

Responding to NGO Development Effectiveness Initiatives

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One World Trust/World Vision Briefing Paper Number 122, November 2009

1. Introduction and context

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are facing increasing pressure to demonstrate their accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness. In response, a growing number are coming together at national, regional and international level, to define common standards and promote good practice through codes of conduct, certification schemes, information services, working groups, self-assessment tools, and awards. However, NGOs, donors and other potential users are often unaware of their existence or what distinguishes one initiative from another, making it difficult for organisations to make choices around which initiative best suits their needs.

This briefing paper has been put together to give some insight into the use and usefulness of various NGO self-regulation initiatives, in the development and humanitarian sectors, for developing effectiveness and accountability. The paper provides a picture of existing self-regulation efforts at international level and at national level in the global North. It describes their underlying principles, content, and compliance mechanisms; and reflects on the way in which NGOs may wish to engage with initiatives or to improve effectiveness by using the best and most relevant parts for their organisation's purpose. This briefing paper hopes to contribute to the debate on how self-regulation could strengthen the legitimacy and performance of the development sector.

The rise of effectiveness and accountability discussion

Driving the CSO effectiveness and accountability debates are a number of issues that have come to the fore over the last two decades. First, while NGOs have remained fairly resilient to threats to their reputation, they have suffered from a general lowering of trust. While the demand (and the need) for civil society engagement in public policy has increased the mandate of NGOs to hold others to account and serve as voices for the poor and marginalised has been challenged and questions are being asked of their legitimacy and accountability. Overly ambitious claims about impact and influence in their own promotional material have not helped.

Second, resources have become more difficult to access for a range of NGOs especially at this time of financial crisis. There is increasing competition from for-profit organisations and others crowding the humanitarian 'space'. In addition, in a range of countries national NGOs find themselves subject to regulatory regimes which limit or tightly control access to funding from abroad.

Third, pressure has increased on NGOs to demonstrate the impact they are having on society and NGOs will need to further step up to meet accountability outcomes. There is more demand for civil society engagement in the context of global governance initiatives and an urgent need to demonstrate added value. Donors, NGOs and regulatory authorities are

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putting more emphasis on metrics to measure outcomes and there is a growing use of comparative methods which require NGOs to improve knowledge management and demonstrate accountability through subjecting themselves to benchmarking against sector standards and codes of conduct.

NGOs can engage positively with the accountability challenge by further networking and proactively developing new standards and codes that suit their needs, raising the bar for NGO performance and accountability.

How did NGO effectiveness initiatives come about?

NGO effectiveness has been a topic of discussion for many years, but a number of initiatives emerged following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the subsequent Joint Evaluation on the International Response to the Genocide recommendations that agencies strengthen their systems of accountability to recipients of assistance. These include the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) NGO Code of Conduct, the Sphere Project which identifies technical standards for working in emergency situations, ALNAP and the People in Aid initiative. Around the same time, national umbrella bodies for development and humanitarian NGOs in a number of Western countries were developing codes of conduct detailing standards in financial management, governance and operations. For example, in 1994, the American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction) developed its Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) Standards; soon after, in 1996, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) developed its Code of Conduct.

The past five years has seen an expansion of NGO self regulation into thematic areas and beyond the humanitarian and development sectors. In 2003, the Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS was developed by 11 global INGOs involved in tackling HIV. The consultative process through which the Code was developed resulted in over 160 organisations signing on by the time of its launch. In the same year the One World Trust launched its first pilot Global Accountability Report and in 2005 published its cross sector accountability framework. In 2004, InterAction developed a third party certification scheme for members involved in Child Sponsorship. In 2006, 16 international advocacy NGOs developed the INGO Accountability Charter which commits member organisations to principles such as transparency, accountability and responsible lobbying. Most recently, in 2007, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP) began certifying NGOs against its Standards in Accountability and Quality Management.

What are the principles that underpin NGO effectiveness?

Many organisations that talk of development and humanitarian effectiveness and many of the initiatives outlined in this paper share similar underlying principles. These present insights into what NGOs think effectiveness means. From our research, six principles of effectiveness have emerged, which in different combination, have been used by NGOs, NGO coalitions and initiatives within the development sector over the last 15 years (see table 1).

The first principle is concerned with the **accountability** of organisations towards both internal and external stakeholders. It stresses the multidimensionality of accountability demands – to those people NGOs aim to serve, to their own staff and to their donors and supporters. A second principle addresses **ownership, partnerships and participation**. It emphasises the engagement of local stakeholders in decision making, in development and humanitarian activities, and highlights the commitment to work on an agenda based on the needs and priorities of these local stakeholders. A third principle focuses on **transparency and good governance**. It concerns the disclosure of information about NGO activities, finances and governance arrangements for guaranteeing internal controls and efficiency.

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The fourth principle is that of **learning, evaluation and managing for results** which is found in most of the reviewed sources. It encourages organisations to learn from the work they do and develop better strategies based on that learning. Emphasis is on measuring performance and impact and on capacity to learn from experience. Fifth, NGO initiatives emphasise principles of **independence** from political and economic interests. Finally, a sixth principle focuses on diversity, equity, the **respect** of human dignity and the advancement of human rights in guiding NGO action.

