



Self-Assessment Checklist: Governance

The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS (the 'Code') states that governance bodies must have clear written polities that are effectively implemented in practice and address the following:

- appointment and termination of members of the governing body;
- identification and mitigation of conflict of interest;
- defined roles and responsibilities of the governing body, both individually and jointly, including strategic planning, financial probity and oversight of quality assurance;
- guidance on how the strategic responsibilities of the governing body are delegated to operational management;
- accountability and reporting arrangements both internally and to donors, NGO partners and communities, and;
- a mandate from communities where an NGO provides services and programmes or undertakes advocacy initiatives to a defined community, such as through elections or appointment of designated community representatives to the governing body.

Good governance is not an end in itself; it is a means to building an effective and performing organisation, able and equipped to pursue its mission and serve those individuals and communities it is there to serve.



The Code identifies one key principle on governance:

- We have transparent governance and are accountable to our communities/constituencies.

This self-assessment checklist will help you assess the degree to which your organisation is successfully implementing this principle. The questions are designed to be thinking points/guidelines to help you identify areas that are already at a 'good practice' level, and areas that need to be developed and strengthened.

author

This checklist was developed by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).



Self-Assessment Checklist: Governance

Self-Assessment Instructions

This checklist should be completed by a group of three to five staff members who are involved with the governance processes at your organisation.

Please indicate your answer marking the appropriate box.

- Y** Yes, we undertake this work/activity, this is supported in practice and by written documents.
- I** Insufficient, in preparation, or being considered
- N** No, we've not yet tackled this work/activity
- NR** Not relevant to our work

Governance is a fundamental issue to all organisations, whatever the sector of work, therefore we expect that you will not have any 'NR' responses.

Please be honest in completing this checklist. It is expected that your scoring will vary between modules, depending on your area of expertise.

There is no formalized scoring process for this assessment. Instead, we suggest that you look at the questions that you answered 'no' or 'insufficient' to, and then select areas that are most relevant for your organisation to improve upon in the short-term.

Action Plan

We challenge you to use this tool to identify areas that your organisation needs to strengthen in order to reach a 'good practice' level, and then develop a brief Action Plan that highlights examples of HOW you will improve your systems of governance process over the next six months. You can use the Action Plan template provided at the end of this module or create your own.

There are ten Key Questions highlighted in the checklist in red. These questions address fundamental issues that you need to consider first when assessing the governance of your organisation. As you develop your Action Plan, keep these questions in mind. If you have answered 'no' to any of them, addressing these issues is a good starting point for improving your programmes.

How to save the Action Plan:

Complete the self-assessment module and Action Plan electronically, save the file and submit it to the Code Secretariat by email. The Secretariat will credit all NGOs that submit Action Plans as 'Implementing' NGOs and full signatories of the Code. After the period of six months, we will ask you to measure your progress against your Action Plan.

the Code

The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS (the 'Code') was created by a broad consortium of NGOs to provide a shared vision of good practice to which NGOs can commit and be held accountable.

The Code outlines principles and practices that are informed by evidence and underscore successful NGO responses to HIV. It identifies a series of areas that are key to HIV programming and articulates fundamental principles that should be applied to HIV programmes in each of these areas.

These principles are aspirational, setting out examples of good practice that NGOs can work towards over time.

For more information on the Code, go to www.hivcode.org



Checklist

Please indicate your answer by marking the appropriate box.

- Y** Yes, we undertake this work/activity
- I** Insufficient, in preparation, or being considered
- N** No, we've not yet tackled this work/activity
- NR** Not relevant to our work

A

Board Knowledge and Awareness

This section will help you to examine whether individual Board members receive the appropriate information regarding the organisation and its area of work. It will help the Board to be clear about WHAT it is governing.

Y **I** **N** **NR**

1. Are new Board members given a basic understanding of how the organisation is structured and how it operates?

Y **I** **N** **NR**

2. Has the Board developed a plan for visits to project implementation sites and service delivery points?

Y **I** **N** **NR**

3. Are new Board members given a basic understanding of the external HIV environment in which the organisation operates?

Y **I** **N** **NR**

4. Is there any system in place to mentor new, inexperienced Board members to carry out their roles and responsibilities?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, it would be useful to consider:

- conducting induction training for new Board members and updates for existing members;
- providing essential governing documents to the Board (constitution, regulations, strategic plan, Board policies etc.);
- developing a system of mentorship for new Board members;
- inviting outside experts to fill gaps in members' knowledge, and;
- visiting sites where the organisation is implementing its programmes.



