION, CHARACTERISTICS AND CLASSIFICATION OF NGOs IN BOTSWANA**

##### **4.1 Definition of NGOs within the Context of the Policy**

The policy defines NGOs as legally formed autonomous organisations that possess non-profit status whose primary motivation is to improve the well being of the people. They are service driven and serve in diverse and complex activities that relate to the development processes that promote social transformation and sustainable development. This definition does not include political parties or organisations pursuing political interests. NGOs view development in terms of a participatory process of capacity building and empowerment of communities to improve their socio-economic wellbeing and expand sustainable livelihood opportunities.

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<sup>9</sup> National Development Plan 7, 1991 Pg. 386

The NGO operations can be found at both national and community levels.

#### **4.2 Characteristics of NGOs**

NGOs differ in affiliations, objectives, methods, structures and levels of operation, but have in common the following key characteristics.

- They are not -for- profit
- They are voluntary
- They are Independent of government and private sector
- They are not self serving in aims and principles
- They are involved in national and community socioeconomic development
- They operate in civil society sphere
- They use participatory approaches in development work
- They are people centred

#### **4.3 The Sectoral Classification of NGOs in Botswana**

The policy takes cognisance that NGOs operate as individual organisations or networks on the basis of common interests or concerns. They function within sectors. Each sector aims to promote sharing and exchange of information, ideas and experiences, networking and capacity building among its membership. They also promote and facilitate dialogue with government and other international and regional development agencies, both bilateral and multilateral. The following are examples of existing sectors<sup>10</sup>: -

- Religious groups
- People with disabilities
- Environment and Agriculture
- Population, Health and HIV/AIDS
- Human Rights
- Media
- Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises

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<sup>10</sup> see annex 2 - for NGO sector classification and information on each sector

- Women, Gender and Development
- Youth
- Culture and Performing Arts
- Education and Training

Given the dynamics of change in the environment in which NGOs operate, the composition and nature of each sector may change over time. The Policy takes cognisance that new sectors will emerge in future and will be accommodated as and when they are constituted.

## **5. THE VISION STATEMENT OF THE POLICY**

The vision of this policy is to create a strong, autonomous, self-supporting, sustainable, disciplined and broad-based NGO sector in Botswana that is able to enter into enduring partnerships with the central and local government, the private sector, regional and international development partners and other stakeholders. Such a sector shall be anchored in and be able to defend the principles and culture of democracy, social justice, good governance and political wisdom in the interest of the wider society and vulnerable groups.

## **6. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The National Policy for NGOs is a framework to achieve the following objectives: -

- 6.1 Recognise the contribution of NGOs to socio-economic development.
- 6.2 Promote partnership and collaboration between NGOs, the government and other sectors.
- 6.3 Improve and strengthen lines of communication and co-operation with Government, the private sector, NGOs and with other stakeholders.
- 6.4 Facilitate harmonisation of development efforts amongst the NGO sector, government and other stakeholders.
- 6.5 Facilitate the creation of sustainable mechanisms for resource mobilisation through line ministries and from other for NGOs programmes.

- 6.6 Provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities between the various stakeholders in the development process and in particular those that concern the NGOs.
- 6.7 Promote mobilisation and sharing of resources between stakeholders at all levels for social and economic development.
- 6.8 The policy will provide an opportunity and commitment for Government to play its role in realising the provisions and principles of Vision 2016 through the involvement of the NGO sector.

## **7. THE SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

- 7.1 The policy will articulate a broad framework within which NGOs can address issues pertaining to the welfare and development of people of Botswana.
- 7.2 The policy will facilitate the harmonisation of the various existing policies that impact on the contribution of the NGO sector in community and national development including the management of the sector itself.

## **8. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE NGO POLICY**

The development of the NGO policy is based on the following principles: -

- 8.1 The need to strengthen and expand the enabling environment in which NGOs can make meaningful contribution to community and national development.
- 8.2 The need for NGOs to develop strategies for self-reliance and sustainability particularly in resource mobilisation for community development projects.
- 8.3 The need to build and strengthen true partnerships and collaboration with government and other sectors in development work.
- 8.4 The need to develop management tools for promoting and supporting transparency and accountability in the development

process by the sector. Such tools may include and are not restricted to a code of conduct and guidelines for financial accounting.

## **9. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The policy aims to harmonise and improve the relationships that are in place and reduce undue competition in development work by clearly defining the legal operational environment and roles and responsibilities especially those of NGOs and the government.