Table 1: High Level Principles of Effectiveness		
High Level Principle	Examples of language used by some initiatives	Sources that highlight the High Level Principle
1. Accountability (internal & external)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donor & developing countries pledge that they will be mutually accountable for development results. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist & those from whom we accept resources. Donor countries will base their support on recipient countries' national development strategies, institutions, and procedures Members enable beneficiaries and staff to report complaints and seek redress safely. 	HAP, PIA, ICRC, GRI, IANGO Charter, WANGO, Paris Declaration, NGO Good Practice Project, Open Forum for CSO Effectiveness, Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP), ACFID (Australia), CONGDE (Spain).
2. Ownership, Partnerships & Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing countries will exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies, and will coordinate development actions. Involving internal and external stakeholders in the activities and decisions that affect them. CSO actions are based on genuine and long-term partnership, respect and dialogue, acknowledging diversity. CSO actions are poverty-focused: solidarity with people claiming their rights. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance & on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organisations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language & cultural barriers must be overcome. 	GRI, Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP), OWT GAR, Open Forum for CSO Effectiveness, Paris Declaration, WANGO, NGO Good Practice Project, UNCRIC, Prague Conference on CSO Effectiveness, Agenda 21, CNCD-11.11.11. (Belgium), CCIC (Canada), QOCI (Canada), Association of Italian NGOs, CID (New Zealand), CONGDE (Spain), BOND (UK), ECB, HAP, SPHERE, ICRC, HIV code, Synergie Qualité, CONCORD.
3. Transparency & Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donor countries will work so that their actions are more harmonised, transparent, and collectively effective. Being open and transparent about activities and decisions. We are committed to openness, transparency and honesty about our structures, mission, policies and activities. We should be held responsible for our actions and achievements. Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organisations. 	CONCORD, GRI, GHP, IANGO Charter, ISO 9000, OWT GAR, WANGO, Paris Declaration, Agenda 21, Open Forum for CSO Effectiveness, NGO Good Practice Project, ISO 9000, Prague Conference on CSO Effectiveness, PIA, ICRC, HIV code, Synergie Qualité, ACFID (Australia), CCIC (Canada), Coordination SUD (France), VENRO (Germany), Dochas (Ireland), Association of Italian NGOs, Circle of Cooperation Luxembourg, CID (New Zealand), RORG (Norway), CONGDE (Spain), KPGH (Switzerland), BOND (UK), Interaction & Global Impact (USA).
4. Learning, Evaluation & Managing for Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries will manage resources and improve decision-making for results. CSO actions are striving for sustainable impact and results, based on social processes and mutual learning. Evaluating performance on an ongoing basis and learning from mistakes. Results based effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires result-oriented coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities. 	CONCORD, GRI, IANGO Charter, ISO 9000, NGO benchmarking, WANGO, Paris Declaration, Open Forum for CSO Effectiveness, NGO Good Practice Project, GHP, Agenda 21, Dochas (Ireland), BOND (UK), ECB, HAP, PIA, Quality COMPAS, Synergie Qualité.
5. Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We aim to be both politically and financially independent. Our governance, programmes and policies will be non-partisan, independent of specific governments, political parties and the business sector. 	ICRC, IANGO Charter, WANGO, NGO Good Practice Project, Coordination SUD, CONGDE (Spain), Global Impact (USA),
6. Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-Discrimination: We value, respect and seek to encourage diversity, and seek to be impartial and non-discriminatory in all our activities. To this end, each organisation will have policies that promote cultural diversity, gender equity and balance, impartiality and non-discrimination in all our activities, both internal and external. Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. 	ICRC, HIV code, IANGO Charter, OWT GAR, WANGO, NGO Good Practice Project, GHP, Prague Conference, ACFID (Australia), QOCI (Canada), VENRO (Germany), BOND (UK),

2. Mapping development effectiveness initiatives

There are a number of self-regulatory initiatives that exist for NGOs working in development or humanitarian contexts. They can be categorised by the level at which they function, their thematic focus and the nature of their compliance mechanisms (see diagram 1).

2.1 Scale

- **International initiatives** – these are initiatives that exist at the international level and involve NGOs from across countries coordinating activities, setting common principles and standards, and sharing lessons and good practices. Such initiatives include the Code of Ethics and Conduct of the World Association of NGOs, ISO 9000; GRI NGO Sector reporting guidelines, among others¹.
- **Northern national initiatives** – these are initiatives that exist within countries where development and humanitarian NGOs have fundraising offices or may be headquartered. They are often sector wide and coordinated and administered by the national association or network for development and humanitarian NGOs (eg. InterAction in the US or VENRO in Germany). Such initiatives exist predominantly in the countries of Europe and North America where governments are major providers of development aid².
- As well as the two groups above, there are also **Southern national initiatives**. These are codes of conduct, certification schemes, etc. that have been developed by the domestic NGO sector in developing countries to support more effective programming. Examples include the Code of Ethics of the Colombian Confederation of NGOs, the Code of Conduct of Non-governmental Organisations in Nigeria and the NGO Good Practice Certification System of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia.

Southern initiatives are generally more contextualised than northern and international initiatives and often identify principles and set standards on effectiveness and quality which are more suited to the locality. They are also important to support as they provide a valuable component to civil society voice and strengthening at the national level. In particular, in countries where civil society is under threat from government, such collective efforts offer an important means of holding back restrictive legislation often introduced under the pretences of inadequate accountability.

Currently, the One World Trust CSO self-regulation project has identified more than 100 southern-based initiatives which have the potential to be of value in building understanding and approaches to NGO effectiveness. Given the scope of initiatives identified however, we feel this area deserves further in-depth study. We will therefore not cover Southern national initiatives in this paper but explore the growth, success and lessons of these initiatives in greater detail in a separate publication.

2.2 Thematic focus

All the initiatives identified in this briefing paper address issues of international development. Within this broad field however, we have identified four sub-sectors: firstly, there are those initiatives, which relate to *development* work in general. These are frequently Northern national level initiatives such as Spain's Code of Conduct of Development NGO Coordination or the VENRO Code of Conduct in Germany and identify a broad set of principles for organisations on what it means to engage in international cooperation. Secondly, there are initiatives that relate specifically to *humanitarian* emergency work. These tend to be international initiatives such as COMPASS Qualité and the Code of

¹ See Annex 1 for a detailed list of initiatives, issues addressed and compliance mechanisms.

² See Annex 2 for a detailed list of initiatives, issues addressed and compliance mechanisms.

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Conduct for International Federation of Red Cross Societies and NGOs and relate to the specific challenges and associated approaches for delivering humanitarian aid. Thirdly, there are a small number of initiatives, which identify best practice principles in technical areas such as health and HIV/AIDS; the most prominent being the Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS. Lastly, there are initiatives, which relate specifically to how NGOs working in international development should approach *advocacy and communications*. This thematic area spans both national and international initiatives and includes initiatives such as the Ethical Guidelines for North/South Information in Norway, and the INGO Accountability Charter. The principles and standards identified in such initiatives relate to issues such as responsible lobbying and the ethical use of images

2.3 Nature of compliance mechanisms

Effectiveness initiatives can also be categorised according to their compliance mechanisms. This relates to the level of assessment, monitoring and evaluation that is implicit in engaging with an initiative. Some for example only require an organisation to sign up to an initiative and promise to meet the relevant principles and commitments, others require verification. In general there are five main types:

