

The Mandate of the Somalia NGO Consortium

Developed through consultation in 2006 with all members

The mandate will be officially adopted by members in November 2006 and become the guiding document for the Somalia NGO Consortium from January 1st, 2007

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Introduction

The NGO Consortium was established in Nairobi in 1999. The Consortium started as a mechanism for international NGOs to coordinate various activities and work together on specific issues. Since then the Consortium has grown as many Somali national NGOs have joined. Members contribute an annual membership fee that is designed to allow all active NGOs to become members. The scale of membership fees is outlined in this document. Funds raised through membership allow the Consortium to employ an Office Manager, Finance Officer and cover administrative costs.

The Consortium currently has 93 listed members. A new method of registration is outlined in this document. Tighter registration is required to ensure that all members respect and reinforce the mandate of the NGO Consortium.

The work of the consortium started on an ad hoc basis. As the Consortium strengthened through active participation of members, it became a recognised body within the aid structure that operates in Somalia.

The Consortium is represented by a core team of volunteers, led by the Focal Point, supported by two Deputy Focal Points, in Nairobi with regional focal points in Somaliland and Puntland. The original membership criteria and objectives were formulated in 1999.

The NSP (NGO Safety Programme) was established in 2004 with financial assistance from the European Commission and administrative support from Care International. The project came into being following the killings of foreign aid workers in Somaliland. The project provides weekly security information to all members, security training and advice as requested by members.

In March 2006, a consultant was employed by the NGO Consortium to review the work and growth of the consortium since its inception. The consultant, Dorothe Appels worked extensively with national and International NGOs, civil society groups and administration representatives in Somaliland, Puntland and South-Central Somalia. The outcome of the research formed the basis for this mandate. Using Dorothe's report, a working group of NGOs debated the recommendations exhaustively and adapted Dorothe's work to come up with this mandate. The mandate has been further revised based on comments from the wider membership. The process of developing the mandate has been as far as possible, open and inclusive, and representative of the NGO community working with and for the Somali people.

The spirit of the NGO Consortium lies in volunteerism and a shared commitment by members to the agreed mandate.

A mandate review can be requested by a minimum of **30%** of the membership. Support of **75%** membership will be required for validation of a new mandate

1. *The values of the NGO Consortium*

Transparency
Do no harm
Empowerment
Equity
Impartiality
Accountability to members

2. *The Mandate*

The NGO Consortium facilitates the exchange, production and provision of information to members, to be in a position to make informed choices on operational and strategic coordination, and creates a space for members to carry out advocacy.

3. *The Goals of the Consortium*

1. Promote co-ordination, information sharing and research to contribute to the alleviation of human suffering and the equitable and sustainable development of Somali society
2. Provide a forum that promotes dialogue, collaboration, learning experiences and information exchange
3. Represent its members and their constituency at international, national and local levels
4. Enhance public awareness about the role, values and responsibilities of NGOs

4. *The Activities of the Consortium*

1. **Information exchange** through:
 - A monthly meeting;
 - email information sharing;
 - security information gathering, analysing and sharing (NSP);
 - informal information sharing;
 - NGO handbook,
 - NGO Consortium webpage featuring minutes of all consortium monthly meetings
2. **Representation:** Individuals can be elected to represent NGO Consortium members at various external fora. Candidates will be elected based on the Terms of Reference of representation
3. **Security training and support** (See NSP program mandate)
4. **Advocacy initiatives of members**
5. **Enhance public awareness** about the role, values and responsibilities of the Consortium

5. The NGO Consortium & Advocacy

Where a number of NGO members wish to advocate on a specific issue, the Consortium can assist in the following way:

- Sharing the intention with all members to encourage broader support
- Approaching specialist agencies on behalf of members for support to the advocacy initiative
- Facilitate NGO groups to develop an advocacy strategy
- The NGO Consortium will not lead on an advocacy initiative unless an issue arises that affects the core mandate of the consortium

6 Membership Criteria

6.1 What is an NGO?

A non-governmental organisation (NGO) is an organisation, which operates on a local, national or international level to address specific issues in support of the public good.