Checklist

B

Member Integrity and Collective Responsibility

This section will help the Board assess whether it has guidelines and mechanisms in place to ensure that Board members act for the collective good of the organisation and its mission.

Y I N NR

1. Does the Board have a Code of Conduct that enables its members to identify and declare actual or potential conflicts of interest?

Y I N NR

2. Is the Board committed to the organisation's mission and values, and actively involved in promoting them and enhancing the public standing of organisation?

Y I N NR

3. Does the Board have procedures in place to ensure that no member of the Board derives personal benefits by virtue of that position?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- working with the Board to develop a Code of Conduct;
- reviewing Board members' responsibilities, and;
- providing advocacy training for Board members and developing an advocacy plan in partnership with the CEO and key staff.

C

Organisational Strategic Direction and Policies

These questions are meant to help the Board reflect on the extent to which they are involved in setting the strategic direction of the organisation and developing policies to guide how the organisation operates.

<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	1. Was there Board involvement in the development of the strategic plan of the organisation?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	2. Is there evidence of the Board keeping itself abreast of developments that might affect the organisation's capacity to pursue its mission?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	3. Has the Board approved a set of policies covering all essential areas of operation?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	4. Is there a policy specifying that the organisation will not discriminate on any ground in any aspect of its work?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	5. Has the Board ensured that there is a HIV workplace policy in place?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- reviewing the strategic plan with the Board if they are not acquainted with it;
- starting the process of developing a strategic plan for the organisation if there is none;
- engaging the Board in thinking strategically about the organisation's work and their own role;
- reviewing existing policies and identifying areas where new policies are needed;
- developing a non-discrimination or anti-oppression policy for all aspects of the organisation, and;
- ensuring that the organisation has an HIV workplace policy that is in line with international best practice and is being enforced.

D

Appointment and Support of the Chief Executive Officer

This section is intended for the Board to review its relationship with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and to the operational side of the organisation. A good working partnership between the governing body and the CEO is essential to all organisations and is worthy of careful and continuous cultivation.

Y I N NR

1. **Has the Board developed a job description for the position of CEO, defining its powers and duties together with an appropriate reward package?**

Y I N NR

2. Has the Board established and followed a robust and transparent, equal opportunity recruitment procedure for the position of CEO?

Y I N NR

3. Does the Board conduct a written annual assessment of the CEO?

Y I N NR

4. Does the current governance allow for effective management?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- reviewing the CEO's job description to make sure it is up to date and gives sufficient power for the CEO to effectively manage the organisation;
- establishing an appraisal system for the CEO;
- reviewing or developing policies defining the Board's relationships with the CEO and the organisation's staff, and limitations to executive powers, and;
- reviewing whether and how well those policies are followed in practice.

E

Monitoring and Reviewing Organisational Performance

This section relates to how well the Board knows where the organisation is in terms of its strategic plan and annual programme.

Y I N NR

1. Is the Board satisfied that the timeliness, quality and clarity of the periodic reports it receives enables it to make informed decisions regarding the organisation's performance?

Y I N NR

2. Do Board meeting minutes reflect discussions and decisions taken in relation to those reports?

Y I N NR

3. Does the Board review the annual performance of the organisation in relation to its agreed strategic objectives?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- reviewing whether reports to the Board give sufficient information regarding the implementation of the organisations programme and budget;
- ensuring that reports are sent to Board members in advance of meetings and that these are read and understood;
- developing a Board calendar that makes it clear which matters will be discussed at future meetings, and;
- setting aside at least one Board meeting per year to review how well the organisation's performance measures up to its agreed strategic objectives.

F

Oversight of the Organisation's Financial Health

This section is concerned with the finances of the organisation and the Board's capacity to monitor them. The Board must be confident that the internal control systems in place are adequate to protect the organisation from loss and waste; and that it has taken the steps necessary for operations to continue in the future.

<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	1. Do the minutes of the Board meetings reflect approval of the annual budget, review of subsequent spending, appointment of external auditors and review of annual accounts and management letter?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	2. Has the Board approved an appropriate control framework to protect the organisation's assets from loss of any kind or from waste of resources?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	3. Has the Board identified and recorded the risks facing the continuity of its activities and taken appropriate action to manage those risks?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	4. Does the Board have a plan to ensure sufficient financial resources for mission implementation?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- setting aside adequate time to review external audit reports and agree on actions to address any recommendations made;
- developing a resource mobilisation plan in partnership with the organisation's staff;
- establishing a risk register that is regularly reviewed for accuracy and monitors high risk activities;
- reviewing the internal control framework of the organisation and identify any areas that need strengthening, and;
- asking the external auditor to review specific areas of the organisation's internal controls.