- **A commitment to compliance** – in such initiatives, signatory organisations simply promise to meet the agreed commitments (usually a list of principles) and there are no arrangements for following up, monitoring or reporting on compliance. Examples include the Charter of Principles for Development in Solidarity of the Quebecois Association of International Cooperation Organisations, the Principles of Partnership of the Global Humanitarian Platform and the Ethical Guidelines for North/South information of the RORG-Samarbeidet Network in Norway.
- **Complaints based compliance** – in such initiatives procedures are in place that allow stakeholders such as members of the public, to make a complaint against organisations that they believe are not in compliance with the commitments of an initiative. Examples are the Swiss NPO Code of the Conference of the Presidents of Large Humanitarian and Relief Organisations in Switzerland, the Statement of Principles of the British Overseas NGOs for Development in the UK and the Code of Development Related Public Relations of the Development Policy Association of German NGOs.
- **Self-assessment** – in such initiatives organisations are required to undertake a self-assessment of its compliance with principles and standards. In some cases they are also required to report to the body administering the initiative and sometimes make the report public. Initiatives include the Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel of People in Aid and the Quality COMPASS Criteria and Tools for the Management and Piloting of Humanitarian Assistance of the URD Group.
- **Peer review or assessment** – in such initiatives peer agencies assess an organisation's compliance with agreed principles or standards and make recommendations for improvement. In some initiatives such as the Accountability to Disaster-Affected Populations of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), senior managers from peer agencies meet to discuss follow up and share lessons.
- **Third party assessment** – in such initiatives a third party body undertakes an independent assessment of compliance. Such process often leads to a form seal of approval or certificate being granted. An example of this is the NGO Benchmarking Certification of the Société Generale de Surveillance (SGS).

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What do the initiatives cover at the international level and how do they work?

At the international level, 22 self-regulatory initiatives have been identified³. They cover a broad range of issues including accountability to stakeholders, transparency in communications, local participation, human resources management and governance and organisational performance.

There are nine initiatives that focus exclusively on the work of humanitarian work (although there is sometimes little to differentiate where development work ends and humanitarian work begins so the definition is a little blurred). They address issues such as accountability to beneficiaries, transparency of communications, governance, and evaluation and learning. Some of these initiatives coordinate and work together, for example, HAP, Coordination Sud and the Sphere Project, although their constituencies and emphasis are different. Coordination Sud provides a tool to develop a quality approach in humanitarian interventions, HAP focuses on accountability towards beneficiaries and the Sphere project emphasises meeting the basic needs of people affected by disasters.

Two initiatives set principles and/or standards for international organisations working on technical (health and HIV/AIDS) issues: the NGO Code of Conduct for Health Systems Strengthening (Health Alliance International) sets principles aimed at ensuring NGO efforts are complementary to and supportive of governmental efforts in the health sector; and the Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS which provides operational and programming principles, and applies a human rights-based approach.

Of the twenty-two international level initiatives identified, seven require only a commitment to comply, two have a complaints-based mechanism, six require self assessment and six involve third party verification⁴.

What do the initiatives cover for Northern national level and how do they work?

Twenty-four self-regulatory initiatives have been identified across twelve countries⁵. They tend to cover a range of common issues such as good governance, financial management and reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and north/south cooperation.

Nineteen of these initiatives target development work in general and cover issues such as how an INGO should engage in child sponsorship (e.g. Irish Child Sponsorship Alliance Codes on Child Protection and Sponsorship) and which principles/standards should guide the conduct of development organisations (eg. the Code of Ethics of the Council for International Development of New Zealand, the Statement of Principles of the British Overseas NGOs for Development of UK, etc.).

There are two initiatives which focus specifically on the humanitarian sector. The Accountability Framework of the Disaster Emergency Committee in the UK for example, addresses issues such as accountability to beneficiaries, learning from experience, and fulfilling the principles embodied in the Red Cross Code of Conduct, Sphere and People-in-Aid. Meanwhile, the Swiss NPO Code focuses on management and board governance, methods of internal efficiency, cooperation and designation of responsibilities of humanitarian and relief organisations.

Four Northern national level initiatives focus specifically on advocacy and communications. The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages sets out key principles to follow when using images and messages to highlight situations in developing countries.

³ See Annex 1 for a detailed list of initiatives, issues addressed and compliance mechanisms.

⁴ One initiative (IATI) is still in development and no compliance mechanisms have been identified.

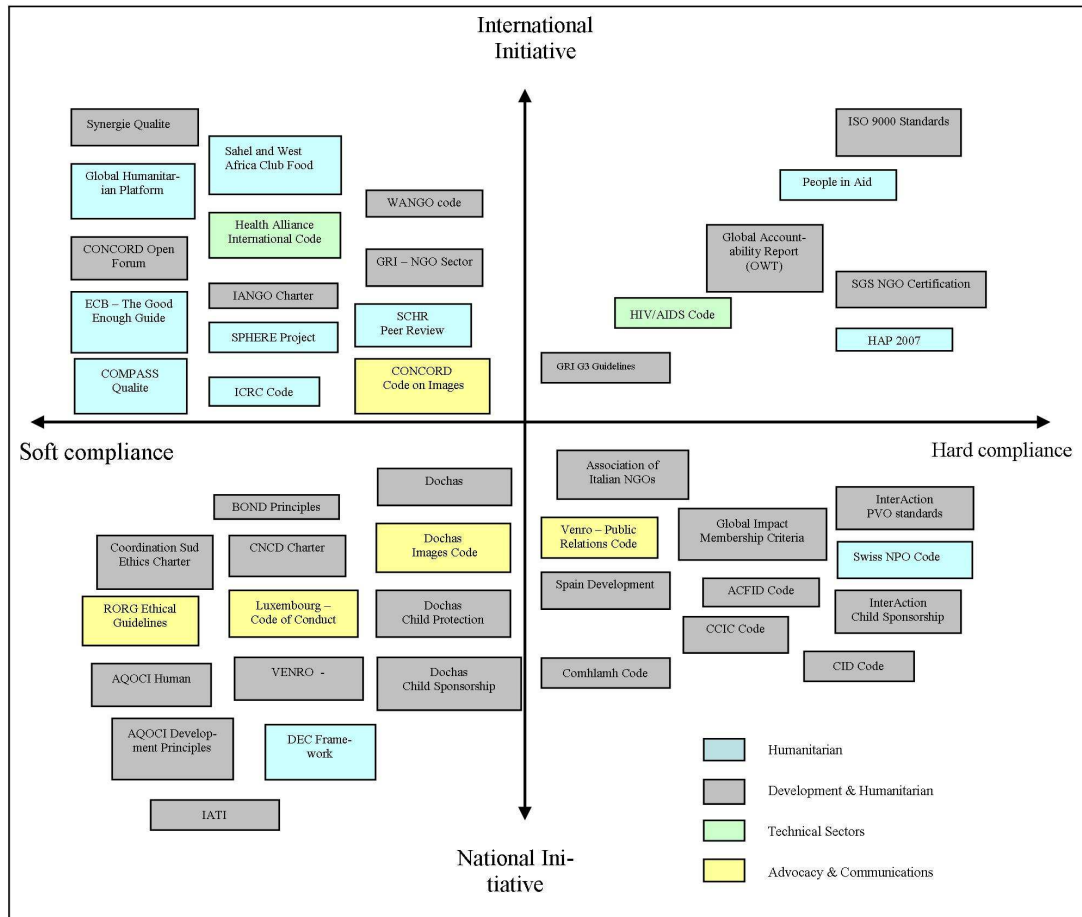
⁵ See Annex 2 for a detailed list of initiatives, issues addressed and compliance mechanisms.

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It emphasises the need to portray people as active agents that require justice as opposed to needy victims. Similar initiatives also exist in Norway, Germany and Luxembourg.

In terms of the compliance mechanisms employed, half (12) of the initiatives require only a commitment to compliance, while the others incorporate a more stringent form of compliance enforcement. Three of these initiatives have complaints mechanisms, five rely on self-assessments in addition to complaints, and five carry out independent verification.

Figure 1: Grouping of self-regulatory initiatives for NGOs in development and humanitarian according to geographical scale, thematic focus and compliance mechanisms



3. NGO decision-making: issues and challenges when engaging with effectiveness initiatives

There are too many self-regulatory initiatives within the development and humanitarian sectors for an organisation to engage with all that exist. To do this would be a poor use of resources and is unlikely to strengthen effectiveness; choices need to be made. The decision which to engage with will be based on factors unique to each NGO. For example, a large INGO will need to think through what it means for one of its offices or partners to sign up to an initiative without the knowledge of other offices or partners – will there be an impact on different parts of the organisation because of these actions? NGOs often work across cultures – what perceptions will there be from the different stakeholders when introducing a self regulatory initiative? How will the initiative be accepted and work within each different context? Can an organisation look for ways to adapt initiatives so they can be used successfully within a specific context?

Some of the issues arising for NGOs to take into account when making commitments to self-regulatory initiatives are considered below. Large INGOs in particular will need to think what such commitment to an initiative will mean to the multiple levels of their organisation as well as the partners they work with.

- **Balancing compliance with encouraging ongoing learning and improvement**
Self-regulation initiatives can be important to strengthen the trust that stakeholders have in an organisation. However, credibility does not come from merely being part of the initiative; it also requires a demonstration of compliance. Therefore, how an initiative assesses and monitors compliance is an important factor. Initiatives that involve self, peer or third party assessment of an organisation's quality and effectiveness for example, may offer useful feedback on weaknesses and recommendations for areas of improvement. Initiatives that require no self or external assessment tend to be viewed with scepticism by external stakeholders and may do little to strengthen legitimacy.

Yet self-regulatory initiatives are only one piece of the puzzle of NGO effectiveness. In order to improve quality and effectiveness an organisation will need to do more than simply complying with a set of principles and standards; it will need to be committed to ongoing learning and improvement.

- **Initiatives may not cover all areas of our work**
While there is a diversity of NGO self-regulatory initiatives aimed at strengthening accountability and effectiveness there are gaps in what initiatives address. For example, our research shows that there is limited emphasis on developing effective partnerships. An organisation should consider each area of their work and look at how they can measure effectiveness. If there are no existing initiatives that provide guidance, then they will need to create some new ones or look at what others are doing.
- **Principles or standards**
Different initiatives use different language when talking about principles, standards or codes, the important thing here is for an NGO to work out how to translate the themes into action and not worry about the minor differences in language between initiatives. Principles tend to capture the broader essence of effectiveness. In contrast standards provide a more fixed framework of indicators on what is expected from organisations in the specific terms of policy formulation or and tools, and are often built in response to the demands of a specific field of work, i.e. humanitarian operations or funding.

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Before signing up to these principles or standards NGOs need to work out what they mean in practice for the organisation and see if they are relevant. Signing up to good policies does not mean there is good practice in this area. Consequently, giving thought to the process of the initiative implementation is more important than the answers that each NGO gives at the end of the process.

- **Resources involved**

The resources that will be needed to ensure compliance with an initiative will be a consideration for an NGO. If an organisation is taking an initiative seriously, it will require an investment of human and financial resources and time. A scheme which includes compliance mechanisms may seem more expensive than a code of conduct that has no compliance mechanism but if the latter is being taken seriously resources will need to be made available to facilitate and carry out an internal review of compliance with the commitments and allocate resources to fill gaps.

- **Moving effectiveness issues forward within the organisation**

Depending on the stage at which an organisation is in addressing issues of quality, accountability and effectiveness, a self-regulatory mechanism can help move an issue forward internally. A constructive assessment by a peer or third party can help generate movement on an issue, sustain momentum for existing processes, help recognise the efforts of staff or help focus efforts on tackling weaknesses. Similarly signing onto a code can raise the profile of issues of effectiveness and reconfirm an organisation's commitment to its values and principles such as north-south cooperation and gender equality.

- **Centralised/ decentralised structure**

Tensions need to be managed from global to local level as central sign-up to codes/ charters will have certain implications for other parts of the NGO or their partners (national level especially). Offices need to have the space to choose initiatives that are right for their level of organisational development and operating environment. Therefore, before signing up to initiatives, preliminary work needs to be done to see what each internal stakeholder will need to be responsible for/committed to delivering as part of the initiative and whether they can meet those demands.

- **Contextualising initiatives**

Organisations need to reflect on what principles and standards mean in different national and local contexts. If the headquarters of an INGO sign up to an initiatives they need to provide scope and support to national offices to contextualise the commitments. Unless this happens they will have little ownership of the process. Large INGOs work across cultures which may have different views on how effectiveness can be measured – flexibility needs to be maintained so that at local, national, regional and global level initiatives can be 'localised' so that they are sensitive.

Learning how to be more effective as an organisation needs to take into account that within some contexts 'learning' is viewed as 'failing'. This can mean that when an initiative is adopted some parts of an organisation may not want to be involved as they are worried about results reflecting badly on them personally or being seen to lack effectiveness (or 'fail') in some areas – whereas some will be keen to learn how improvements can be made year or year. NGOs need to work out how they help all parts of the organisation understand the positives of accountability and to not use initiatives to judge people's work unfairly. Discussion and training before adoption of initiatives is important so that misunderstanding can be minimised and stakeholders can take responsibility for the commitments.

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▪ Working through partners and national offices

There are challenges such as over-burdening southern partners; setting standards that are not appropriate/ realistic for organisations operating in a particular context etc. These need to be discussed upfront so that stakeholders are aware of expectations and can minimise extra demands on partners. If national offices of INGOs are signing up to national initiatives as well as having to comply with international and northern national initiatives, there is a likelihood of overburdening the organisations with accountability demands. Organisations have to make sure the linkages between the initiatives are made so that the same national reporting can be used to comply with all.

