



“Children in Difficult Situations are the Reason We Exist”

**NOVOC STAMP OF APPROVAL
Process document**

**FOR COMMUNITY/FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS
NOVOC MEMBERS**

Background

One of NOVOC 5 key thematic area is to facilitate the linkage between grant giving bodies (donors) to members Community Based and Faith Based Organisations (CBO/FBO). CBO/FBOs typically cry out for support to carry out their activities. Some make efforts to generate funds on their own but inevitably these efforts are limited and insufficient to meet the growing need for support to OVCs. In addition, small community organisations do not have the power to convince large donors of their worthiness to be granted funds.

Therefore, with support from Raising Malawi Trust and CORDAID, NOVOC wishes to give its members an approval mechanism that will give donors the confidence to invest their funds in them. The NOVOC Stamp of Approval concept is an indication that a CBO/FBO has successfully completed a thorough, transparent and systematic process of assessment of its capacity to manage funds and deliver quality services.

This document outlines the process of development of the Stamp of Approval, the assessment tools used and how it will be awarded and renewed.

1. Development process

The Stamp of Approval was developed over 1 year (Oct 2008 – Sep 2009) in conjunction with capacity building activities in 22 CBO/FBOs from 7 Districts across Malawi.

1.1 Desk research

Research for existing models of organisations assessment was done using partners such as World Vision, VSO, SAT, NAC and District Assembly as well as the internet. The research was supplemented by the knowledge and lessons learned while conducting organisation capacity building activities in communities. Key persons with experience in CBO/FBO assessment were also consulted for advice.

1.2 System design

The Stamp of Approval needs strong guiding principles on how to administer the award. The findings of the desk research were analysed leading to the definition of standard sought for approval of CBO/FBOs (defined below). The tools adapted for CBO/FBO assessment from SAT (Southern Africa AIDS Trust) and World Vision were selected as most appropriate in favor of more complex NGO assessment models. These were supplemented by pertinent questions from District Assemblies assessment questionnaires derived from NAC (National AIDS Commission).

From this work the process described below comprises 6 sections:

- Process and Criteria for assessment
- Definition of the standard for approval
- Principles of assessment
- Ranking for approval
- Award of NOVOC Stamp of Approval
- Renewal of the award

Once completed the tools were tested on a number of CBOs to refine them.

2. Process and Criteria for assessment

General guiding process for the NOVOC Stamp of Approval

NOVOC will inform all members on the availability and the benefits of the Stamp of Approval giving the criteria and minimum standard to meet to be granted the award.

CBO/FBO will voluntarily register their interest with NOVOC to be considered for the award. They will be asked to fill in a form to show that they meet the entry criteria (Annex 1).

Once it has approved an organisation to be considered, NOVOC will draw up a timetable for the assessment process.

The process not only leads to the award but is also an opportunity for the CBO to analyse in depth its position and identify areas where it needs to develop its capacity.

To qualify for consideration for a NOVOC Stamp of Approval, an organisation needs to meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be a fully paid NOVOC member for at least 1 year
- 2) Be a registered organisation with the District Assembly in their district
- 3) Focus their program on OVC care.
- 4) Have submitted at least 6 reports to the District Assembly in the past 12 months that demonstrate their activities.
- 5) Have existed for at least 1 year fulfilling the above criteria 1-4.

3. Definition of the Standard for approval

In order to be granted a stamp of approval a Community Based Organisation/ Faith Based Organisation should meet the following minimum criteria;

Capacity area	Minimum standard
Organisational Purpose and Planning	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
1 Organisational Vision and Mission	A clear Vision and Mission, agreed and understood by all members and known by all stakeholders.
2 Organisational Goal and Objectives	Clear goals and SMART objectives agreed and understood by all members and known by all stakeholders.
3 Action Planning	A workplan (at least monthly and yearly) based on its objectives and with clear responsibilities and timeline that can be monitored.
Organisational Structure and Procedures	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
4 Structure, Roles and Responsibilities	A clear Organisational structure showing reporting lines and each individual roles and responsibilities. Each post holder has a job description they are familiar with and that is used to allocate tasks within the Organisation.
5 Constitution	A constitution laying out all the internal rules of the CBO/FBO. The constitution was agreed and approved by all members.
6 Meetings	Holds regular meetings of the management committee and the Trustees. Meetings are recorded and minutes are kept for future reference.
7 Formal By-Laws/ legal registration	Is registered with the local Social Welfare office and complies to its registration requirements.
8 Governance	An appointed Board of Trustees (BOT) of no less than 5 and no more than 10 members. The BOT acts as advisors and owners of the organisation. A management committee of no less than 10 and no more than 15 members elected by the membership on a regular basis.