### **9.1 Regulatory Environment**

Currently the NGOs operate as one of the following: - Societies, Trusts, Companies limited by guarantee or established by an Act of Parliament. A few NGOs operate under the auspices of agreements entered into between them and the government. This policy will not only complement this legal arrangement but will also enhance the overall management of NGOs in Botswana.

### **9.2 Relationships between NGOs with Government and other Sectors**

The relationship between NGOs with government and other sectors including the donor community shall be based on mutual respect, trust, and true partnership. Such relationship will also respect the independence of NGOs including their basic rights and freedom of association and expression.

### **9.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

The policy will facilitate the identification of clear roles and responsibilities with the aim of eliminating "undue competition" referred to above. It will also enhance collaboration between government and the NGO sector in the development arena.

#### **9.3.1 The role of the government and the private sector**

- i. The government and private sector will endeavour to support activities and programmes of NGOs to the extent possible both financially and technically. Such support will not compromise the independence of the sector.
- ii. The government and private sector should support capacity building programmes for NGOs.

### **9.3.2 The role of NGOs**

The role of NGOs will be to: -

- i. Promote and support participatory development approaches that empower communities in determining their development needs and subsequent strategies to address them.
- ii. Assist individual community groups or their membership in developing sound and feasible project proposals for use in resource mobilisation from government and other partners.
- iii. Ensure accountability and transparency at all times.
- iv. Develop a code of conduct for NGOs.
- v. Support sustainable livelihoods at the community level, through community based interventions.
- vi. Improve living conditions, enhance quality of life and assist the disadvantaged groups in a given local community.
- vii. Safeguard the quality of the environment and promote sustainable utilisation of natural resources by communities.
- viii. Build and strengthen community confidence and capacity to participate in national development planning and implementation process.
- ix. Promote financial sustainability initiatives.

## **9.4 Accountability and Financial Management**

- i. The policy will encourage NGOs to be accountable for their actions and decisions, not only to donors and governments but also to project beneficiaries.
- ii. The Policy will ensure that NGOs account for financial resources received from donors, government, members, other partner organisations or self-generated activities.
- iii. The Policy will require NGOs to fulfill all statutory financial management and reporting requirements.
- iv. The policy will support NGOs in the establishment of proper and effective financial management policies, procedures and systems.
- v. The policy will support NGOs in the establishment of an effective financial monitoring system through proper accounting systems.
- vi. The government will provide financial support to NGOs and Umbrella organisation that meet the criteria for accountability.
- vii. The government reserves the right to withhold funding in case an NGO is found to be un-accountable.

## **9.5 Links between the NGO Policy with other Policies**

The responsibilities and activities of NGOs often overlap with those of other partners and hence affect other policies. Through the Liaison Officers attached to strategic line ministries (LO)<sup>11</sup>: -

- 9.5.1 The government will ensure harmonisation of this policy with other policies and that there is no conflict among them.
- 9.5.2 The government will ensure that collaboration and effective communication takes place.

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<sup>11</sup> Liaison Officers are focal point persons appointed at the level of individual Ministries to co-ordinate the activities of NGOs in any particular Ministry.



9.5.3 NGOs will, through the Liaison Officers and the parent Ministry, share information on their plans and programmes with government

9.5.4 A forum will be established where Liaison Officers will have an opportunity to share strategic information in relation to the operationalisation and implementation of this policy.

## **9.6 The Implementation Mechanisms of the Policy**

In order to implement the objectives of this policy, it is necessary to outline and describe the various levels of interaction and approaches between stakeholders. The policy will promote a participatory multisectoral approach in its implementation. The multisectoral approach will be implemented through the following mechanisms:

### **9.6.1 Mechanism I - Tripartite Arrangement**

- i. Upon the adoption of this policy, Government will convene an **NGO Policy Council** to advise the government and monitor the implementation of the policy. Its membership will be drawn from NGOs, Government and the Private Sector as defined in section 10.1.
- ii. The Council will regulate its roles and responsibilities, and conduct its functions in accordance with the provision of section 10 of this policy and within the framework of approved Rules and Regulations.