- NGOs are not part of a government, or any other regional/local authority, de facto authority, faction, clan or administrative group and should be independent thereof.
- NGOs are non-profit organisations and are self-governing
- Task/process oriented and made up of people with common interests; NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions.
- NGOs bring citizens' concerns to governments, monitor policy and programme implementation, implement their own programmes and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level.
- NGOs owe their existence to moral authority – meaning that they provide much needed services, are relevant to the communities, and thus enjoy popular support.

6.2 Membership of the NGO Consortium

Full Membership

- International or national ngo (based on definition)
- Programs working with Somali society
- Signatory to International Federation of red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Code of Conduct
- Commitment to adhere to the vision and mandate, as well as active participation
- Profile of organisation including budgets (to be published)
- Paid annual membership fee

Services provided to full members:

- Assistance in visa applications
- Assistance with organisational security plans
- Links to NGOs/UN Agencies
- Links to regional, national and local authorities
- Information relating to funding opportunities

- NGO Handbook
- NGO Consortium meetings in different regions
- Access to representation functions

Associate Membership

Associate membership is available to NGOs that are not a registered and fully subscribed member of the Consortium but are active (registered) members of a field coordination body.

Associate members will have access to information services only. These services include the weekly security report generated by NSP and emails on training, meetings or events that are circulated by the NGO Consortium on an ad hoc basis.

Associate members do not have a vote on consortium issues.

6.3 Membership fees

The Consortium Audit report for 1999 – 2003 recommended the following membership fees, which have been accepted by members:

- Agencies with annual budget over \$250,000 – subscription: \$800
- Agencies with annual budget between \$50,000 - \$249,000 – subscription \$400
- Agencies with an annual budget less than \$50,000 – subscription \$150

Membership fees will be reviewed on an annual basis.

6.4 Payment Structure

Fees become due from 1st January for all members

For agencies wishing to join during the year, proportional payment will be required

Umbrella bodies pay a single fee for a single membership. Umbrella members become associate members – see below for details of Associate membership.

7. *The Governance Structure of the NGO Consortium*

A mandate review can be requested by a minimum of **30%** of the membership. Support of **75%** membership will be required for validation of a new mandate

Advocacy positions on issues affecting the core mandate of the consortium will be taken based on a consensus being achieved by all members

A financial report will be issued quarterly to all members, followed by a finance meeting of executive committee. An audit of the Consortium will take place every year.

7.1 Validation of new members

The Executive Committee will validate new members after consulting other member NGOs in the region of operations of the applying agency.

Rejected members have the right to appeal decisions on membership by writing to the Executive Committee. The appeal will be taken to the Monthly Meeting of the Consortium.

7.2 Suspension or expulsion of members

In the unfortunate event that the behaviour or actions of an NGO contravenes the values, goals or membership criteria of the Mandate, the Executive Committee will review the case and identify a possible resolution with the NGO Directors. NGO Consortium members will be informed of the proposed resolution and the timeframe for implementation.

In a case where the proposed resolution is not amenable to the NGO or failure to implement the necessary changes within a specific timeframe, the NGO will be informed that the agency registration will be cancelled. The agency will not receive a refund of membership fees.

An NGO may approach the Consortium to reconsider the matter. This request will be in writing to the Executive Committee. The request will be shared with all registered NGO Consortium members, who will vote on the matter. Support of 75% of the members will be required to reinstate the NGO in question. If this support is not received, the NGO will not be eligible for registration until the following year when the application will be reviewed again by the Executive Committee.

