

Civil Society Organization (CSO) Good Governance



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Decoding Conversations: Compilation of the Syntheses of CODE-NGO's Communities of Practice Forums in 2014-2016

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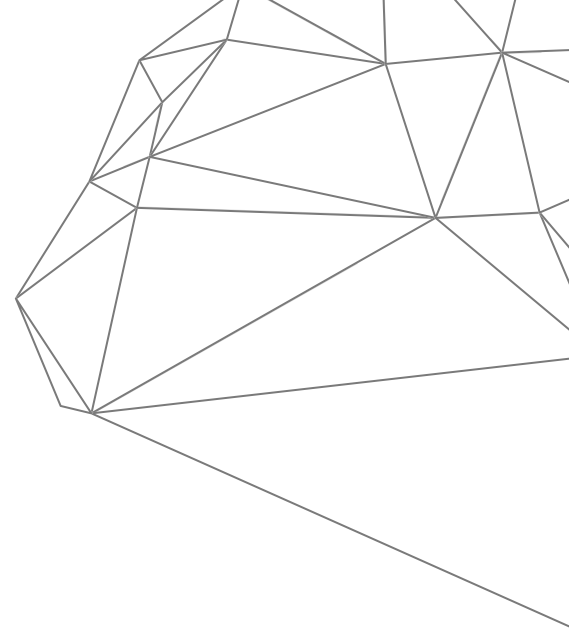


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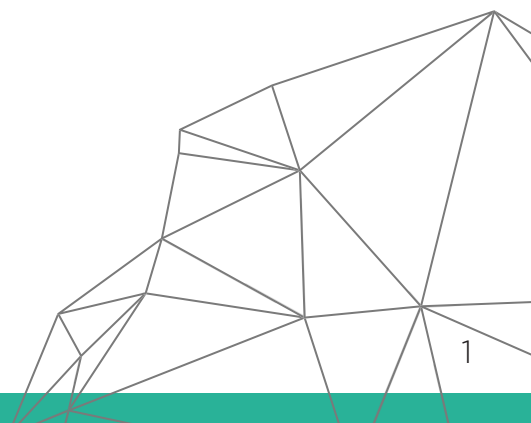
INTRODUCTION

“Decoding Conversations” was an offshoot of the Strengthening the Capacity of Philippines CSOs Project, implemented by a consortium of civil society organizations (CSOs) to which the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) was a part of. The 3-year project led by Ayala Foundation and funded by USAID aimed to build the capacities of 120 CSOs for them to be more sustainable and accountable. Specifically, it covered organizational development (OD) interventions on Governance and Leadership Development, Planning and Strategic Management, Resource Mobilization and Development, Program Design, Implementation and Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (PDIMME), Financial Management and Administrative and Personnel Management.

Various modes of learning were utilized for capacity building: formal training, mentoring, peer-to-peer learning (through communities of practice via social media), internships and provision of templates. As the project’s technical partner for building a Community of Practice (CoP) among participating CSOs, CODE-NGO launched the ‘CSOCommunity’ site, an online community and discussion forum on organizational development issues confronting Philippine non-profits. The site was meant to allow exchanges on good practices, tips and techniques on OD matters for the participating CSOs of the project. In 2014, community discussions were conducted, involving an average of 25 participants from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao coming together online to exchange on lessons and experiences on development issues important to CSOs. Among the topics covered in the online discussions were “Practicing Good Governance through NGO Certification” and “Proposal Development: Challenges and Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations”. Wanting to reach more participants to the forum, the online discussion was shifted to the Facebook page of CODE-NGO (<https://www.facebook.com/caucusofdevelopmentngonetworks>). Resource persons were invited to share their expertise on the topics and the discussions were summarized and shared through the CODE-NGO website, e-Newsletter and Facebook page.

In 2016, CODE-NGO’s Knowledge Development and Management (KDM) Program continued to facilitate more meaningful learning exchanges through a forum on “CSO Good Governance”. This was through an email group and was co-organized with the Membership Program.