### **9.6.2 Mechanism II - Parent Ministry**

The parent Ministry will undertake to: -

- i. Provide the custody for the NGO policy.
- ii. Co-ordinate the affairs of NGOs as far as this relate to policy and institutional management issues. Programme implementation co-ordination shall be the responsibility of individual line ministries

- iii. Review and develop new policy directions on matters pertaining to NGOs in close collaboration with the NGO sector and the NGO Policy Council.
- iv. Promote collaboration and co-operation among government ministries with NGOs.
- v. Distribute relevant information and research studies to NGOs through BOCONGO and other NGO sectoral mechanisms that already in place.
- vi. Develop mechanism for channelling financial support to NGOs in an efficient and effective way through the line ministries, in a manner that will avoid duplicate funding.
- vii. On regular basis, commission financial audits on the Books of Accounts of BOCONGO to monitor and evaluate the financial management procedures of the Council.
- viii. Encourage line ministries to actively promote NGOs understanding in the public sector.
- ix. Keep track of all NGOs reports submitted to government, for proper record keeping and institutional memory within government of NGOs contribution to development.
- x. Provide tax exemption to private sector and individuals in relation to monetary and material contributions and support to NGOs.

### **9.6.3 Mechanism III - Private Sector**

The Private Sector will endeavour to strengthen their partnership and collaboration with NGOs in development initiatives. The Private Sector through Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM) and other business organisations, shall be responsible for co-ordinating the affairs of the Private Sector vis-à-vis NGOs as appropriate and relevant. In particular the private sector should seek to: -

- i. Support NGOs programmes financially and technically
- ii. Commission research studies from time to time and share research results with NGOs on socio-economic development in the country.

- iii. Support the sustainability of the NGO sector by stimulating domestic philanthropy.

#### **9.6.4 Mechanism IV- The Donor Community**

- i. The donor community should endeavour to strengthen their relationship with NGOs as equal partners in development with a common objective of improving the socio-economic wellbeing of communities.
- ii. In view of this donors should facilitate adequate resource flows based on viable and sound project proposals by respective NGOs.
- iii. Donor should also support NGOs in developing self-reliance and sustainability initiatives

#### **9.6.5 Mechanism V - NGOs**

The co-ordination of this sector shall be through BOCONGO. For purposes of this Policy BOCONGO shall have the following functions:-

- i. Co-ordinate all NGO affairs in relation to this policy through sector co-ordinators
- ii. Maintain an effective interface between the central and local government and with NGOs
- iii. Support the sector co-ordinators in the implementation of this policy by providing technical assistance.
- iv. From time to time conduct organisational capacity assessment of NGOs so as to be better informed of existing capacity gaps that need to be strengthened
- v. Monitor the implementation of the policy at local and national levels.
- vi. Facilitate periodical sector co-ordinators meetings for purposes of reflecting on the implementation of the policy and related issues.
- vii. Carry out lobbying, advocacy and networking on behalf of NGOs and in particular on the implementation of the policy.
- viii. Maintain a database of all NGOs in the country.

- ix. Be responsible for the disbursement of funds provided through the policy to NGOs.
- x. Have the mandate to commission a financial audit on the books of accounts of those NGOs that are funded through the policy.

## **10. COORDINATION OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

The policy will be implemented through the following institutional mechanism: -

### **10.1 The NGO Policy Council**

- 10.1.1 An **NGO Policy Council** shall be formed to advise the government on the implementation of the policy as mentioned in section 10.2.1 (i)
- 10.1.2 The Council shall also monitor the implementation process in collaboration with the NGO sector.
- 10.1.3 The Council shall have 19 members representing the various stakeholders as follows:-

- i. Government Ministries:-

- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning,
- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs,
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry,
- Ministry of Agriculture,
- Ministry of Education,
- Office of Attorney General,
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment,

- ii. 2 - representatives from the Private Sector
- iii. 8 - representative from BOCONGO

### **10.2 The Terms of Reference for the NGO Policy Council**

The Council shall be guided by the following terms of reference:-

- i. Co-ordinate the implementation of the policy in collaboration with the Parent Ministry and the NGO sector
- ii. Facilitate a participatory monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation and its impact on NGO sector
- iii. Facilitate the review of the policy and advise the government and other stakeholders on appropriate action.
- iv. Ensure harmonisation of the policy with other policies to avoid potential duplication or conflict.
- v. Facilitate a better and more widespread understanding of NGOs, how they operate and the benefits they confer on development efforts by the various sectors and other stakeholders.
- vi. Encourage a systematic application and replication of best practices in NGO institutional development, governance and programme development and management.
- vii. Promote the development of other sources of funding for NGO activities e.g. the establishment of an endowment fund, development of joint ventures, awarding of contracts to NGOs based on merit and competence and the establishment of a national lottery that would benefit NGO programme.
- viii. Facilitate effective government support to NGO programmes through line Ministries by allocating financial resources at the time of the National budget planning and or by providing funding through the Endowment Fund.
- viii. Stimulate domestic philanthropic impulses and ultimately generate significant private contributions for socio-economic development through NGO programmes.
- ix. Provide overall policy guidance on all aspects of NGO operations and activities within the framework of this policy.
- x. The Council shall meet quarterly. Special or extra ordinary meetings of the Council shall be convened as need arises.