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Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
9 Monitoring	An up to date system for recording its beneficiaries and the activities carried out on their behalf. It knows how to compile monthly/yearly statistics.
10 Reporting and Recordkeeping	Regular verbal reports to its members and the community. Regular timely written reports for internal use and external submission (e.g. DSWO).
Financial Management	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
11 Budgeting	Knowledge of budget writing that reflect projected income and expenditure. Actual income and expenditure does not vary more than 10-20% from budget.
12 Bookkeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CBO (Treasurer) keeps a Cashbook recording all money coming in and going out of the CBO fund • The Treasurer writes Receipts for all money paid in to the fund • The Treasurer fills out Payment Vouchers authorised by 3 CBO members for all payments out of the fund • The CBO verifies the balance on the Cashbook to actual cash on hand on a monthly basis • The Treasurer provides a justification of accounts to the CBO members on a monthly basis • All CBO members understand the basics of the system that the Treasurer is using
13 Banking	A bank account is open in the name of the organisation. Bank statements are kept and reconciled. At least 3 signatories for cheques.
Resource Mobilisation	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
14 Proposal Writing	The CBO has succeeded in submitting a proposal for funding to an external donor
15 Community mobilisation	Succeeded in mobilizing the community to contribute human, material or financial resources to carry out its activities/ projects e.g. workforce, bricks, money, clothes...
16 Human resources	Systems for recruiting, training, managing and retaining volunteers in place.
External Relations	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
17 Linkages/Networking	Good working relationships with community leadership: chiefs, VAC, VDC as well as district structures DAC, NOVOC network, DSWO.

Impact on target beneficiaries	The CBO/FBO has at least ...
18 Awareness of the CBO/FBO in the community	Been mentioned as a coping strategy to assist with the OVC issues that come up in the community mapping tools used (Pairwise Ranking, River Code and Stakeholder Ranking).
19 Community participation in the decision making of the CBO/FBO	Proposals goals and objectives reflect the needs of the community as identified in the mapping tools used (Stakeholder ranking, Pairwise Ranking and River Code)
20 Relevance of activities to the target groups (OVCs)	CBO/FBO activities should be mentioned as stepping stones in the river code tool.
21 Evidence of impact of the CBO/FBO programs on OVCs	Concrete, visible and documented evidence of benefits given to the OVCs e.g. bursaries for school fees, CBCC, IGAs, garden etc...

4. Principles of assessment

4.1 Assessors

NOVOC will be responsible for selecting and training assessors with appropriate skills to conduct the assessments. The terms of reference for the assessors are in Annex 2.

The assessors should not have any ties to the CBO/FBO being assessed and should sign a declaration (in Annex 2) as such each time they conduct an assessment.

4.2 Target groups for assessment:

The CBO/FBO will be assessed on the above criteria using a systematic approach to measure their level of development at CBO level and their level of integration into the community response to OVC issues. Therefore two assessments are conducted: one with the CBO executive, the other with community members, including beneficiaries wherever appropriate. The two can be conducted simultaneously or consecutively depending on the circumstances and assessors availability.

Community group: impact of the CBO/FBO programs on the community/beneficiaries.

An assessment workshop with the community to be conducted as follows:

Participants and organisation:

- Aim for a maximum group size of **20**
- Participants should represent a **cross-section of the community**
 - **Socio-economic status** – aim to have representation from both poor and powerful/higher status community members
 - **Age profile** – aim to have at least some representation from youth and elderly
 - **Gender** - aim for gender balance
 - **Community representatives** – to be agreed by NOVOC and NOVOC partners. May include: volunteers, beneficiaries, community health workers, church leader, community leaders, NOVOC partner organisation staff (see below), local administrators/politicians, members/workers from development organisations, youth, and traditional healers.
 - **Partner representation** – max. 2 or 3 participants from the NOVOC member CBO/FBO
- CBO/FBO and NOVOC Partners to discuss and agree on participant list before invitations are made
- NOVOC Partners to organise the event and invite participants
- Venue to be a relevant local meeting place, suitable for group size and group work (i.e. floor space for mapping)

CBO/FBO Management team:

An assessment session to be conducted at the CBO as follows:

Participants and organisation:

- Aim for a maximum group size of **10-15**



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- Representatives from the Board, Executive committee (inc. office bearers), members and volunteers. At least Chair, Secretary and Treasurer must be present.
- A good gender balance should be aimed for
- Agree participants list with NOVOC partners

4.3 Values guiding the process

To be credible the whole process should be guided by strong values that need to be adhered to by all involved in running the scheme. These are:

- **Transparency:** the process is explained clearly to all involved. Any stakeholder can get copies of the guiding principles and assessment documents. The tools are designed for minimum bias and maximum transparency.
- **Systematic:** clear, simple, unambiguous tools and reporting systems
- **Fair/ inclusive:** no one should be excluded on the grounds of gender, age, abilities or rank/status in the community.
- **Honesty/ integrity:** assessors should be mindful to avoid bias and be consistent in their approach.