To make better use of the syntheses of these online and face-to-face discussions, this compilation was pursued and in such a way that the reader can easily understand the development concepts and principles delved on in each topic by transforming the text to information graphics or infographics. To be abreast with the current communication trends and changing landscape of capturing an audience, it is good to explore and adopt more creative and innovative methods to process and share knowledge. May the 10 infographics presented here be able to help CSOs in one way or another as they strive to be more effective stewards of social development in the Philippines.



Key Principles of

Effective Government Regulation of CSOs

- 1 Appropriate for the Purpose**

For CSOs' participation in decision-making or governance processes, the requirements and other regulations should be light and easy, but for CSOs' access to public resources, the requirements and regulations should be stricter or more rigorous.
- 2 Proportional**

Consider that there is no "one size fits all" for CSOs. For regulation, factors such as type or nature, size (membership, assets, income) and activities of CSOs should be considered.
- 3 Ease of Compliance**

Processes for compliance should be decentralized, streamlined, and should maximize the use of ICT.
- 4 Consultative/Due Process**

Before government issues a regulation or rule affecting CSOs, it must first make public a draft through its website and thru emails to CSOs, convene public consultation/s and give CSOs reasonable time (at least one month) to submit inputs/comments on the draft
- 5 Non-discriminatory**

Government regulation must not discriminate against CSOs as compared to for-profit corporations or private businesses. This means that, in general, the government should not impose more requirements for CSOs than those it requires for for-profit corporations.
- 6 Inclusive**

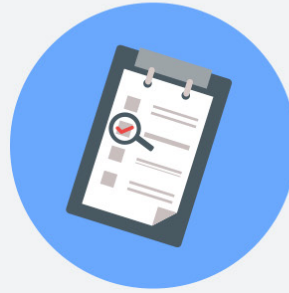
Government regulation of CSOs must be inclusive. It should take into consideration the various types and capacities of CSOs in the country.
- 7 Pro-CSO**

Government regulation should support the strengthening of CSOs. This is in recognition of the public service nature of CSO work using voluntary services and private resources.

HOW GOVERNMENT REGULATION COULD PROMOTE CSO GOOD GOVERNANCE



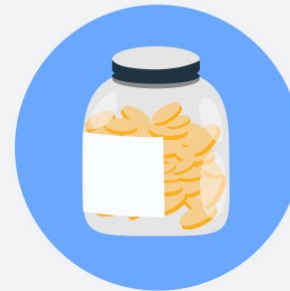
1 Recognize and promote self-regulation by the sector with government “oversight”



2 Establish basic CSO good governance standards for CSOs wishing to participate in governance bodies



3 Government can make public the list of CSOs that pass these standards.



4 More rigorous standards for CSOs wishing to access funds/resources from government



Which of these principles do you think is most observed / most ignored or violated in the Philippines?

In some government agencies, there is a semblance of participatory process, albeit lacking in depth and in genuine implementation of the spirit of the consultation. In such instances information is disseminated but no space for feedback is provided. This kind of engagement may already be reported as “public consultation”.

Although there are also instances when suggestions and recommendations of CSOs are included by the agencies in the implementation of programs/projects.

CASE STUDY



There are cases when it was reported that there are certain government programs with budget allocated for CSOs but it is difficult to access the resources or the information that will lead to this. Case in point is the budget allotted for Special Vehicle Pollution Control Fund from the Motor Vehicles User's Taxes. Partnership for Clean Air tried to seek audience with the Road Board regarding this to no avail.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Most of government policy and mechanisms in the Philippines are focused on regulating CSOs and not on building more meaningful and collaborative engagements between government and CSOs (such as in UK's "Compact").

CSOs should advocate for a general framework for government – CSO relations which clarify the basic principles and general guidelines for this relationship. CSOs and government should work on clarifying and crafting these principles/guidelines together so that there is shared ownership and stewardship of the framework.



ONLINE DISCUSSION ON PRACTICING GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH NGO CERTIFICATION

Resource Person: Mr. Luis Morales
Executive Director, Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC)

Main Discussion Points

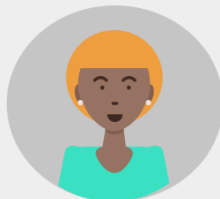
GOOD GOVERNANCE concerns accreditation non-profit Certification issues LEGITIMACY

WHAT DOES THE PHILIPPINE COUNCIL FOR NGO CERTIFICATION (PCNC) DO?

