

TRAINING IN NGO BEST PRACTICES

CONTEXT

The nonprofit sector in general and NGOs in particular, play a growing role in advocacy, civil society and community development issues. Funding agencies, whether public or private, recognize more and more the importance of NGOs. Their grassroots presence ensures better assimilation of local specificities and for that reason they often play a key role in projects' design, implementation and impact assessment. Sometimes, these organizations benefit from important financial resources in order to carry out their not-for-profit operations. The increasing number of NGOs in some countries clearly reflects this situation.

Legitimacy questions left aside, it is rather difficult for an NGO to demonstrate to the "outside world" i.e. to all its stakeholders, whether and how it complies with transparency, accountability and Good Governance principles. Indeed, First Party self-assessment is useful but results may lack basic objectivity while Second Party audits do not have the indispensable neutrality since they have a direct interest in the organization they audit. This is where an independent Third-Party, acting as certification agency, may provide a very meaningful contribution.

In a time of growing demand for accountability, transparency and performance of non-governmental organizations, SGS has designed a service Standard "NGO Benchmarking" that aims at providing all stakeholders with the highest possible assurance that a given organization's mission and activities are implemented in compliance with internationally accepted Best Practices. Detailed information is available on www.ngobenchmarking.sgs.com.

While SGS is undertaking numerous certification audits worldwide,

a recurrent demand from several interlocutors triggered the design of a "by-product" of our NGO Benchmarking Standard, namely a "Training in NGO Best Practices".

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this programme is NOT to tell NGOs what should be their normative model of Good Governance and Accountability.

The objective is rather to provide training intermediaries, or groups of NGOs, with an overview of generic Best Practices requirements as underlined in today's Accountability principles set by donor agencies, public authorities or private foundations. By doing so, the training shall enable participants to identify the risks attached to non-compliance as well as shortcomings that may jeopardize sustainable development of a NGO. It is also geared towards a reinforcement of their capacities towards better Compliance with the exigencies of Best Practices.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Across the 9 Dimensions of the NGO Benchmarking Standard, consolidating 101 internationally recognized Best Practice criteria; a list of the 50 most important topics is provided and explained along the following headers:

- Definition
- Risks of non-compliance
- Benefits of compliance
- Selected References of Best Practices from agencies, states, foundations
- Description and study of real cases.

The following table presents a snapshot of this program which consists of two complementary curricula, one

¹Namely Board of Trustees, Strategic Framework, Integrity Management, Communication, Advocacy and Public Image, Human Resources, Fund-Raising - Resources Allocation and Financial Controls, Operations, Outcomes and Continuous Improvement.

for the trainers and the other for the participants. This program can be provided in several languages. Normal duration is two full days (eight sessions of ninety minutes each) to cover all topics (presented through 194 slides). See Annex on page 3).

TARGET AUDIENCE

All interested parties, whether public, private or non-profit, concerned with Good Governance and Accountability issues in the "third-sector" can be targeted in this programme. In particular:

- Non-profit organizations' Board Members and Managers,
- Private Foundations as well as Public Agencies financing the non-profit sector,
- Public authorities involved in civil society issues (accreditation, monitoring, policy dialogue etc.),
- Consultancy practices involved in training and advisory services.

In order to comply with its third-party principles, SGS cannot provide the programme individually to a given non-profit institution, especially if there is a downstream certification prospect. However, a training programme outlining the generic Best Practices can be provided by SGS or its sub-contractors, as long as it does not address the specific situation or "prepares" an NGO towards a certification audit. Auditors providing training services are disqualified from undertaking certification audits of the same institutions that are participating in the course.

ANNEX: MAIN TOPICS OF THE “TRAINING IN NGO BEST PRACTICES”

<p>MODULE 1: BOARD OF TRUSTEES</p> <p>Characteristics of the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary • Independence • Diversity • Pluralism <p>Conditions & Rules of the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Office • Attendance • Voting Rights • Nomination <p>Conflict of Interest</p>	<p>MODULE 2: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK & COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Strategic Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision/Mission • Stakeholders (identification, involvement & communication) • Planning and Strategic review • Formal Structure • Phasing out • Dissolution <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report • Promotional material • Internal / external Communication
<p>MODULE 3: FUND-RAISING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FINANCIAL CONTROLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking of funds and Resource (Financial) allocation of projects • Financial allocation for administrative expenses • Financial report • External/internal financial audit • Policy on off-the-books transactions • Working capital ratio • Inventory • Financial misuse 	<p>MODULE 4: OPERATIONS AND OUTCOMES</p> <p>Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & assessment of outputs, outcomes & impacts • KPIs • Procurement • Definition of responsibilities through project • Reporting from project units <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries’ response and stakeholders feedbacks
<p>MODULE 5: HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & hiring • Job description • Performance review • Staff development • Promotion policy • Risk insurance coverage 	<p>MODULE 6: INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>GUIDELINES ON ETHICAL STANDARDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict of Interest • Financial disclosure • Whistleblower • Investment plan • Induction and training • Employee’s/volunteers contract • Monitoring body • Compliance officer • Management review • Report to the Board
<p>MODULE 7: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal management audit and integration of results • Handling of preventive & corrective actions • Satisfaction survey • Learning organization and Consolidation of projects results 	<p>CASE STUDIES ON SELECTED TOPICS OR AT CLIENT’S DEMAND</p>