G

Accountability and Transparency

This section addresses the need for an organisation to be able to show, at any time, what is being achieved and how it is done. The trust of the organisation's clients and supporters must be secured by making accurate and accessible information available and the recognition that complaints will be handled diligently and fairly.

Y I N NR

1. Does the Board ensure that the organisation has mechanisms in place to enable the engagement of service users and beneficiaries in the organisation's planning and decision-making?

Y I N NR

2. Does the Board ensure that annual reports are readily understandable, widely disseminated and accessible to the public?

Y I N NR

3. Does the Board ensure that donor requirements are met in full?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- inviting stakeholders to planning meetings;
- ensuring that clients' opinions and feedback are collected and considered when reviewing programmes and services;
- establishing a complaints system and procedures;
- making sure that annual reports give an accurate picture of the organisation's activities and how it operates;
- new ways to present and publicise the annual report to groups that cannot access a written report;
- making the minutes of governing body meetings available for inspection by individual members of the organisation, and;
- ensuring that the Board is fully aware of donor requirements and for adherence to reporting deadlines.

H

Composition of the Board

This section concentrates on the performance and composition of the Board itself. It is generally accepted that an effective Board is one where the individual members come from diverse backgrounds and possess a wide range of skills. Boards need to ensure that their membership is regularly renewed and reinvigorated by attracting new people to serve on them. Board work needs to be rewarding for each member: to achieve this, members need support as they learn more about the organisation and how best they can contribute to its work.

<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	1. Is there a set term of office for individual members and a limit to the number of terms an individual can serve?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	2. Does the Board actively seek to recruit people living with HIV to serve in a governance role?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	3. Does the membership of the Board sufficiently reflect gender diversity?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	4. Does the Board membership include people from key populations that your organisation targets through its programmes and projects (for example men who have sex with men, sex workers and drug users)?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	5. Does the Board actively pursue a strategy to develop and encourage a diverse membership that reflects the community it serves?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	6. Does the Board make effective use of the time and skills of its members and ensure that their capabilities are enhanced through development and training?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	7. Does the Board formally assess its own performance annually?

If you answered NO

to any of the above, consider:

- establishing term limits for serving on the Board;
- conducting a Board profile review to identify skills and backgrounds currently missing on the Board;
- actively seeking out individuals in the community with skills and backgrounds that could enrich the work of the Board;
- actively seek out women in the community who could be trained to sit on the Board, and;
- ensuring that Board meetings are held at times and locations suitable for Board members.

Action Plan: Governance

In completing this self-assessment checklist, you are likely to have identified some areas that are in need of improvement and some that are already at a 'good practice' level.

Please complete the Action Plan table on the next page and highlight examples of how

you will improve your organisation's work on Governance over the next six months, thinking first about the Key Questions below. If you answer 'no' to any of these eight questions, it would be important for you to start here in improving your work!

Key Questions

1. Are new Board members given a basic understanding of how the organisation is structured and how it operates?
2. Does the Board have a Code of Conduct that enables its members to identify and declare actual or potential conflicts of interest?
3. Was there Board involvement in the development of the strategic plan of the organisation?
4. Has the Board developed a job description for the position of Chief Executive Officer, defining its powers and duties together with an appropriate reward package?
5. Is the Board satisfied that the timeliness, quality and clarity of the periodic reports it receives enables it to make informed decisions regarding the organisation's performance?
6. Do the minutes of the Board meetings reflect approval of the annual budget, review of subsequent spending, appointment of external auditors and review of annual accounts and management letter?
7. Does the Board ensure that the organisation has mechanisms in place to enable the engagement of service users and beneficiaries in the organisation's planning and decision-making?
8. Is there a set term of office for individual members and a limit to the number of terms an individual can serve?
9. Does the membership of the Board sufficiently reflect gender diversity?
10. Does the Board membership include people from key populations that your organisation targets through its programmes and projects (for example men who have sex with men, sex workers and drug users)?

Please remember to save your completed action plan and email it to **info@hivcode.org** or send it to **PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.**

Name of Organisation	Contact Person	Email Address
Signed		Date



Action Plan: Governance

Expected Outcomes
(What do we want to achieve?)

Key Activities
(What do we need to do?)

Action Points
(What kind of support do we need to do it?)

Resources
(What kind of support do we need to do it?)

Timeframe
(When will we do it?)