Table 2: Issues and challenges for NGOs when using self-regulatory initiatives to improve the effectiveness of their work		
Issues	Questions to consider	Recommendations
Balancing compliance with encouraging ongoing learning and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far do self-regulatory initiatives really go in meeting development effectiveness and facilitate learning? What do NGOs need to do to comply with this or that initiative? 	Effectiveness and quality require a credible mechanism of compliance together with ongoing learning and improvement.
Initiatives may not cover all areas of our work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What gaps remain with the initiatives that already exist? What areas of work are not yet included in 'what it means to be effective in this area'? 	An organisation should consider each area of their work and assess if existing initiatives address those criteria or if new ones must be developed.
Principles or standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the difference between principles and standards of development effectiveness? Does it matter? How to comply with general principles? What do we need to do in practice to meet our commitments? Where should we focus? 	Principles tend to capture the broader essence of effectiveness and standards provide a more fixed framework of indicators. Before signing up to principles or standards, NGOs need to work out what they mean in practice for the organisation and see if they are relevant.
Resources involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much time, human and financial resources will be needed to support commitment to the initiative? 	Organisations need to carry out an internal review of the resources available and the type of compliance mechanisms and commitments they want to set up.
Moving effectiveness issues forward within the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will an initiative generate momentum for moving issues forward internally? 	Depending on the stage at which an organisation is in addressing issues of quality, accountability and effectiveness, a self-regulatory mechanism can help move an issue forward internally.
Centralised/ decentralised structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the headquarters of an NGO signs up to an initiative what does this mean for its national/other offices? Or if a national office signs up what does that mean for others? Should it be left to national offices to navigate self regulatory initiatives or direction comes from the centre? 	Tensions need to be managed from global to local level as central sign-up to codes/ charters will have certain implications for other parts of the NGO or their partners (national level especially).
Contextualising initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What needs to be put in place at different levels for internal stakeholders to deliver on commitments? What will it mean to sign up to effectiveness initiatives for different parts of the organisation? How will culture play a part in measuring what success looks like? Whose agenda takes priority? A learning agenda, an accountability agenda or a marketing agenda? 	Organisations need to reflect on what principles and standards mean in different national and local contexts. Discussion and training before adoption of initiatives is important so that misunderstanding can be minimised and stakeholders can take responsibility for the commitments.
Working through partners and national offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For NGOs that work through partners what does it mean for them to sign up to self-regulatory initiatives? Where do their responsibilities begin and end? How can the national offices be expected to report for four different initiatives? How can the linkages between initiatives be made to minimise compliance reporting? 	There are challenges such as over-burdening southern partners; setting standards that are not appropriate/ realistic for organisations operating in a particular context etc. These need to be discussed upfront so that stakeholders are aware of expectations and can minimise extra demands on partners.

4. Where are the challenges in realising global accountability?

Self-regulation is by definition voluntary; organisations are free to decide whether or not they abide by the standards or principles of an initiative. This limits the impact self-regulation can have on a sector and therefore also limits its reach as an accountability tool. Incentives need to be created to encourage organisations to actively participate. In some NGO initiatives such as the ACFID Code of Conduct for example, compliance has been tied to accessing donor funds.

Perhaps more problematic is the fact that self-regulatory initiatives frequently lack enforcement mechanisms. Once a member of an initiative, it is often left to the organisation to ensure that the principles are followed and to what extent it reports publicly on compliance. This lack of enforcement is problematic as it can sometimes lead to free riding (signing up to the initiative purely to show the organisation in a good light – without any real action on the part of the NGO to implement against the initiative's purpose). While organisations may sign up to an initiative because they agree with its content, they frequently fail to dedicate adequate human and financial resources to identifying and implementing the changes that are required to ensure compliance. The challenge facing self regulatory initiatives is therefore in developing appropriate mechanisms to support enforcement and ensure compliance for development effectiveness.

A final challenge that the development effectiveness community is going to have to consider carefully over the next few years is how technology will affect accountability initiatives. Technology is rapidly changing the way civil society operates and for NGOs today the real time nature of reporting is just the start – what will technology mean for development 20 years from now? The ethical considerations of using technology in development may mean a quantum leap in how we view accountability; communities and all the other stakeholders in development projects that have access to technology will also have access to information - donor details, funding, outcome areas, and complaints mechanisms. Largely, the NGO community has been slow to look at how technology can be a positive force for development effectiveness and perhaps while they consider accountability initiatives such as those discussed in this paper they might also focus on how IT can open the door to more thorough accountability of NGO practice (or the door may be opened without them).

5. Conclusions

The evidence reviewed for this paper shows that self-regulation can provide important incentives for organisational reform, achieving greater accountability and effectiveness for NGOs working at global and national level, and indeed for other types of organisations as well. Given the influence that NGOs and other actors have in the determination of global public policy and the provision of global public goods to citizens, accountability reform driven by the dynamics of self regulation can help to bring about more legitimate, effective and accountable global governance across all sectors.

We have outlined six underlying principles of NGO effectiveness that are largely shared by organisations and coalitions working in the development and humanitarian fields. They emphasise the accountability of organisations towards both internal and external stakeholders; ownership, partnership and participation; transparency and good governance; learning, evaluation and managing for results; independence from political and economic interests; and respect for human dignity and equity. These principles give us some insights into what development practitioners think effectiveness means and into the issues the sector continually emphasises as core to meeting its mission.

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In order to present a landscape of existing NGO self-regulatory initiatives we have categorised them according to the level in which an initiative functions (international or national), its thematic focus (humanitarian, development, technical sector and advocacy and communications) and the nature of its compliance mechanisms (commitment only, complaints based, self-assessment, peer assessment, or third party assessment). Most of the international initiatives require from signatories only a commitment to comply, without specifying monitoring or enforcement mechanisms. National level initiatives involve development and humanitarian NGOs that have fundraising offices or are headquartered in that specific country. For the purpose of this paper we focus only on those that are Northern-based. Half of the initiatives in this sector require only a commitment to comply while the other half has more stringent form of compliance enforcement.

Finally, we outlined some of the issues NGOs might face when engaging with self-regulation initiatives. We addressed questions concerning their context, resources, structure and values so it can be used as a starting point to reflect on what self-regulation can mean for the work and effectiveness of NGOs,

Self regulation can improve organisational behaviour where formal regulation is lacking, not enforceable or, importantly, where it may not be desired. It can also be used to define good practice, share learning and hold organisations to account publicly on a range of issues. Yet, to realise its potential a number of challenges need to be overcome. Creating the incentives for organisations to join self-regulatory initiatives and develop appropriate structures to ensure compliance.

