

REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA CIVIC ORGANISATIONS PARTNERSHIP POLICY (GRN-COPP) 2022

“Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia” (EPDN): A Partnership Programme of
the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the European Union

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What is this presentation about?

Part 0 The EPDN Programme: Short intro

Part 1 COPP - Review process and outcomes

Part 2 Potential way forward: Proposal



“Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia” (EPDN): A Partnership Programme of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the European Union

Who are we?

- We are a TA programme focusing on capacity enhancement of Parliament, CSOs and Government to strengthen participatory democracy .
- A team of three permanent team members : My colleagues Dr. Anthony Tsekpo and Reena Fernandez and I, Christine Leiser
- We are supported by a team of local and international short term experts who we can hire for particular work to be done
- We are a Technical Assistance programme of the National Planning Commission and funded by the European Commission, implemented by a Dutch based company called Ecorys
- We are accountable to both the NPC and the EC and thus European Union and Namibian tax payers.

Where are we?

We are kindly hosted by the National Assembly on the ground floor and are open to visitors

Our email address is info@epdn.org

Our Facebook page is [EPDN Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia | Facebook](#)

“Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia” (EPDN): A Partnership Programme of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the European Union

What are we doing and for how long? Five year programme and we started in June 2020

- ✓ We are working with **Parliament (both chambers)** to **strengthen its crucial function of oversight**
- ✓ Here we also strengthen existing mechanisms/ rules **to boost cooperation between Parliament and citizens in regard to oversight/** CSOs (e.g. Interface meeting Parliament CSOs)
- ✓ We are tasked to work with **Civil Society and Government to improve implementation of policies and projects**
- ✓ We are also offering support to civil society organisations who received a EU grant within this programme
- ✓ **Our focus sectors are education / skills development and rural development , (a wider spectrum of CSOs aiming at enhancing their skills to cooperate with either Parliament or national / local Government or both not excluded)**
- ✓ **What are we not and what are we not doing?**

We are not **a grant based project**, we are not **a political foundation** and we **have no funds for grants or CSO events** and we work to our **Terms of Reference**

Part 1 COPP - Review process and outcomes

Conducted by a team of experts, hired by EPND

Mr Christopher Louise

Mrs. Mary T. Hangula

EPDN was tasked to undertake:

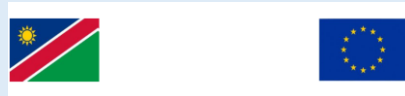
A Review of the GRN-COPP - changes in the policy and identification of conditions that may affect the implementation, outcomes and expected impact of the policy

Methodology

- Task team with 10 members: 4 NPC,, 5 CSOs, 1 TA team
- 5 workshops in October and November 2022 (Ondangwa; Swakopmund Keetmanshoop; Windhoek, Rundu): 96 CSOs and 123 participants. Method: Civic Organisations Scorecard (COS) – focus group discussions with a structured questionnaire in each workshop- resulting in more than 60 recommendations to be found at the end of this presentation
- Develop a final report
- A final validation workshop to present the findings (November 2022)

Summary of the GRN-COPP discussion points during workshops

1. CSO awareness and understanding of the policy
2. How do CSOs rate the performance of the policy and its objectives?
3. 67 Recommendations shared during the events



Awareness and understanding of the policy

Scoring: 10 is the highest, 0 the lowest

	Ongwanda	Swakopmund	Keetmanshoop	Windhoek	Rundu	Average
Familiarity with the GRN-COPP	4.4	3.4	2.5	4.2	3.0	3.5
Experience of Government led process to promote importance of CSOs in development	3.1	5.0	3.1	4.2	4.0	3.9

How do CSOs rate the performance of the policy?

Objective 1: To create a greater commitment for civic participation through the promotion and encouragement for active citizenship.

Development partners promote and support indigenous approaches of civic participation and organisation.	3.5
Development partners learn from local and international best practices.	6.4
Development partners adopt effective mechanisms to promote, recognise and reward voluntary action and active citizenship.	3.5
Local and international development partners network to achieve a high level of exposure and transfer of Knowledge for civic participation and voluntarism	3.6
Overall score for outcomes under objective 1	4.3

How do CSOs rate the performance of the policy?

Objective 2: To enhance the environment for civic participation and partnership.

Citizens have high levels of trust in civic participation through their respective COs and are prepared to invest voluntary time, skills and leadership.

