

A note on terminology

The term 'NGO' has quite different legal and cultural significance in different countries. However, what we mean by 'NGO' is any non-governmental, non-profit organisation with lawful public or mutual benefit purposes. Organisations that meet this definition are known by many different names around the world: the term can and may include non-profit organisations, associations, foundations, waqf, voluntary organisations, public benefit organisations, societies, community associations or any other organisation to which this definition applies regardless of its name, legal form or mode of operation. In England and Wales these organisations are usually charities and are regulated by the Charity Commission.

Why is effective regulation of NGOs important?

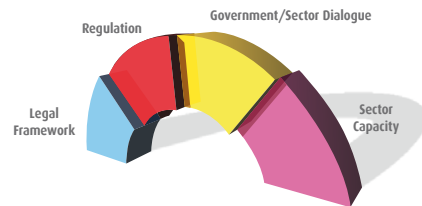
A healthy NGO sector has significant social and economic value to a country. NGOs often provide links to local or overseas communities that governments do not have, and they can have an important role in meeting basic needs by providing services to society and in influencing public policy.

Effective regulation enhances the contribution NGOs can make to improving lives by promoting good governance and accountability within the NGO sector, increasing public confidence and trust in NGOs' work. Effective regulation promotes a healthy NGO sector and achieves a balance - minimising the risk of misuse without stopping the legitimate charitable work of the vast majority of NGOs.

The Building Blocks of Effective Regulation:

Effective regulation is not limited to regulatory action taken by the state. We believe there are four essential components of effective regulation: the Legal Framework, Regulation, Government/Sector Dialogue, and Sector Capacity.

For more information about these building blocks and how they contribute to effective regulation, please visit our website: www.ngoregnet.org



Getting in touch

If you would like more information about our work, please contact us at:

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The Charity Commission's International Programme

An introduction to our work

Contributing to the development of healthy, accountable and independent NGO sectors worldwide



Who we are

The International Programme is part of the Charity Commission, a non-ministerial department of the British Government, which is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. The Charity Commission has over 150 years experience of ensuring charities are well governed and managed; it enables charities to maximize their potential and enhances the accountability of charities to donors and those who benefit from their work.

Our Vision

An environment which maximises the contribution NGOs can make to improve people's lives across the world.

Our Mission

To contribute to the development of healthy, accountable and independent NGO sectors worldwide.

Our Principles

We will work towards our vision by acting within these principles:

- we believe that good governance within government and NGOs forms the foundation of a healthy and accountable NGO sector;
- we believe that government has a key role in ensuring transparency and accountability within an independent NGO sector;
- we respect the independence of NGOs and their contribution to society.

In doing this, we:

- work in partnership;
- aim to ensure the inclusiveness and accessibility of our work;
- act with honesty, impartiality and fairness;
- work to deliver practical and sustainable results to the highest possible standard.



Our Work

Since 2002 the International Programme has been working with civil society and government bodies to contribute to the development of healthy, accountable and independent NGO sectors worldwide. We have worked with over 40 countries to date and currently have projects in the Gulf, Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and South East Asia. Our work involves sharing best practice ideas on effective NGO regulation and providing technical assistance.



Our Activities include:

- undertaking assessment exercises to identify areas for improvement in current NGO legislation and regulatory practice;
- reviewing the role, structure, resources and planning capabilities of regulators to strengthen the delivery of effective regulation;
- providing in-country training for senior regulatory officials covering the key components of effective regulation;
- offering in-depth assistance in areas of regulation such as Information Technology and Communications, and in skills such as Training of Trainers;
- assisting the development of effective laws and an enabling environment for NGOs;
- developing Codes of Conduct for both NGOs and regulators;
- advice on self regulation within the sector;
- facilitating consultation between government and NGOs;
- hosting and participating in regional workshops; and
- hosting visits to the Charity Commission to exchange experience of the regulation of NGOs.

We also manage a website, www.ngoregnet.org, which is designed to help people, organisations and governments find out more about good practice in the regulation of NGOs. It acts as a gateway to information on developments in countries where we work.