This paper, the first in a series jointly authored by World Vision International and the One World Trust, was developed as an introduction to the issues surrounding accountability, development effectiveness and the self-regulatory initiatives that have already been created in this arena. The authors hope that the paper can be used as a starting point for discussion and so welcome feedback and further learning from all parts of the development sector to build on and improve this work so that together we are clear on the steps we need to take towards becoming effective in development practice.

6. Where can organisations go for more information?

Annexes 1 and 2 below give details of the main CSO self-regulation initiatives that were reviewed for this paper. The information provides a starting point to allow NGOs to compare at the high level the different initiatives which may be relevant for them and which may lend themselves to further exploration. For comparative review in greater detail, the One World Trust has developed a database containing information on more than 300 civil society self-regulatory initiatives which provides the first comprehensive inventory of civil society self-regulatory initiatives worldwide. The database can be found at <http://www.oneworldtrust.org/csoproject/>.

The second in the series of papers will analyse research concerning southern national accountability initiatives. It is hoped that this paper will give some helpful guidance for how national codes of conduct and accountability initiatives can support development effectiveness in specific contexts as well as looking at better practice and lessons for the future. This second paper will be available in early 2010.

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Annex 1: International self-regulatory initiatives for INGOs working in development and humanitarian relief			
Name of initiative	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Accountability to Disaster-Affected Populations Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)	Humanitarian	The SCHR peer review process focuses on the existence and quality of organisational policies and processes for ensuring accountability to beneficiaries. It is aimed at facilitating learning among organisations.	The process involves a self-assessment at headquarters level and in two selected countries, followed by two country visits by a review team and interviews with stakeholders. Finally, the CEOs meet to discuss the findings and to agree priorities.
Accountability and Impact Measurement: The Good Enough Guide The Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB)	Humanitarian	The Guide focuses on the involvement of beneficiaries; transparency in communications; complaints and response mechanisms and impact assessment. Any organisation working in humanitarian and emergency relief can use this guide.	Although The Good Enough Guide will not be thought of as a self-regulatory initiative in the formal sense it is an important tool for supporting field assessment of effectiveness.
HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP)	Humanitarian	The HAP standards cover transparency in communications; accountability to stakeholders; involvement of beneficiaries in planning and implementation; monitoring and reporting on compliance; addressing complaints; implementation partners; staff competency; and continual improvement.	The HAP Standard is a third-party certification scheme based on a desk and field assessment. Certification is granted for three years subject to a compliance verification audit and mid term monitoring. Certification can be withdrawn upon review of complaints by HAP's Standing Complaints Committee. HAP deploy staff to the field to support better adherence to HAP standards.
Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel People in Aid	Humanitarian & Development	The Code is aimed at strengthening staff management among INGOs. Its principles focus specifically on human resources; staff policies and practices; consultation and communication with staff; recruitment and selection; learning, training and development; health, safety and security.	The Code of Good Practice is a self-assessment scheme based on a desk review. Certification can be awarded but needs to be underpinned by a formal audit performed by People in Aid upon request.
Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response SPHERE Project	Humanitarian	The charter is a framework for accountability in humanitarian assistance. It addresses principles concerning the right to life with dignity, the distinction between combatants and non-combatants and the principle of non-refoulement. The Minimum Standards aims to operationalise the principles with regard to people's needs for water, sanitation, nutrition, food, shelter and healthcare.	The Sphere project only requires a commitment from participating organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism. SPHERE deploy staff to the field to support better adherence to minimum standards and supply guidance notes to promote better humanitarian practice.
Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Humanitarian	The Code seeks to maintain standards of independence, effectiveness and impact for NGOs in emergency response. The code's principles focus on impartiality; respect of local culture; involvement of beneficiaries; accountability to stakeholders and respectful communications.	The Code of Conduct of the ICRC requires only a commitment from participating organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism.

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Name of initiative	Sector	Issues	Compliance
The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS NGO Code of Good Practice Secretariat	Development & HIV/AIDS	The code identifies a number of principles and standards for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS, which addresses advocacy work, management, governance, harm reduction, human rights; meaningful involvement of people with HIV; monitoring and evaluation, research and service delivery.	Signatories endorse the code on one of three tiered levels according to the degree of code implementation within their organisations' policies and practices. There is no sanctioning mechanism.
COMPAS Qualité (Quality COMPASS)- Criteria and Tools for the Management and Piloting of Humanitarian Assistance Groupe URD	Humanitarian	COMPAS is a project planning tool which enables information about a project to be recorded, archived and consulted. There is a specific focus on project management and project evaluation including consistency of mandate; respect of population; removal of negative impacts; flexibility; optimal use of resources; achievement of objectives; sufficient management capacity.	The Quality COMPAS requires only the participation of interested organisations. It is a self-assessment tool. There is no sanctioning mechanism.
The NGO Code of Conduct for Health Systems Strengthening Health Alliance International	Health & HIV/AIDS	This code of conduct offers guidance on how international NGOs can work in host countries in ways that respect, support and strengthen government health systems. There is specific focus on training, securing and deploying human resources.	The NGO Code of Conduct requires only the commitment of participating organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism.
Synergie Qualité Coordination SUD	Development & Humanitarian	This guide is a comprehensive set of principles and methods grouped into five thematic areas: humanitarian ethics (humanity, impartiality and independence); NGO governance; human resources management; the project cycle; and participation of affected populations.	Synergie Qualité is a guide for any NGO wanting to implement its quality approach. There is no certification or sanctioning mechanism.
Global Effectiveness Framework for NGOs - Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)	Development & Humanitarian	This forum facilitates the discussion on themes such as human rights; gender equality; environmental sustainability; capacity building; aid effectiveness; health; monitoring and evaluation. Its objective is to propose a global effectiveness framework for CSOs by 2011.	There are no compliance mechanisms
Principles of Partnership Global Humanitarian Platform	Humanitarian	The principles focus on equality in partnerships; transparency in communications; a results-oriented approach; the responsibility to deliver on commitments; and seeking complementarity with local capacity.	The Principles of Partnership only requires the commitment of participating organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism.
Draft Revised Food Aid Charter: A Code of Good Conduct in Food Crisis Prevention and Management Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD	Humanitarian	The code involves states, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, OECD technical and financial partners and civil society organisations. The charter consists of a set of principles and commitments concerning food security, information and analysis systems; a dialogue and consultative framework; and a strategic framework governing response to food crisis. It specifically focuses on transparency, beneficiary participation and monitoring and evaluation.	The Draft Food Aid Charter only requires the commitment of member organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism.