6.2

Voluntary registration of the 'Civic Organisation data base' of NPC provides enhanced recognition of civic organisations and establishes a sound foundation for development partnership.

6.3

Voluntary registration for partnership will enhance the credibility of COs, leading to increased access to funds and opportunities.

6.8

Overall score for outcomes under objective 2

6.4

How do CSOs rate the performance of the policy?

Objective 3: To bring the Government closer to the people and create partnership opportunities that benefits the Government, civic organisations and civil society.

Government programmes reach the intended target beneficiaries and are sustainable.	3.1
Partnership opportunities between the Government and COs are identified and effectively communicated.	2.3
Civic organisations recognise the value of partnership and compete for involvement in Government development programmes.	5.9
Government actors, civic organisations and target beneficiaries are informed about the value of partnership.	4.1
Development partners are able to measure the impact of partnership programmes and communicate the outcome.	3.8
Overall score for outcomes under objective 3	3.8

How do CSOs rate the performance of the policy?

Objective 4: To enhance the capacity of partners (Government and civic organisations) to enter into partnerships and jointly respond to development challenges and opportunities in an efficient, effective and sustainable fashion.	
Horizontal and vertical linkages between development partners achieve high levels of synergy and avoid overlap and duplication.	2.8
Development resources are shared to enhance the capacity of both civic and public organisations and to create financial and technical sustainability.	1.7
Development partners have access to a range of instruments that assist them with entering into effective and efficient partnership arrangements.	4.6
Overall score for outcomes under objective 4	3.0

Why is the COPP redundant ?

- The policy was never implemented and not assessable as envisaged by the terms of reference:
 - No budget - No implementation plan
- Inadequate investment to translate the policy into an operational framework for government-civil society cooperation.
- Too generic to have any practical meaning.
- Sectoral ministries have their own policies and procedures to secure partnerships with CSOs.
- Deficiencies in the operation of local government structures impede civic organizations' access to local decision-making and curtail their ability to establish partnerships with local authorities.
- The policy is not necessary aligned with the current development realities in the country (Agenda 2030, Sustainable development goals...)

Overall assessment

The internal evidence points to a need to retire the existing GRN-COPP. While the “spirit” of the policy remains relevant, the modality of government-civil society cooperation, and the role played by NPC in this relationship, should focus on a **framework of practical engagement.**

Part 2

A potential way forward

Framework of engagement between
the GRN and civic organisations in
support of national development

Six Framework principles routed in 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development

1. **Focus on duty-bearer and rights holders' relationship** in advancing national development
2. **Promote local leadership:** GOV –CSO cooperation must advance locally led development
3. **Improve equity and inclusivity within partner relationships** : include communities that traditionally have been overlooked or which are underserved
4. **Demonstrate accountability to constituents:** this applies to all duty bearers – GoV as well as CSOs
5. **Seek innovative approaches** to social innovation and problem solving, collectively with business sector create the venues for innovation, use talent of all citizens Tap into international knowledge
6. **Lower barriers to partnerships:** enhance local ownership of development programmes through grass-roots action- GoV to ensure an enabling CSO environment on all levels

Five Pillars of engagement

The Framework comprises five pillars of engagement in support of SDG localization and focuses on

1. coordination
2. national dialogue
3. local structures
4. political engagement
5. regulatory coherence.

Pillar I: Coordination

The sole purpose of coordination will be to create a space for strategic discourse

Limited NPC capacity to support the aspirations of civic organisations.

The coordination mechanism could host six inter-connecting components

- **Sectoral networks** – self regulating free from government involvement and managed according to the internally designed governance structure
- **Civic Organisation Advisory Committee (COAC)** “duty-bearing” responsibility, composed of sectoral network coordinators
- **Coordination Secretariat hosted in the National Planning Commission**
- **National budgeting process** – structures allowing CSO involvement from community to national level
- **Funding opportunities and calls for proposals-** NPC to encourage efforts to lowering barriers and encourage sectoral ministries to consider innovative ways for civic organizations accessing funds especially on a grass-root level (CBOs) (for service delivery)
- **Civic organisation information portal:** The NPC and Civic +264 could establish a joint civil society information portal, based on the existing digital information centre (hosted by Civic +264 - subsidized by NPC through the Coordination Secretariat)

Pillar II: National Dialogue focused on SDGs

to connect citizens to the decision-making processes which shape their lives

Lack of institutionalised dialogue between the government and citizens, local communities and their civic organisations

- **A National Dialogue Secretariat (NDS):** Agreed by the COAC and the NPC coordination secretariat
- **Regional dialogues:** The NDS will work with the Regional Councils in the 14 regions of the country to organize the regional dialogue process.
- **National SDG conference:** Regional representatives will be selected to attend the annual national SDG conference, managed by the National Dialogue Secretariat.
- **SDG priority action plans:** The dialogue process will produce national and regional priority action plans for delivering SDG outcomes.