4.4 Assessment report - recommendations

The report to deliver the result of the assessment and recommend whether the award should be granted or not. Recommendations for areas of improvement to attain the award should be stated clearly in the report.

The report to be shared with the organisation during a feedback session and the District departments as appropriate.

5. The Assessment Tools

ANNEX 3 shows the NOVOC Assessment tools for Community and Organisational competence.

To avoid any ‘donor’ syndrome the assessment should be presented to the participants as their opportunity to explore their capacity gaps in order to develop their organisation. The approach taken should be participatory and positive.

6. Ranking for Stamp of Approval¹

Participants are presented with a statement implying a ‘quality standard’ in organisational capacity (e.g. does the organisation have a written strategic plan?). Supplementary open ended questions are also asked to gather further information that will verify the degree of compliance to the standard implied in the opening question. Further concrete proof of the standard need to be obtained (e.g. paper evidence of written mission statement). Assessors must review the documents – as indicated within the assessment tool. They are requested to discuss and agree on one of the following 5 possible answers to these statements:

- **“Yes”** - means that the organisation has achieved the standard. Areas where there are many “Yes” responses are likely to point to agreement about some strengths that can be celebrated.
- **“YNI-Yes Needs Improvement”** - means that the organisation is some way towards meeting the standard, but needs further improvement to meet it fully. Within this response people can also express their opinions about the degrees of improvement required and possible ways of achieving that improvement.
- **“No”** - means that the organisation has not achieved the standard, but should. “No” responses are clear signs of the organisation’s capacity building needs.
- **“?”** - means that the respondent(s) are unsure whether or not the standard is being met.
- **“N/A”** - means the standard does not apply / is not relevant to the assessment.

¹ Based on Southern Africa AIDS Trust Assessment Guidelines

The assessor guides the discussion using a set of supplementary open questions designed to give the assessors some information rich data to assist in ranking the CBO. Without these the assessment leads to a over-favourable ranking that does not reflect the level of maturity of the CBO.

Organisational capacity assessment levels.

- **Emerging** - the partner is starting to develop some capacity in the standards/criteria measured by the checklist.
- **Established** - the partner has established capacity in the standards/criteria measured by the checklist. The standards /criteria are in place and functioning but they are incompletely developed.
- **Mature** - the partner's capacity is well developed, fully functional and sustainable (even though there may still be room for improvement).

To be awarded a NOVOC Stamp of Approval a CBO/FBO will have to have reached at least '**Established**' level.

7. Awarding committee

After the assessment has been carried out and a report with recommendations submitted to NOVOC secretariat by the Assessor the Awarding Committee will meet to make the final decision. This committee should comprise:

- NOVOC Program manager
- NOVOC Capacity Building Officer
- One Board member
- Other member of staff

8. Award of NOVOC Stamp of Approval

- A certificate based on the assessment report.
- Verified by District officials e.g. DAC – system of assessment?
- At national level, the SoA should be presented and endorsed by the Technical Working Group.
- Presentation to the NOVOC network / DAC if no network the CBOs that were assessed and which are awarded the award. Presentation of the award by NOVOC staff - invite the media to report on it.

8 Renewal of Stamp of Approval

The stamp to be valid for 2 years.

The CBOs that are renewing should have improved to at least maturity before being granted a renewal. The same tools will be used for re-assessment but the minimum standard required on each assessment criteria will reflect a progressing development.

9 Acknowledgements

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List of abbreviations for SOA documents

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CBCC	Community Based Children Centre

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DA	District Assembly
DAC	District Aids Committee
DSWO	District Social Welfare Office
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
IGA	Income Generating Activity
NAC	National Aids Commission
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
NOVOC	Network of Organisations for Vulnerable and Orphaned Children
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
SAT	South African Aids Trust
SMART	Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-bound
SOA	NOVOC Stamp of Approval
VAC	Village Action Plan
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Expression of interest form for NOVOC Stamp of Approval

NOVOC Stamp of Approval expression of interest form		
<p>By filling this form the organisation acknowledge it is familiar with the concept of the NOVOC stamp of approval and understands the requirements for being considered for the award (the document 'NOVOC Stamp of Approval for CBO/FBO NOVOC members').</p>		
Name of the organisation:	NOVOC membership number:	
	Date joined NOVOC:	
Location:	District:	TA:
Address: :	Contact person:	
	Contact numbers	
District assembly registration number:	Formation Date:	
Main areas of activity:		
Nature and dates of reports submitted to the District Assembly in the past 12 months:		
Explain below the reasons behind your interest in being considered for a NOVOC stamp of approval:		
Date submitted:	Submitted by:	Signature: