



NGO Good Practice Project (NGO GPP)

Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia

Revision 10

August 2007

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Preamble

What is the purpose of Code?

The *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia* has been developed by a Working Group of representatives of the NGO community in Cambodia, and incorporating feedback from a wider audience of NGOs and other development stakeholders. These development processes have been facilitated by CCC's NGO Good Practice Project (NGO GPP).

The *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia* aims to maintain and enhance standards of good organisational practice throughout the NGO community. This Code also aims to ensure public trust in the integrity of the individuals and organisations that make up the NGO sector, and the effectiveness of NGO programmes.

These principles are based upon moral and ethical values, which are held to be important throughout Cambodia, in combination with standards of good organisational practice (locally and globally). This accountability framework draws strength from both the body of knowledge developed globally and from the Cambodia's unique social context.

The *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia* expresses a shared vision about the principles and good practice standards that guide the work of NGOs.

Who is the Code for?

The *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia* is for interested NGOs who are registered with relevant ministries and have been operating for a minimum of three years.

The Code is voluntary.

NGOs that choose to sign on to the Code agree to be held accountable to the Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards in the Code.

Participating NGOs are likely to include both Cambodian NGOs and international NGOs.

What is the history of the Code?

The Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia builds on the foundations that were started with the original *Code of Ethics for NGOs and People's Organisations in Cambodia*.

The first version of the *Code of Ethics for NGOs and People's Organisations in Cambodia* was drafted in English by the executive committee members of the CCC in 1995. The draft was then translated into Khmer by the Federation of Ponleu Khmer, a Cambodian NGO umbrella organisation and promoted among Cambodian NGOs. Ponleu Khmer was replaced by the NGO Star Kampuchea. In cooperation with Star Kampuchea's Cooperating Organisations, the Code of Ethics was reviewed and revised. Star Kampuchea continued to promote the *Code of Ethics for NGOs and People's Organisations in Cambodia* during the following years.

In 2004, CCC's NGO GPP Pilot Project, in cooperation with Star Kampuchea, began facilitating the development of the new *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia*.

The nine (9) principles provided in the new *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia* were adapted from the original *Code of Ethics for NGOs and People's Organisations*. The format and Minimum Standards are new.

What does the Code contain?

Ethical principles are the foundation for the *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia*, and are based on core organisational values of:

- cooperation
- respect and equity in our relationships
- quality
- efficiency
- openness

Nine (9) principles are provided in the Code. The principles are intended to guide the professional practice of NGOs, and to inform stakeholders and the general public about the principles they can expect to be upheld by NGOs.

Twenty-five (25) new NGO Standards have been developed and are provided in the new Code as practical indicators that describe how NGOs should act to be ethical and accountable in their governance, organisational management and programmes.

Participating NGOs must comply with applicable state laws, and the *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia* builds on that foundation. These principles and standards should proactively guide the behaviours of NGOs in everyday practice.

How will the Code be applied?

In Phase 2 of the NGO GPP project, a certification system will be developed by the Working Group and a compliance mechanism established. NGOs choosing to participate in the system will be assessed for compliance with the Minimum Standards defined in the Code.

There will be an independent committee formed that will check and follow up with NGOs who apply to participate in the certification system. Certification of applicants will be based on compliance with the *Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia*.

Definitions:

Accountability

The capacity to account for one's actions; or as a representative of one's organisation, to account for either your actions or the actions of your organisation

Audit

A formal examination of an organisation's or individual's accounts or financial situation, an audit may also include examination of compliance with applicable terms, laws, and regulations.

Global Audit

Examination of all accounts and finances together as one

Certification

The process of confirming that an organisation complies with specified requirements or standards

Code

A central guide and reference for organisations to help clarify an organisation's mission, values and principles, linking them with standards of good organisational practice

Conflict of Interest

A conflict between an individual's personal interest and his or her professional duty; this can exist whether or not money is involved

Ethics

A set of moral principles or values

Equity

Justice, impartiality or fairness

Goal

A statement describing the intended long-term result of a programme

Governance

An organisation's structure and policies for decision-making which include board, staff and other stakeholders

Objective

A measurable statement about the end result that a service or programme is expected to accomplish in a given period of time; objectives are based on goals, the purpose of a programme, or the organisation's overall mission

Principles

Statements or descriptions of what should or should not be done that describes the rules, parameters or guidelines for performing the task; values that govern a person's behaviour