Pillar III: Local structures

To bring services and decision making closer to citizens and open a wide window for active community participation

Effectiveness of government programmes reaching the intended target beneficiaries and the ability of the government to come closer to the people through more partnerships involving civic organisations is poor.

- Build local authorities' knowledge of the benefits of partnership with CSOs in support of the SDGs and national policies - build capacities for implementing such partnerships.
- Build the capacity of CSOs to understand how to work with local authorities, (local government structures; effective advocacy and engagement).
- Recruit a Senior Civic Organisation and SDG Engagement Adviser in each Regional Council: responsible for coordinating the relationship between civil society and local government at the local level

Pillar IV: Political engagement

to strengthening civil society's engagement with parliamentarians, and in particular through the Parliament's Standing Committees

The role of civic organisations in the national discourse generally misunderstood

- Take advantage of the reform process to amend rules of the Standing Committees to receive and deliberate presentation from civic organisations.
- Arrange a study visit of a joint delegation of MPs and civic organisations to an appropriate country to see first-hand how civil society and Government work together.

Pillar V: Regulatory coherence

Debate on whether & how to bring CSO regulatory framework into the 21st century

Regional workshops conducted result in – support for easier regulation

Windhoek workshop – result in support for a unified NGO law

- Study about best practice examples of the world on not-for-profit laws
- Present examples to a wide range of Namibia stakeholders in the CSO sector, government, Parliament and business.
- Proposal: Establish a chapter under the National Dialogue to take forward a process of public consultation to explore the options for a single not-for-profit law and establishing a charitable status for organisations.

Recommendations from the workshops

Ondangwa, 10 October 2022

- 1 Create an Action Plan for each of the 4 objectives of the COPP.
- 2 Harmonize all the regulatory frameworks, databases and government frameworks related to the operation of civic organisations.
- 3 Translate and communicate any future policy or strategy for GRN-civic organisations partnership into local languages.
- 4 Monitor the implementation of the partnership policy and if possible do a case study of where the policy has been implemented already to understand what worked and what did not work.
- 5 Establish sectoral interest umbrella organisations which had a mandate to provide technical assistance to the civic organisations in that sector.
- 6 Launch a new consultation process to develop a new partnership policy. The process should avoid the mistakes and shortfalls of the process which led to the 2005 Partnership Policy. The process needs to be sufficiently long in duration to properly consult as broad a civic organisation constituency as possible.
- 7 The new COPP should reflect as many civil society voices as possible.

Recommendations from the workshops

Swakopmund, 13 October 2022

- 1 CSOs need a policy which is both regulatory and enabling.
- 2 Make the policy and the NPC more visible at the local level. 3 Establish a CSO institutional development fund.
- 4 Launch a new consultation process to develop a revised policy and ensure that the consultation accommodates the different languages of Namibia.
- 5 include local CSOs in Windhoek-CSO meetings. Local CSOs feel left out.
- 6 An umbrella framework is acceptable with an emphasis on sector specific networking.
- 7 Ensure all participants in this consultation process is subsequently contacted about the outcome.

Recommendations from the workshops

Keetmanshoop, 17 October 2022

- 1 Request for a revision of the policy involving a substantive consultation process.
- 2 Make the policy and the NPC more visible at the local level.
- 3 Need to close the gap between grass roots and regional councils and to close the gap between national level and regional councils. Evidence of what is happening needs to be communicated from the grass roots to the Regional Council, so it can represent the needs of communities accurately.
- 4 Regional Council needs to become open to working with CSOs as partners instead of ignoring them or seeing them as troublemakers. Regional Council needs to funnel local development funds to CSOs.
- 5 Establish a regional council CSO help desk which reports to the NPC in Windhoek. This will be part of bringing the policy to the local level and make the RC responsible for implementing the policy according to regional action plans. RC is accountable to the NPC for its performance.