## **11. STAKEHOLDERS INPUTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

The following inputs shall be required for the effective co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

- 11.1 Financial resources
- 11.2 Identified parent Ministry
- 11.3 Liaison Officers in selected line Ministries
- 11.4 A tool for participatory monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process.

## **12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE POLICY**

- 12.1 The policy will be evaluated periodically to ensure that it remains responsive and relevant to the needs of NGOs and those of other stakeholders. The implementation of the policy will also be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that the objectives of the policy are being achieved.
- 12.2 The Monitoring and Evaluation processes and the timing for it should relate as much as possible to district and national planning cycles.
- 12.3 The Council shall be responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation that is referred to in sub section 13.1

## **13. REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS OF THE POLICY**

- 13.1 The NGO Policy Council shall be responsible for the review of the policy in consultation with other stakeholders
- 13.2 The policy will be reviewed periodically on the basis of strategic information obtained through participatory evaluation
- 13.3 The Council shall make recommendations to government on amendments if any to the policy.
- 13.4 The policy will initially be evaluated after three years and thereafter as need arises

## **14. ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1 - FRAMEWORK OF THE NGO CODE OF CONDUCT<sup>12</sup>**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The increased demand for NGOs to be accountable, transparent and practice good governance, has necessitated the need for an NGO code of conduct. In most cases NGOs attempt to be accountable, transparent, practice good governance and adhere to their basic values and professional ethics. However, some violate the very principles they claim to stand for. NGOs therefore consider it necessary to develop a voluntary tool i.e. the code for NGOs to regulate themselves in a more professional and ethical way.

#### **2. DEFINING THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

A code of conduct is defined as " a prevailing standard of moral behaviour. It is a voluntary instrument that assists individual organizations and the people that serve in them to conduct business and relate with one another in such a manner that their conduct is seen as a reflection of their values, good governance and an honest desire to be transparent and accountable".

#### **3. STRATEGIC ISSUES CONSIDERED IN THE NGO CODE OF CONDUCT**

The code of conduct focuses on issues of moral and ethical conduct, and values rather than mandatory policy and or legally binding requirements in the way NGOs conduct business. These issues include the following:-

##### **3.1 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

- i. A commitment by all stakeholders to create an enabling environment that promotes and supports the concept of

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<sup>12</sup> The framework is not the code of conduct it outlines the issues that constitute the body of the actual code of conduct.

voluntary action, appreciates the NGO sector's role and has a clear policy and legal framework that guide and inform NGOs' work.

- ii. An operational environment, that recognizes, respects and preserves the independence, autonomy and constitutional rights of NGOs. In so doing sustain the freedom of association, expression and conscience.
- iii. An enabling environment that will promote democratic participatory development among NGOs and with their partners.

### **3.2 VALUES**

- i. NGOs are diverse entities and pursue different interests within a common value system that is based on the desire to improve the welfare of the people, increase people's awareness of their development issues and to become the voice of the voiceless.
- ii. The values of NGOs underpin their vision, mission and objectives therefore constitute the foundations for project design implementation, management and external relations.
- iii. These values promote a people centred development and respect for human rights, culture and history of a people.

### **3.3 TRANSPARENCY**

- i. NGOs are committed to being transparent not only to their development partners but also to the people their serve and their staff.
- ii. NGOs are committed to promote transparency through systematic dissemination of information to all stakeholders.
- iii. Each organization shall endeavor to fulfil legal and constitutional requirements such as financial accountability, reporting and adherence to the laws and policies that govern their operations.

### **3.4 GOVERNANCE**

NGOs recognize that:



- i. Good governance is a product of participatory evolutionary process that empowers people and brings them to the center stage in decision making. And also provides adequate political and social space to people and organization's for them to determine their niche, roles and responsibilities in society and development in general.
- ii. Good governance is dependent on the existence of democratic institutions within an organization such as Board of Directors, Management committees and Councils.
- iii. The foundations of good governance also include the existence of social justice, political wisdom and the ability to accept the shifting balance of power from institutions to people and communities.

### **3.5 PARTNERSHIP**

- i. NGOs committed themselves to develop sustainable partnerships that are built on the principles of equality, trust, and honesty. True partnerships respect individual institutional values, policies, vision and objectives. Partners will work together to find solutions and achieve agreed goals
- ii. NGO translate their partnership with other development organizations as pooling resources, sharing power in both decision making, planning together, promoting effective coordination, improving coordination respect the independence and autonomy of each other and their democratic and legal rights.

### **3.6 ACCOUNTABILITY**

- iii. NGOs will endeavor to be accountable to their donors, staff and project beneficiaries.
- iv. NGOs are also committed to be accountable for their actions in relation to respecting human rights, peoples' culture and history.

### **3.7 FUNDRAISING**

- i. NGOs will promote ethical and professional fund raising practices that promote transparency and honesty.
- ii. In addition as much as practicable NGOs will minimize competition for resources by pooling together in fundraising efforts and strategies.  
NGOs will adhere to best practices in fundraising including provision of all essential information to the donor or government that would enable them to make informed decisions and choices when considering funding NGO projects.
- iii. As a strategy to move towards sustainability NGOs will diversify funding sources.

### **3.8 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

NGOs are committed to ensure

- i. Proper financial accountability
- ii. Maintenance of proper financial records
- iii. Provision of mandatory financial information to government as defined by law
- iv. Establish institutional based sound financial management policies, procedures and systems
- v. Establish an effective financial monitoring system through proper accounting books and records keeping.

### **3.9 MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

- i. NGOs will recruit their staff on the basis of competence, professional qualifications and will avoid recruitment on basis of friendship or otherwise.
- ii. NGOs will endeavour to fulfil basic needs of needs of their staff as far as resources permit without discrimination by sex, age, education or colour.
- iii. NGOs are committed to developing clear policies, guidelines and procedures that relate to staff welfare, development or their rights in the organization.

### **3.10 NGO MANAGEMENT**

- i. NGO will base their management on clear understanding of roles and responsibilities at all levels of the institutions, in particular between Boards and secretariats, and Between Directors and the rest of the staff.
- ii. NGOs are committed to maintaining high standards, transparency and democratic ways in decision-making process.

### **3.11 NGO AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE**

- i. NGOs recognize that their strength is based on their autonomy and independence. They will endeavour to guard this with integrity.

### **3.12 ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS.**

- i. NGOs will commit themselves to promote and support participatory approaches in all aspects of institutional and socio-economic development programmes there are involved in.
- ii. Participation by staff or project beneficiaries shall be the norm or the policy and not an option or a privilege for a few people.

### **3.13 CAPACITY BUILDING**

- i. NGOs will promote and support capacity building as “the process by which individuals, organizations and institutions shall develop their abilities individually and collectively to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve (strategic) objectives<sup>13</sup>.”

### **3.14 COOPERATION AND NETWORKING AMONG NGOS**

- i. The strength and impact of NGOs is more effective when acting together rather than individually. NGOs will strive to build partnerships and create collaborative interventions. They

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<sup>13</sup> UNDP's management development and governance Division, 1997

will also improve networking among themselves and with other partners.

### **3.15 COMMUNICATION**

- i. NGOs will strive to improve their communication strategies and the messages contained therein. Communication must have an objective and a clear target.
- ii. Communicating shall respect the dignity, community values, history, religion, culture and education of the people being targeted including staff.

### **3.16 COORDINATION**

- i. NGOs will commit themselves to improve coordination among themselves and their development partners including the government.
- ii. NGOs have a moral responsibility to stay united and to avoid conflicts, rivalry and misuse of resources, whether human, financial and/or technical.

### **3.17 REPRESENTATION AT BOTH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS**

- i. Participation should be considered on merit and in particular in relation to programme focus of individual organizations. NGOs shall guard against competing for participation in international workshops and seminars based on personal interest.

### **3.18 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

- i. NGOs will promote people centered development that in all aspects is responsive to their needs and aspirations.
- ii. NGOs will ensure that any project shall not undermine the values and traditional practices of the people.

#### **4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

An effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism shall be developed and all NGOs ratifying the code will adhere to it. NGO will monitor and evaluate their individual performance. In addition other NGOs in the same sector will also act as peer monitors and evaluators.

The process and strategies shall focus on both qualitative and quantitative aspects.

#### **5. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

- i. NGOs will define strategies and institutional arrangements for the coordination of the code.

