

**Sample Board Policy Manual for
Non-Profit Organisations
2009**

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A Board Policy Manual is a useful tool to orient and guide Board members in their functions on the non-profit organisation's (NPO) Board that they serve on. It provides them with the vision, mission, policies, guidelines and principles that chart the course of actions and establish objectives for the operation and services of the NPO. It is recommended that each Board member be given a Board Policy Manual from the start of his/ her service to ensure that all Board members have the necessary reference information to carry out their governance role on the NPO Board. The ultimate goal of good governance is to ensure the effectiveness, credibility and viability of the organisation.

Contents of the Board Policy Manual may differ from organisation to organisation, depending on the specific situation, needs and nature of the organisation. The Board Policy Manual should be updated periodically to ensure its relevance and usefulness. Following is a sample framework of a Board Policy Manual including content and items that an organisation can consider in constructing a Board Policy Manual for its Board members' use. Recognising the differences among the NPOs, we have attempted to provide basic content guidelines for application and adoption to the NPO's specific context.

Board Policy Manual Framework:

1. Organisational Background

- a) Brief history of NPO
- b) Vision and mission statements
- c) Organisation structure
- d) Overview & brief description of programmes and services

2. Board's Governance Responsibilities & Functions

- a) Constitutions, by-laws and policies & Board's responsibility to ensure compliance

Board & Board Committees

- b) Board Structure
- c) Board Governance roles & responsibilities
- d) Job descriptions of Board members and Office Bearers (e.g. Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, etc.)
- e) Term limits of Board members and Office Bearers
- f) Board meeting quorum and minimum expected attendance
- g) Board Committees and their terms of reference, terms of service, meeting quorums
- h) Conflict of interest policies governing Board members and Board Committee members
- i) Guidelines or policies for recruitment, orientation, training & development and renewal of Board & Committee members
- j) Guidelines or policies for evaluating Board (Board Self-assessment) & Committee members, if applicable

Board & Committee Meetings

- k) Board meeting schedules
- l) Committee meeting schedules
- m) List of all current Board members with addresses, phone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and business or other affiliation.

3. Strategic Organisation & Programme Planning & Monitoring

- a) Organisation & programme planning process and plans
- b) Organisation & programme evaluation system

4. Human Resources

- a) Overview of guidelines and policies for Executive Director/ CEO
- b) Overview of guidelines and policies for paid staff
- c) Overview of guidelines and policies for volunteers

- d) Code of Conduct & Conflict of interest policies governing staff & volunteers (other than Board & Committee members)

5. Financial Controls & Accountability

- a) Budget guidelines for corporate and programmes' needs
- b) Financial statements
- c) Internal control systems
- d) Company approved auditors
- e) Internal auditor(s) and control audit exercise

6. Fund-raising

- a) Overall fund-raising strategies
- b) Types of donors and sponsors (including listing if applicable)
- c) Fund-raising reports
- d) Guide on Fund-raising practices

7. Public Relations & Corporate Communication

- a) Guidelines or policies for releasing information about the organisation to the media, the stakeholders and the public
- b) Appointment of official spokesperson (usually chairman of the Board)
- c) Policies for communicating and receiving information and for responding to public's request for information
- d) Branding guidelines and public relations strategies to ensure positive image of organisation