8. Representation on behalf of the NGO Consortium

- The life of the consortium depends on volunteerism.
- All NGOs are consulted and invited to nominate volunteers for all the representation duties required.
- All nominations are circulated to members for their consideration on the suitability of the nominee for the specific activity. Members are invited to indicate support via email and final endorsement takes place at the monthly NGO Consortium meetings. For regional posts, nominations and endorsement will take place at the regional NGO consortium meeting.
- Once a member is endorsed to represent the Consortium, s/he cannot present the position of his or her agency but that of the majority of the members of the Consortium
- Consensus on issues that require a position or a number of positions form within the Consortium will be gathered via email. The Office Manager will invite input on the specific issue and provide this information as guidance to the Ngo Consortium representative.

- All representatives are asked to report on meetings, including issues for further discussion to the next consortium meeting, or in writing to the Office Manager for circulation to members.
- Minutes of NGO consortium minutes are currently posted on a web page, allocated to the Consortium from the Somalia Support Secretariat (SSS).
- To facilitate preparation and availability, the Consortium asks that meeting requests are given five working days in advance of the scheduled meeting. The Consortium respects the commitments of all members to their respective organisations and aims to spread the burden of representation among members.

8.1 Procedures for consultation on representation

When an issue arises, the Office Manager, on behalf of the Steering Committee, sends an email highlighting the issue and requesting input from all members

Based on the feedback, the Steering Committee agrees on a position and the endorsed representative presents that position

Due to the volume of information circulated and the number of consultations required, feedback is not always received. In such a case, the Office Manager will follow emails with reminder emails and when necessary, phone calls to agencies that may be particularly affected by a specific issue.

Give the number of members and the amount of varied information circulated regularly, members are responsible for responding to issues that affect them. The Consortium cannot take responsibility for the views of members not articulated prior to the deadline given for feedback. With this in mind, the Office Manager will try as far as possible to ensure that all members are receiving information in a timely manner.

8.2 Links between the Nairobi Support Structure of the NGO Consortium and regional coordination mechanisms

As many international and national NGOs have a base in Nairobi, the support secretariat is also based in Nairobi for the time being.

The Nairobi Support Structure will recognise and work with coordination mechanisms within Somalia that fulfil the following criteria:

1. The coordination mechanism is open to national and international NGO members active in the geographical area
2. The coordination mechanism holds monthly meetings and the minutes of these meetings are circulated to all members and to the Nairobi Support Secretariat for circulation

9. NGO Safety Program

9.1 Background

The NGO Security Preparedness and Support (NSP) Project aims to reduce the risks posed to programme personnel and assets of NGOs operating in Somalia through the provision of specialised, coordinated and focused security management support. The project recognises the insecure operating environment all NGOs face in Somalia and the collective value of enhancing security preparedness and support. The project provides the NGO community with its own security focal point and tailored security support services through information gathering, analysis and reporting; coordination with relevant actors in the security arena; the upgrading of security preparedness through the provision of training and technical advice; and security assessment activities.

The NSP Program Manager is supported by a Steering Committee (see Annexe IV for members and Terms of Reference)). The Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis, and works closely with the NSP team.

9.2 NSP Principles

- Focus on NGO security preparedness with the assumption that this will benefit the security of the collective relief and development community operational in Somalia.
- Respect for internal policy and operating procedures of the member NGOs.
- The NSP runs as a service for the NGO community both local and international.
- Participation in project activities is on a voluntary basis.
- Learning from experience, sharing best practices.
- Project personnel have a strictly advisory role.

9.3 NSP Activities

- Effective information collection, analysis and dissemination system with respect to security of the operating environment of NGOs programmes in Somalia.
- Enhanced security preparedness capacity of NGOs through the provision of training and technical advice
- Increased understanding of the security risks that affect the operating environment in Somalia by NGO personnel.
- Mechanisms to ensure NGOs role in coordinating security matters with relevant stakeholders established and functioning
- Risk assessments and monitoring and coordination systems and procedures

Important Note

- NGO members with fully paid membership benefit from all NSP activities outlined above.
- Associate members receive security information services only.
- Non-members are not entitled to any of the NSP services.

Agency Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Company Stamp: _____