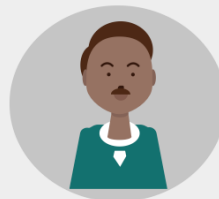
The Philippine Council for NGO Certification or PCNC is a private voluntary, non-stock, non-profit corporation that serves as a service organization whose main function is to certify non-profit organizations that meet established minimum criteria for financial management and accountability in the service to underprivileged Filipinos.



Online Discussion Participants



CSOcommunity Members



Mentors



CODE-NGO Secretariat

PURPOSE AND ADVANTAGES OF PCNC CERTIFICATION



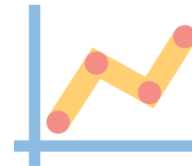
To ensure that NGOs/Foundations applying for donee institution status are legitimate, efficient, and effective organizations



A certification of organizational good housekeeping for successful applicants, which improves the credibility of the organization



A few grant making institutions already use PCNC certifications as one of the pre-requisites to be considered for funding



PCNC evaluation helps NGOs/foundations identify areas for improvement in their legitimacy, efficiency, and effectiveness, thereby maximizing their outputs.



Required by BIR for donee institution status; donations to NGOs/foundations that do not have donee institution status are subject to 30% donor's tax and 12% VAT

Common problems that hinder NGOs from being PCNC certified



Overwhelming documentary requirements that PCNC asks for



Many NGOs are managed "informally", thus, lacking in systems and procedures for better performance and compliance with government statutory requirements



Finding the time to develop (based on consistent practices) and/or put together the needed documents, especially the Operations Manual/Guidelines.

REQUIREMENTS TO GET PCNC CERTIFICATION

- ✓ Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws
- ✓ Audited financial statements submitted to SEC & BIR
- ✓ Compliance with all BIR and SEC reportorial requirements
- ✓ 3-5 year Program and Financial Plan
- ✓ Minutes of Board Meetings
- ✓ Operations Policies and Procedures
- ✓ Updated four books of accounts and financial documents and other documentations

Recommendations to facilitate PCNC certification

Organizations should have the will and staff time to pursue improvements they need

Get in touch

Should organizations need some assistance, PCNC can refer them to "mentors" who can act as volunteer consultants. Organizations that are affiliated to member networks of CODE-NGO may also approach their network for advice and assistance.

Those who have questions or clarifications may call PCNC at tels. + 63 (2) 782-1568, + 63 (2) 715-9594, + 63 (2) 715-2756 or visit their website at www.pcnc.com.ph.

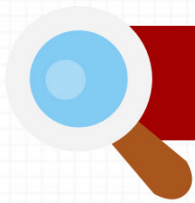
PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT:

Challenges and Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations

Resource Person:
Ms. Vicky Garchitorena
CSO Leader



Common features of strong proposals



Clear and concise statement of the problems the proponents wish to address, proposed solutions and strategies, as well as anticipated outcomes and success indicators.



Proponents' good track record and proven capability to deliver



Innovative



Experienced staff to undertake the project, or when needed, access to required skills from partners or consultants



Realistic budget

Common mistakes of weak proposals

- ✘ No full grasp of the situation and the social problem that the project aims to address
- ✘ Approach is too general – thus, strategies and activities do not focus on the problem and expected outcomes are not specific
- ✘ Not feasible
- ✘ Too ambitious – promising a “pie in the sky”
- ✘ Too small in scope to make a difference
- ✘ Basic flaws, e.g. failure to comply with instructions or to submit required documents



Common problems encountered in proposal-writing



Recommendations to improve proposals

Construct a logical framework

Problem to solution to strategy to activities, to outcomes, to indicators of success, to timelines and budget, monitoring and evaluation

Stretch goals

Aim for scalability and sustainability



Be prudent

Budget items should be reasonable

Showcase your competitive advantages

Is it your organization? your personnel? your track record? your financials? your networks? your creative idea? Like any other competitive process, it is important that you "stand out" among the various applicants.

www.code-ngo.org

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 [CODE_NGO](https://twitter.com/CODE_NGO)

