

The HOPE'87 Quality Standards¹ („The 50 Points Agenda“)

A. HOPE'87 as an organisation

a. Ethical governance

1. HOPE'87 and the Country Offices (CO) are legally registered with the appropriate authorities.

2. HOPE'87 has a constitution and demonstrates it adheres to its provisions. The Constitution must be a written document. The General Assembly can check that all articles it identifies are fully adhered to. This may include articles on the use of funds, composition of the Board, or other governance and/or programme issues.

3. HOPE'87 has a written and shared vision, mission/goal, objectives and values (or equivalent). They are shared to the extent that staff are able to recollect them and Board members and the interested public are familiar with them.

4. HOPE'87 and the CO have offices and addresses. The offices are in actual existence; the NGO has both a physical address and correspondence address (e-mail). The physical address is made public on the NGO letterhead, the webpage and sent e-mails and is known to the majority of the NGO's local stakeholders.

5. HOPE'87 has a development-oriented agenda without any discrimination as to gender, sexual orientation, religious and ethnical background, fostering citizens' rights. The mission and goal of HOPE'87 and its practice is focused on improving people's welfare and/or rights, without engaging, as a body, in party political activities. HOPE'87 is a non-profit organization, any financial gains are meant to benefit, directly or indirectly, the NGO's beneficiaries.

6. HOPE'87 has laid-down governance and reporting structures, with a governing body whose members meet regularly. The NGO has a Board and sub-committees to which its staff members are accountable. The Board meets regularly as stipulated by the Statutes. The Board is responsible for the overall affairs of the NGO and is availed with the necessary information and authority to perform its functions. Its meetings are minuted and these minutes are accessible to those concerned.

7. The Board members are regularly elected by the General Assembly, in accordance to the Statutes of the organisation and the law.

8. HOPE'87 actively avoids any conflict of interest among members, staff, and Board members.

While the Board of HOPE'87 does not involve itself in the day-to-day activities of the organisation, it effectively plays a supervisory role, including overseeing the use of financial and other resources. The NGO staff, through the Chief Executive (General Secretary), is accountable to the Board for the day-to-day operations. These roles are documented and adhered to.

A conflict of interest may include: a Board member benefiting from access to the NGO's resources (transport, fuel, stationery), other than as stipulated in the Statutes or other policy documents or benefiting from its decisions (e.g. consultancy work, procurement). It may

¹ This document has been drafted with appreciation of the immense experience of: www.oneworldtrust.org

include members of staff using the NGO's resources for their own benefit, beyond that allowed in their conditions of service and HOPE'87 policies. Not only will HOPE'87 reprimand such practice, but it also actively avoids it.

9. HOPE'87 does not condone any misconduct by its members, staff, and/or Board members. The NGO reprimands any of its members, staff or Board members who disregard any organisational policy or regulation, and/or act against the NGO's values. This may include sharing of confidential information, misappropriation of resources, and other unethical behaviour.

10. HOPE'87 has laid down membership criteria. There are clear, written rules that inform any prospective applicant of its eligibility to join the organisation and of his/her rights and duties in a transparent manner. These rules have been officially sanctioned by the General Assembly.

11. HOPE'87 documents its financial transactions. All financial transactions are transparently and effectively documented. Financial records are up to date, including detailed records of income and expenditure, cash book and banking records. These are kept by the financial staff in the organisation, whose work is supervised by the competent authorities. All procedures governing financial transactions are written down and are adhered to.

12. HOPE'87 prevents any abuse of its property, whether by Board members, staff or its members. The NGO prevents any of its stakeholders to use its property, other than as allowed for by policy papers, e.g. assets and consumables are not used or disposed of for personal gain; property is not used for purposes other than for which it has been acquired.

13. HOPE'87 recruits its personnel in a transparent manner. Staff (including the GS of HOPE'87) is recruited in a transparent manner, following written policies or guidelines, to avoid nepotism and all other forms of favouritism.

14. HOPE'87 produces a detailed annual report that is publicly accessible and fulfils the information requirements of its stakeholders.