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Name of initiative	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Code of Conduct on Images and Messages European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)	Development & Humanitarian	This Code focuses exclusively on the respectful use of images portraying poverty with dignity.	The Code of Conduct only requires the commitment of member organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism.
G3 (Version 3 of the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines) Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)	Development & Humanitarian	The guidelines seek to promote accountability to internal and external stakeholders for organisational performance. They are divided into seven thematic areas: economic, social, environmental, labour, practices, human rights, society, and product responsibility.	GRI's G3 Guidelines are a self-assessment and reporting tool. However, organisations using the reporting tool then submit their reports for auditing. The resulting scores measure the degree to which the framework has been implemented. There is no sanctioning mechanism
International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) Accountability Charter INGO Charter Secretariat at CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation	Development & Humanitarian	The charter includes principles focusing on transparency, accountability, communication with stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation and responsible lobbying	Signatories conduct an annual self-assessment against the principles and report on performance using the Interim Reporting Framework. In the future the GRI NGO Reporting Supplement will provide a common framework for signatories to report on their compliance with the Charter. There is also a committee which investigates complaints against the process immediately linked to the implementation of the Charter.
ISO 9000 Quality Management Standards International Organisation for Standardisation	Development & Humanitarian	The ISO 9000 series consist of standards and guidelines relating to quality management systems. The system is built around eight principles: customer focus; leadership; involvement of people; process approach; system approach to management; continual improvement; factual approach to decision making; mutually beneficial supplier relationships	Certification is available but is not a requirement. The auditing and certification process is carried out independently of ISO by more than 750 certification bodies active around the world. The audit measures consistency and not actual content performance.
NGO Benchmarking Certification Société Generale de Surveillance (SGS)	Development & Humanitarian	The certification includes 108 indicators addressing issues such as transparency, efficiency, fundraising standards, good governance, auditing, board structure, financial reporting, staff relations and volunteer Relations	This is a third party certification scheme. In order to achieve certification organisations must undergo an audit undertaken by the SGS.
Global Accountability Report One World Trust	Development & Humanitarian	The Global Accountability Report assesses NGOs, as well as transnational corporations and intergovernmental organisations, across four dimensions of accountability: transparency, participation, evaluation and complaints and response handling	Organisations receive a percentage score based on the inclusion of good practice principles across four dimensions of accountability. Organisations are selected for assessment by the One World Trust. There is no sanctioning mechanism
GRI NGO Sector Supplement Reporting guidelines Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)	Development & Humanitarian	The proposed reporting guidelines are split into a number of categories: governance, programme effectiveness, economic, environmental and labour, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation, gender and diversity, public awareness and advocacy, resource allocation, ethical fundraising.	It is anticipated that the reporting using the NGO Sector Supplement framework will be audited by a third party. The framework is linked with the INGO Charter and will enable signatories to report on their compliance with the principles

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Name of initiative	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Code of Ethics and Conduct for NGOs World Association of NGOs (WANGO)	Development & Humanitarian	The code is a set of fundamental principles, operational principles, and standards to guide the actions and management of non-governmental organisations working in different sectors and regions. It includes issues such as human rights, transparency and accountability, good governance, human resources and public trust, among others.	It requires only the commitment of participating organisations. There is no sanctioning mechanism. There is a Compliance Manual that forms the basis for a self-certification program that is currently in development.
Code of Conduct (draft) International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)	Development & Humanitarian	This initiative brings together donor countries, developing country governments, non-governmental organisations and experts in aid information to agree ways of sharing more and better information about aid.	The IATI standards, including the code of conduct, will be overseen by the IATI Steering Committee, supported by an IATI Secretariat. Code is still in consultation phase (October 2009).

Annex 2: Northern national level self-regulatory initiatives for INGOs working in development and humanitarian relief

Name of initiative and country of application	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Australia ACFID Code of Conduct Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)	Development & Humanitarian	The Code defines standards for organisational integrity, good governance, communications with the public, personnel and management practice, financial reporting and fundraising. It also addresses beneficiary participation, gender equity, human rights, child welfare, respect for other cultures, and CSO collaboration and partnership.	The signatories to the code assess their own compliance through a web based application. In addition, a committee monitors compliance by reviewing audit reports, investigating complaints and responding to enquiries. The Committee can withdraw recognition of a signatory and publish the findings of the investigation if a breach of the code is found.
Belgium Charte Fondamentale du CNCD-11.11.11 Centre national de coopération au développement (CNCD)	Development	The charter has general principles addressing gender equity, advocacy, existence of evaluation mechanisms, beneficiary participation, human rights and CSO collaboration and partnership.	The Code of Conduct only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
Canada Code of Ethics Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)	Development	The code contains principles for CSO collaboration and partnership, governance and management (auditing, board structure, conflict of interest, financial reporting, and procurement), human resources (staff and volunteer relations), communications to the public (ethical communications, fundraising standards).	The Code of Ethics requires a self-assessment and a review by an ethical review committee who provide support in addressing any issues which arise. The CCIC only takes disciplinary action when there is an extreme case of non compliance, in which case the board of directors can withdraw an organisation's membership.

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Name of initiative and country of application	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Canada Charte de principes pour un développement solidaire (Charter of principles for development in solidarity) Association Québécoise des Organismes de Coopération Internationale (QOCI)	Development	The Charter includes principles on human rights, beneficiary participation and gender equality.	The Charter only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
Canada Charter of principles for human rights and development Association Québécoise des Organismes de Coopération Internationale (QOCI)	Development	The Charter focuses on human rights principles for development cooperation.	The Charter only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
France A shared ethics charter Coordination SUD	Development & Humanitarian	The Charter identifies principles that address ethical communications, auditing, board structure, financial reporting, a general commitment to beneficiary participation, and a general commitment to evaluation.	The Shared Ethics Charter only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
Germany VENRO Code of Conduct Development Policy Association of German NGOs (VENRO)	Development & Humanitarian	The Code identifies principles that address good governance (board structure, conflict of interest, anti-corruption, financial reporting, stewardship of funds, procurement), ethical communications, fundraising standards, beneficiary participation and evaluation.	There is currently no complaints mechanism, but members of the code commit to implement it in their organisations and to support other members in their implementation.
Germany Code of Development Related Public Relations Development Policy Association of German NGOs (VENRO)	Development & Humanitarian	Signatories commit themselves to respect human dignity, promote tolerance, financial transparency and accountability and efficient resource mobilization.	The VENRO Kodex is a complaints-based system. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism, but complaints are addressed via a process of mediation between the two parties (conciliation board).
Ireland Irish Development NGOs Code of Corporate Governance Dóchas Association of Irish Non-Governmental Organisations	Development	The Code was developed by the Corporate Governance Association of Ireland (CGAI) in partnership with Dóchas. It focuses on good governance, board structure, accountability and responsibilities of staff. It has implementation guidelines on how to put the principles outlined in the code into practice.	The Code only requires a commitment to compliance, but non-compliance must be explained. Membership is reaffirmed annually. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
Ireland Code of Conduct on Images and Messages Dóchas Association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations	Development	The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages deals with the respectful use of images to portray a complete picture of poverty and maintain the dignity of people portrayed. This Code has been adopted by a number of European development and humanitarian relief NGO umbrella organisations	The Code only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no sanctioning mechanism. However, the Code requires participants to make a public declaration of use of Code. In addition, the Code mandates a 'right to challenge' mechanism, with an email address provided for feedback and complaints.