#### **6. THE CAPACITY OF NGOs TO IMPLEMENT THE CODE OF CONDUCT.**

- i. The implementation of the code of conduct will require an extensive process of sensitization and awareness creation among NGOs and with other development partners. It will require action at three levels of society i.e. national level, networks, staff and project beneficiary levels.
- ii. The implementation will require NGO capacity building and strengthening, especially in the following areas:
  - Information dissemination and awareness creation
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - Stakeholders empowerment to be able to understand the implication of the code on their individual conduct and how that may affect their organisations.

## **ANNEX 2 - THE SECTORAL CLASSIFICATION OF NGOS IN BOTSWANA**

### **1. Introduction**

The policy takes cognisance that NGOs operate as individual organisations and or groups with similar interest or concerns. For purposes of this policy they are organised by networks and coalitions according to their sectors of operation. The role of networks and coalitions is to facilitate information sharing, exchange of ideas and experiences, networking and capacity building. Their secretariats also facilitate dialogue with key individual organisations and international and regional development agencies, both bilateral and multilateral

Given the dynamics of change in the environment in which they operate, the composition and nature of each sector may change over time. The policy classifies NGOs in Botswana under the following sectoral networks or coalitions.

#### **1.1 Development Arm of Religious Organisations**

At present the sector is co-ordinated by ***Botswana Christian Council (BCC)***. However other religious networks will be accommodated as they emerge. The key areas of intervention that reflect the main challenges the sector face include: - promoting church unity, counselling and specialised ministries, contextualisation of theory and ecumenical spirituality, enabling the poor to live a better life, care for people in need, and advocacy for the marginalised and oppressed.

#### **1.2 Disability**

The sector is co-ordinated by the ***Botswana Council for the Disabled (BCD)***. One of the main aims of BCD is to lobby and advocate for the welfare of people with disabilities. The Council has also the responsibility to mobilise resources for capacity building, monitoring and evaluation of programme delivery by stakeholders directly or indirectly involved with the welfare of people with disabilities.

#### **1.3 Environment and Sustainable Agriculture**

NGOs dealing with conservation, environmental issues and sustainable agriculture are co-ordinated by the ***Forum on Sustainable Agriculture (FONSAG)***. FONSAG is a forum for promoting needs oriented sustainable environmental and agricultural practices in partnership with farmers, NGOs, government and private sector institutions. FONSAG also promotes best practices on sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.

#### **1.4 Population, Health and HIV/AIDS**

NGOs that deal with health issues including HIV/AIDS are co-ordinated through ***Botswana Network of Aids Service Organisations (BONASO)***. BONASO's role is to co-ordinate and facilitate networking, health related programme implementation, resource mobilisation, policy advocacy, and capacity building and institutional strengthening for its member organisations. BONASO represents NGOs at the National Aids Council.

#### **1.5 Human Rights**

This sector is co-ordinated by ***DITSHWANELO - Botswana Centre for Human Rights***. The sector's objective is to expand public awareness and knowledge of human rights. The sector also advocates for the development of appropriate laws that take cognisance of basic human rights and promotes the protection of such rights. The sector pays specific attention to the interests of marginalised, underprivileged and discriminated persons.

#### **1.6 Media:**

This sector is co-ordinated by ***Media Institute of Southern African - Botswana (MISA)***. The sector aims to defend and promote freedom of expression of the media and lobbies for the removal of obstacles and impediments to the free flow of information.

#### **1.7 Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise**

This sector, which is co-ordinated by ***Co-operation for Research, Development and Education (CORDE)***, provides training and management advisory services mainly to small and medium enterprises.

The overall objective is to widen the socio-economic options of rural people through Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME).

### **1.8 Women, Gender and Development**

The sector is co-ordinated by ***Women's NGO Coalition***. Its overall objective is to promote and support the empowerment of women and gender equality. The sector provides networking opportunities, capacity building and institutional strengthening to member organisations.

### **1.9 Youth**

The sector is co-ordinated by ***Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC)***. BNYC aims to empower young people through the implementation of various programmes including self-development and appreciation of ones ability and competence. The Council plays an advocacy role, promotes and mobilises resources for research on critical areas that concern and affect youth development.

### **1.10 Culture and Performing Arts**

Although the sector has not formally appointed a sectoral co-ordinator, several organisations are active. The Ministry of Labour Dept. of Culture and Youth in collaboration with BOCONGO will organise a consultative meeting for the sector early 2000, to select the sector co-ordinator.

### **1.11 Education and Training**

Although the sector has not formally appointed a sectoral co-ordinator, several organisations are active. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with BOCONGO will organise a consultative meeting for the sector early 2000, to select the sector co-ordinator.