15. HOPE'87 complies with reporting and other requirements, as per laws in place in the country of operation.

16. HOPE'87 has a mechanism to authenticate its documents and safeguard its organisational identity. HOPE'87 has taken measures to ensure that its identity is safeguarded and that no-one misuses its name. This includes the use of an organisational seal, stamp, authorised signatories and other identification mechanisms.

17. HOPE'87 only receives funds that are consistent with its mission or goal. The NGO does not raise funds (through donor funding or other income generation activities) for purposes other than those that contribute to the realisation of its missions and goals.

18. HOPE'87 uses any surplus funds only to further its mission.

19. HOPE'87 has properly managed bank accounts. The NGO operates bank accounts only with a licensed financial institution. It adheres to the rules and regulations of that financial institution. The accounts are only used for organisational (not private) transactions. Withdrawals of banked funds are properly documented, are in accordance with written procedures, and are authorised by at least two signatories.

20. HOPE'87 keeps a regularly updated register of fixed assets. The NGO maintains a register of fixed assets (vehicles, equipment, furniture, land, etc), in accordance with auditing

practice. This is subject to scrutiny and is regularly updated.

21. HOPE'87 has procedures for the acquisition, management and disposal of assets. These procedures have been adopted by the Board and are in use.

b. Standards for improvement

22. HOPE'87 maintains sound systems to ensure its resources are effectively, efficiently and transparently managed, including procedures for the acquisition, management and disposal of assets. The NGO has financial policies that are officially sanctioned, documented, and adhered to by all its stakeholders. These include policies for acquiring assets (such as through transparent tendering procedures); for managing and maintaining them (such as through the use of appropriate records, log books and maintenance schedules) and for disposing of them (such as through internal and external advertising).

23. HOPE'87 adheres to gender and minority equity standards and rejects absolutely any form of discrimination, e.g. in recruitment. The NGO has written guidelines that ensure it is fostering gender equity, safeguards the rights of minorities and of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) people and avoids any form of discrimination in its operations and internal practice. This covers such areas as staff recruitment, remuneration, promotion and staff development.

24. HOPE'87 has, and follows, internal policies in place. The NGO has documented policies and procedures in place and in use that govern its human resources (this includes recruitment, remuneration and other benefits, promotion, disciplinary and grievance procedures, health), its operations (this includes monitoring and evaluation guidelines, partnership principles, planning guidelines, etc.) and its finances (this includes accounting guidelines, financial reserves policy, depreciation policy, funding principles, etc.)

25. HOPE'87 adheres to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Standards. These are a set of principles and standards that are internationally applicable.

26. HOPE'87 has independently audited and publicly accessible annual accounts and acts upon any audit report recommendation. The NGO has its accounts audited annually by a legally registered firm of auditors. These audited accounts and the auditors' report are accessible for public scrutiny.

27. HOPE'87 has mechanisms to measure the cost benefit of fundraising and running the organisation. The NGO is able to estimate its cost effectiveness, and the amount of resources it puts into its fundraising efforts. The NGO is able to measure its 'overhead' costs (e.g. administration and coordination costs) in relation to its total costs. The NGO learns from this information and adapts its practice where necessary.

28. HOPE'87 develops and uses management tools and practices and is able to adapt its management systems and practices to its stages of growth.

B. The HOPE'87 programmes and activities

Quality has to be at the basis of the work of the organisation. To be successful, HOPE'87 needs to develop effective relationships with other 'actors' in its environment and be accountable to them.

a. Minimum standards

29. HOPE'87 has written programme/activity plans that aim at achieving its objectives, mission and/or goal. The programmes of the NGO are all meant to contribute to the realisation of its mission/goal. Plans are current, written down and accessible.

30. HOPE'87 understands and is able to identify its current/actual programme outputs and/or outcomes. The NGO is able to explain what change (or changes) it wants to make through its projects or programmes. Its projects or programmes therefore go beyond a collection of activities.

31. HOPE'87 documents its programme work. The NGO is able to produce up-to-date progress reports or other documents that describe its activities.

32. HOPE'87 undertakes to monitor and evaluate its programme activities. The NGO documents its monitoring and/or evaluation of its projects/ programmes, based on regular and recent programme or activity reviews.

33. HOPE'87 shares its objectives with its members and intended beneficiaries. The beneficiaries, intended beneficiaries or members of the NGO are given sufficient information to understand the NGO's current objectives. There is therefore participation and understanding by the NGO's 'target' group and/or partners.