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Name of initiative and country of application	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Ireland Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations Comhlámh	Development	The Code of Good Practice sets out standards for organisations that send volunteers overseas. It has principles that address transparency in communications, staff development and training and volunteer relations, evaluation and learning.	Compliance with the Code involves signing up to the principles, a self audit and peer support mechanisms. The Code includes a complaints handling mechanism which can be accessed via email.
Ireland Irish Child Sponsorship Alliance Code on Child Protection Dóchas Association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations Child Sponsorship Alliance	Development	The Code focuses on visit preparation and visit conduct of organisations and children sponsors. It also specifies the number of visits, and sets standards for correspondence and gifts.	The Code on Child Protection only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
Ireland Irish Child Sponsorship Alliance Code on Child Sponsorship Dóchas Association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations Child Sponsorship Alliance	Development	The Code on Child Sponsorship was written by the six peer organisations which operate child sponsorship programmes to help improve coordination between agencies and ensure that each sponsored child receives the maximum benefit from sponsorship. It focuses on ethical communications (advertising standards), beneficiary participation and evaluation.	The Code on Child Sponsorship only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
Italy Ethics Charter Association of Italian NGOs for International Cooperation and Solidarity	Development	The Ethics Charter affirms a rights-based approach in international development and humanitarianism. It identifies principles on communications (transparency, ethical communications, fundraising standards), governance, financial management, human resources, and CSO collaboration and partnership.	Compliance must be declared annually and the principles must be reflected in individual organisations' codes of ethics. If members of the Association no longer comply with the Ethics Charter, they can be removed after an annual audit.
Luxembourg Code of Conduct governing the dissemination of images and messages Circle of cooperation of development NGOs of Luxembourg	Development, Advocacy & Communications	Based on the Dóchas Code of Conduct for the Use of Images and Messages (it is a translation), the Circle also offers a guide to using the code. The Code focuses on ethical communications and lobbying standards.	Acceptance of the Code is required for membership in the Circle. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.
New Zealand Code of Ethics of the Council for International Development Kaunihera mo te Whakapakari Ao Whanui Council for International Development (CID)	Development	The Code contains principles, which address beneficiary participation in development, the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi as fundamental to New Zealand's development (and the basis of common perspectives on development issues in other countries), transparency to stakeholders, ethical fundraising and fundraising standards.	Adherence to the Code of Ethics is mandatory for all CID members. Complaints of breaches of the Code of Ethics are directed to the Executive Director of CID. A Complaints Committee reviews complaints. Sanctions may include membership termination with the vote of three-quarters of all board members.
Norway Ethical Guidelines for North/South information in Norway RORG-Samarbeidet (Network)	Development	The guidelines outline how Norwegian NGOs should, and should not, present information in the context of development education campaigns in Norway. The focus is on the avoidance of disempowering stereotypes, and a checklist is provided to help organisations assess their campaign plans.	The Code of Conduct only requires a commitment to compliance. There is no identified sanctioning mechanism.

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Name of initiative and country of application	Sector	Issues	Compliance
Spain Code of Conduct Development NGO Coordination	Development & Humanitarian	The Code provides standards on transparency, CSO collaboration and partnership, ethical use of images and advertising, good governance, financial auditing, staff and volunteer relations. The association is currently working on indicators on transparency and good governance that will be implemented between 2009 and 2011.	There is a monitoring commission which deals with publicising the code and compliance. NGOs that breach the code can be removed from the initiative, and this would be made public.
Switzerland Swiss NPO Code Conference of the Presidents of Large Humanitarian and Relief Organisations (KPGH)	Humanitarian	The Code focuses on management and board governance, methods of internal efficiency, financial reporting, conflict of interest, cooperation and designation of responsibilities.	The Swiss NPO Code uses a 'comply or explain' mechanism and a third-party (ZEWO) verifies this compliance based on a field assessment. A certificate is awarded, and must be renewed every two years. In order to be reviewed for the Swiss NPO code during the first two years of its operation an organisation must already have achieved a ZEWO certification (financial auditing standards).
UK Statement of Principles British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND)	Development & Humanitarian	The Statement of Principles focuses on transparency, fundraising standards, beneficiary participation, evaluation and gender equality.	The Code of Conduct only requires a commitment to compliance. There is a complaints mechanism and a complaints review board, though the sanctions are not specified, and efforts are made to find positive solutions to complaints rather than sanction.
UK Accountability Framework Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)	Humanitarian	The Framework focuses on accountability to beneficiaries, good governance and financial management, fundraising standards, evaluation, learning and realising the principles embodied in the Red Cross Code of Conduct, Sphere, People-in-Aid.	The DEC Accountability Framework is a peer-verification scheme based largely on UK assessment (with some field evaluation). No certificate is awarded, but members are reviewed by the trustees every three years. Complaints can be directed to the DEC, and members can be removed from participation.
USA Child Sponsorship Accreditation Project American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction)	Development	The Accreditation project is still in a pilot phase, and though it is coordinated by InterAction, it is a member driven initiative. The standards focus on transparency, ethical communications, and good governance.	A third-party certification organisation (Social Accountability International-SAI) conducts field assessment to monitor compliance with the standards. A certificate is awarded, and re-certification is required every four years.
USA InterAction Self Certification Plus American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction)	Development & Humanitarian	The standards focus on governance (board structure, financial reporting), human resources, fundraising standards, monitoring and evaluation, ethical communications, and beneficiaries participation.	The PVO Standards Self Certification Plus is a self-verification scheme based on desk assessment. A re-assessment is required every two years. InterAction reviews complaints and participation can be revoked.
USA Criteria for membership in Global Impact Global Impact (formerly International Service Agencies)	Development	The criteria for membership focus on good governance, financial transparency, fundraising standards, and compliance with regulatory requirements.	The membership criteria use a peer-verification scheme based on desk and field assessment. A certificate is awarded (membership). Membership can be refused or revoked if members are deemed to have acted in a way that might damage Global Impact.