Management

The process of planning, leading, organising and supervising people within a group in order to achieve goals

Mission

A mission statement defines the core purpose of the organisation - why the organisation exists

NGO

A Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) is a non-profit, non-state, formal organisation of individuals created for the purpose of achieving certain common objectives

Nonprofit

A non-profit organisation (also called "not-for-profit") is an organisation whose main objective is to serve the public good without the motivation of profit

Quality

A fulfillment of expectation; the ability of a product or service to meet the expectations of the persons or group that are the direct beneficiaries of a project or service

Stakeholders

Individuals and groups that affect, or are affected by, an organisation and its activities

Standards

Statements that explain what organisations should do to achieve good organisational practice, used to measure organisational performance

Minimum

Representing the lowest possible amount or degree that is acceptable or attainable

Sustainability

Being able to continue into the future

Transparency

An openness and willingness to accept public scrutiny that reduces the capacity for an organisation to engage in dishonest or deceitful practices

Values

The deeply held beliefs of a person or group; in an organisation, values are demonstrated through the day-to-day behaviour of all staff.

Vision

A compelling and inspiring image of a desired and possible future that an organisation seeks to achieve.

Principles:

NGOs engage in diverse activities, but have one constituency and that is the public. We aim to improve the welfare of the people we serve. We commit ourselves to the following ethical principles:

- An NGO's purpose is to work in partnership with stakeholders for a sustainable development of Cambodian society, based on justice, equality, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights. (1.1)
- An NGO's policy and vision is appropriately and independently determined from that of any donor or government agency. (1.2)
- NGOs are not aligned or affiliated to any political party. (1.3)
- NGO activities will be carried out without discrimination on the basis of nationality, group, political affiliation, ideologies, race, age, religion, gender, HIV status or disability. (1.5)
- NGOs will respect the values, dignity, history, religion of the communities they serve. (2.1)
- An NGO's cooperation with other NGOs will be based on equality, dialogue and mutual respect. (3.1)
- NGOs will ensure that their relationships with funding agencies are honest and transparent. (3.5)
- NGOs will cooperate with the Cambodian people, the government and other stakeholders to improve the quality of life of the people. (4.1)
- NGOs are committed to using non-violent ways in solving problems, disputes and conflicts. (5.2)

(Note: the numbers in parentheses are the location numbers of the principles in the original Code of Ethics document; some of these principles have been slightly revised by the Working Group).

Minimum Standards:

1. Mission and Values

1.1 The NGO has a clearly defined mission statement and set of organisational values.

1.2 The staff are aware of the organisation's mission and values.

1.3 The NGO's activities are consistent with its stated goal.

1.4 The NGO regularly reviews its mission statement to determine if the programme activities are consistent with stated mission.

1.5 The NGO is non-profit.

2. Governance

2.1 The NGO is registered with relevant ministries.

2.2 The NGO has a functioning governing body by whatever name.

2.3 The NGO adheres to clear written statutes or bylaws.

2.4 The NGO develops all organisational policies, procedures and guidelines based on a participatory approach with staff members, reviewed and approved by the governing body.

3. Relationships/Communication

Internal

3.1 The NGO conducts and documents regular information-sharing meetings.

3.2 Management staff meet regularly, and meetings are documented, for decision making purposes.

External

3.3 An annual report is to be produced and made available.

3.4 Fundraising communication will accurately describe the NGO's identity, purpose, programmes, and scope of achievement.

3.5 NGOs will participate in networks to improve coordination, disseminate information, share experiences and good practices.

4. Financial

4.1 The NGO has an annual global financial audit by a qualified and recognised auditor.

4.2 The NGO implements clear and written financial management policies, procedures and systems.

5. Accountability and Transparency

5.1 The NGO provides members of the public, the target population, donors and governments with accurate information about their activities, finances and other relevant information.

5.2 The NGO has a written conflict of interest policy that applies to all board members and staff members.

6. Quality

6.1 The NGO conducts regular monitoring and evaluation of the organisational management and the programme.

6.2 The NGO ensures the participation of the target groups/ population in development processes.

7. Human Resources

7.1 The NGO has clear and fair written staff policies and procedures which are implemented.

7.2 Management and staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and written.

7.3 Each staff member of the NGO has an annual performance appraisal.

7.4 The NGO has policies and procedures to promote gender and minority equity.

7.5 The NGO has a clear, written grievance policy and procedures that protects the interests and rights of all staff members.