34. HOPE'87 keeps appropriate government authorities informed of its plans, activities and programmes. The appropriate government authorities (e.g. line ministry; local district government; sub-county extension personnel...) are informed about the NGO's current plans, activities and programmes.

35. HOPE'87 makes efforts to relate with others actors (beyond its membership) working in its operating environment. The NGO makes efforts not to work in isolation; it tries to relate, for instance, with other NGOs involved in similar work. It tries to establish working relationships with government and/or other stakeholders, where appropriate and feasible.

b. Standards for improvement

36. HOPE'87 mainstreams such issues as poverty, gender, sexual orientation, human rights, social justice, poverty focus, environmental sustainability, disability, HIV, as cross-cutting in its activities.

37. HOPE'87 has developed, maintains and uses an appropriate Monitoring&Evaluation (M&E) system. This M&E system is within the implementation capacity of the NGO and is in regular use.

38. HOPE'87 is able to define and measure its programme outcomes. The NGO has clearly defined and measures the outcomes (or effects) of its programmes. An outcome describes how a beneficiary or 'target' group has used the products or services being offered by HOPE'87.

39. HOPE'87 makes efforts to track the impact of its programmes. Impact usually refers to a desired change in the long term. While tracking the impact of the NGO's programmes may be difficult (because impact might have required the combined efforts of several development actors and cause-effect relationships might be hard to establish), HOPE'87 is at least able to show that it has attempted to do so.

40. HOPE'87 is able to analyse the cost benefit of making an impact. The NGO is able to estimate and analyse what has been the cost of making the desired long-term change it has sought to make. This might include its own costs, as well as other contributions made to a programme or project. HOPE'87 gives attention to the ratio between its overhead and programme delivery costs.

41. HOPE'87 engages productively with government, where appropriate, in its area of competence. The NGO is able to show how its engagement with government has led to enhanced effectiveness. This engagement can take several forms, including advocacy work, joint programme implementation, and monitoring of government interventions.

42. HOPE'87 tries to link with other actors present in its operating environment in order to produce synergy effects.

43. HOPE'87 contributes to cohesion within civil society in its area of operation (consisting of CBOs, NGOs, trade unions, other associations, citizens' groups...) for example, by supporting joint advocacy work, information sharing, or contributing to a local civil society network.

44. HOPE'87 has established and uses feedback mechanisms from its beneficiaries.

45. HOPE'87 can demonstrate:

a) its value added as a network of COs. The network can articulate and document how it makes a difference as a collective organisation, beyond what all its members can achieve individually.

b) that it has strengthened the organisational capacity of its COs to achieve their goals. The network can demonstrate how it has contributed to enhancing the capacity of a cross-section of its COs to better achieve their goals, independently of the common network agenda. Training organised by the network for COs on M&E, for instance, leads to enhanced practice not only for network activities and programmes, but also for the internal M&E practice of individual COs.

C. Further improving the performance of HOPE'87

HOPE'87 recognises that the organisation constantly needs to improve.

a. Minimum standards

46. HOPE'87 makes efforts to reflect on its past successes and challenges. It does so by organizing review workshops, staff meetings dedicated to a programme or organisational evaluation, or a Board meeting to evaluate past performance.

47. HOPE'87 is able to identify how it has learnt and responded from past challenges and successes. The NGO can identify how lessons have been drawn and used to improve on practice and policy. This is done through revised plans, revised mission, changes in implementation practices, etc.

b. Standards for further improvement

48. HOPE'87 makes efforts to reflect on its past successes and challenges as an organisation, with input from other stakeholders, including beneficiaries. This might include participatory programme reviews, external evaluations of a programme or of the entire organisation. The NGO can show how these processes have led to changes in its policies, mission and practices.

49. HOPE'87 actively tries to learn from other (re)sources available in its operating environment. The NGO is actively learning from other development organisations, such as local government and other INGOs and NGOs (through joint visits, collective activities, attending conferences, participating in representation bodies, etc) and can show how it is using this to improve.

50. HOPE'87 uses a staff development system that promotes individual staff learning. This might include support for further studies, exchange visits, study tours, etc.