



COSV Code of Practice

Approved by the Stakeholders' Meeting of the COSV held on 13-10-2006

Foreword

In development of its activities as an association operating in the sector of international cooperation and humanitarian aid, the COSV is guided by the values and principles expressed in: the Charter of European non-governmental organisations of Elewitt; the Ethical Charter of the Association of Italian non-governmental organisations (AOI); the Code of Practice of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for non-governmental organisations (ONG) during aid operations in the case of catastrophes; the Donation Charter of the Italian Donation Institute (IDD).

This Code of Practice is intended to express the methods whereby the COSV puts its reference values into practice in managing its activities and in relations with its stakeholders, which are:

- collaborators (employees, expatriates, local personnel and collaborators...)
- donors and financial backers, both private and institutional
- partners
- beneficiaries
- national, international and local institutions
- suppliers

Collaborators

In relations with its collaborators, the COSV:

1. Chooses collaborators without any discrimination and with transparent procedures.
2. Provides adequate support and training, on the basis of the professional requirements of the role of collaborator.
3. Communicates the medium and long term plans and objectives of the organisation in a transparent manner.
4. Guarantees the health and safety of collaborators, in their area of work, through all the means at its disposal, including through taking out of specific insurance.
5. Promotes participation and involvement of collaborators in management of the organisation and its plans, acknowledging their fundamental role in development of the COSV.
6. Pursues continuity – compatibly with plans and funding of projects – in working relationships, in acknowledgement of the professionalism of collaborators.
7. Recognises – as part of a human resources development plan – the commitment and professionalism of its collaborators through paths of professional growth, without

any discrimination. It also pays remuneration which is commensurate with the levels of responsibility and professionalism in the various roles of the organisation.

8. Selects individuals who share the spirit and the mission of the COSV and who possess the requisites, professionalism and characteristics necessary for the role required, without any form of discrimination.
9. Encourages discussion and dialogue, open to all members of the organisation, since it believes exchanging opinions to be a constructive and functional means for achieving a climate of collaboration and efficient and effective management of the activities of the organisation.
10. Complies with local regulations on employment legislation for local personnel in the various countries.

Conduct of COSV collaborators

In order to guarantee achievement of its objectives and mission, the COSV requires its collaborators:

1. to perform the tasks assigned to them in a manner which complies with procedures and regulations and this Code of Practice;
2. to display maximum confidentiality regarding all facts, information and documentation produced or which they receive in performing their assignment;
3. to accept any documentation produced in performing their duties is the exclusive property of the COSV;
4. to behave in a manner appropriate to the mission of the organisation in use of economic and financial resources, maintaining a sober style in performing their activities;
5. in compliance with contractual and legal obligations, to demonstrate a spirit of collaboration, adapting with flexibility to the operating requirements of the organisation;
6. to display integrity and propriety in use of the resources and tangible assets of the organisation;
7. to display transparency and propriety in relations with third parties, avoiding all forms of corruption. Acts of courtesy and hospitality are only permitted if they do not compromise the integrity and reputation of the COSV, including from the viewpoint of an impartial observer;
8. to devolve to the COSV any income deriving from the relationship of collaboration with the COSV (such as: lecturing, consultancy, publications, etc.).

In particular, collaborators who operate overseas are required to:

1. perform their duties in maximum compliance with local laws, culture and customs;
2. abstain from disrespectful behaviour with regard to local institutions, partners and personnel;
3. properly represent the COSV in the country where they operate, with beneficiaries, partners, local and international institutions;
4. take an active part in promotion of the organisation and its activities.

Donors and Financial Backers

In relations with its donors and financial backers, the COSV:

1. Provides truthful information on projects for which funding is required and is prepared to establish dialogue with financial backers/donors for better understanding of the project.
2. Guarantees fulfilment of the project in a manner which is consistent with the declared objectives and the project signed by the financial backers. COSV projects are carried out following standard methods and procedures; in the case of variations, the COSV agrees to notify these promptly through its own means of information and – where requested – to provide the appropriate documentation.
3. Reports in a clear and transparent manner on development of the project, producing periodic reports, as requested by the financial backers. If no specific reports are requested, the COSV nonetheless adopts its own standard of reporting.
4. Although it acknowledges the contribution of its donors, the COSV maintains its independence from private or government interests. Therefore, in the acceptance and fulfilment of projects, no variations in the objectives are accepted which are instrumental to the interests of the financial backers.
5. Diversifies the sources of funding of its projects, through fundraising activities with public and private organisations and individual citizens, in order to boost its own independence and autonomy and facilitate continuity of its activities.

Partners

In relations with international partners:

1. the COSV chooses partners on the basis of skills and reliability and requires, as a prerequisite for all forms of collaboration, sharing of the principles stated in the Charter of European non-governmental organisations and the operating methods and purposes of the organisation.

In relations with local partners, the COSV:

2. Requires, as a prerequisite, compliance of partners with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. Prefers creation of partnerships with organisations of which it has direct knowledge and of which it verifies the affinity and sharing of the aims of cooperation and project objectives. The COSV does not accept any impositions by local partners which operate in contrast with the principles expressed herein.
4. Operates with the objective of creating long-term relationships, with the organisations most representative of a community, on the basis of effective needs and sustainability of the projects carried out.
5. Provides training and develops the skills of local partners and organisations with which it collaborates. The COSV carries out its cooperation plans with the objective of encouraging direct management of activities and resources by local partners, according to their abilities, providing its support in boosting growth and development, but nonetheless maintaining direct responsibility with donors.
6. If local partners are capable of proposing development initiatives, the COSV promotes joint planning and joint management of the activities, always operating on the basis of the needs and requirements identified by the partners.

Beneficiaries

In relations with its beneficiaries, the COSV:

1. Offers – as part of the objectives of its projects – the best service, of a quality which is sufficient and appropriate to the situation and local operating capabilities.
2. Also guarantees access to the services provided by the project (education, health, water, agriculture, training, etc.) to all beneficiaries, without discrimination in terms of class, race, gender, age, religion, ideology or culture, provided these are not imposed through the use of violence.
3. Encourages the creation of groups of users/beneficiaries, who may express their opinion and provide feedback on the services supplied as part of the project and the quality thereof.

Suppliers

In relations with suppliers, the COSV:

1. Applies the procedures identified by local administrations, the European Union, the Italian government and by the COSV itself in selection and management of its suppliers.
2. Implements non-discriminatory policies in the choice of suppliers, using, as criteria, standards of quality, service and economic viability.
3. Requires specific guarantees on: compliance with working conditions according to the international standards of the ILO (International Labour Organisation); on quality, documented with product certification.
4. Requires compliance with contractual clauses, particularly as far as concerns quality, delivery times and final destination of the project goods, including when the supplier uses the services of third parties.

National, international and local institutions

In relations with institutions, COSV:

1. Promotes dialogue with all institutions, through direct relations, attributing them a primary role in achieving its mission and for development of international cooperation based on transparent rules and effective methodologies.
2. Intends to contribute to and participate in the preparation and development of strategies of intervention in the area of cooperation, providing its skills and experience and, in any case, maintaining its full decision-making autonomy
3. Operates in protection of its independence from both institutional choices and the choices of groups with economic and political interests.