Recommendations from the workshops

Rundu, 1 November 2022

- 1 Practical application of the policy should be pursued.
- 2 Review the relevance of the policy intentions and synchronize these with current realities.
- 3 More information sharing is required.
- 4 Establish sector umbrella entities that help unify CSOs and recognise local CSOs under these umbrella.
- 5 Regional Councils should be custodians of the partnership policy and should be held accountable for the policy's implementation.

Recommendations from the workshops

Windhoek, 24 October 2022 Group 1

- 1 There is a need for guiding partnership framework – not necessarily this policy - but something which is more compact which is easy to understand and spells out roles and responsibilities of the government and the civic organisations.
- 2 Identify key priority areas under the SDG's with each thematic civil society sector developing action plans to implement the SDG's relevant to that sector based on priorities.
- 3 Youth involvement in consultation and decision making should be considered. Invest in raising awareness and information sharing at grassroots level before action processes are implemented.
- 4 Review NANGOF and set up a nation umbrella body to help facilitate the process of a partnership framework. Sector specific representation will make up the umbrella body members, and sector specific representatives will represent civil society's voice to government
- 5 Funding modalities for the umbrella organisation should consider membership fees, donor funding, fundraising, EU grants
- 6 Reporting on a monitoring and evaluation framework every second year will strengthen the relationship between the GRN and CSOs.

Recommendations from the workshops

Windhoek, 24 October 2022 Group 2

7 National Planning commission should take the initiative and let the GRN-COPP be validated by all the OMA's Offices, Ministries and Agencies of government.

8 NPC should translate the policy into various local languages

9 Government should arrange for a national conference which CSO's to create awareness and opportunities for partnerships.

10 Constant stakeholder engagements on a one on one basis will be beneficial to all.

11 CSO's should sign MoUs and other contractual arrangements with government but not on the basis of competing for resources and funding opportunities. There should be no competition for CSO funding, to ensure no CSO is more prominent than others.

12 The government and civic organisations already have partnerships, such as the Shack dwellers Federation. These relationship happened organically, meaning that the current GRN-COPP is not fit for purpose

Recommendations from the workshops

Windhoek, 24 October 2022 Group 3

13 Governments should encourage CSO's to form business and the model of the 3 legged pot (Business, Government and Civil society) needs to be embraced.

14 Fund raising environments for CSOs should be improved. Tax breaks, rebates and incentives should be used to encourage the private sector to support CSOs. Most businesses have a corporate social responsibility function. It just needs to be coordinated better).

15 Government should protect local NGOs against the competition posed by foreign NGOs, who are more likely to be funded by foreign donors. Local NGO's are just as effective as the International NGOs.

16 Government should outsource projects to civic organisations and local level citizen watch-dogs need to be looped into local projects to improve oversight.

17 There is a national volunteer policy which is being ignored, and the COPP needs to be harmonized so that the two policies speak to each other.

18 Establish a CSO Development fund. Its modalities should be elaborated by the Government.

19 Government must respect independence and self-regulation of CSOs.

20 Existing sectoral umbrella bodies need to be strengthened and organisations that do not fit into any of the existing bodies should be encouraged to start their own.

21 Establish a sectoral leaders/ directors' forum.

22 Include access to a Braille version of agreements between government and CSOs for the visually impaired

Recommendations from the workshops

Windhoek, 24 October Group 4

23 The partnership should be based on ethical background through the faith that the government should want to have a relationship with CSO's instead of them feeling that they are begging for a relationship.

24 Government should make information on the availability of funds and grants easy to access. CSOs should have a listing of specific government offices where they could discuss their activities.

25 Improved Communication between all parties on how to reach common goals and objectives.

26 Develop a policy that regulates the partnership between the Government and civic organizations: this policy should be well balanced and allow Government to partner with CSO's.

27 Government should recognize the existence and role of civic organizations in a democratic setup. Public officials on the ground should work very closely with civic organizations.

28 The partnership should be a value-based arrangement with distinct roles for each party. There is a need to recognize the flexibility and innovation of CSO's, while highlighting the specific values CSO's bring to the table

Thank you

Consultancy Team

Christopher Louise, Mary T. Hangula

and EPDN team