



Accountability Self-Check 2012



Background

The Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) is a non-profit, non-partisan networking NGO founded in 1987 with the goal of better coordinating NGO activities in Japanese society and facilitating communication with overseas groups.

One of the principal missions of JANIC is to strengthen the institutional capacity of NGOs and promote social responsibility initiatives. With this intention, in 2002 JANIC opened a committee for creating a framework for NGO accountability assessment. In 2006 the committee members approved a framework encompassing 4 fields (Organizational Management, Project Implementation, Accounting, and Public Information) consisting of 234 criteria. However, the large amount of criteria and the relatively low merit perceived from such an assessment created a barrier to its acceptance.

Therefore, in 2007 JANIC opened a committee to reexamine the framework with a focus on widening the recognition and interest in accountability assessment. The result was “Accountability Self-Check(ASC) 2008” a simplified, easy to impose self-assessment framework of 41 criteria under the above mentioned 4 fields. In 2012 JANIC organized a committee to revise ASC2008 and developed ASC2012. NGOs can apply for the Self-Check, and 63 organizations in total have completed the Accountability Self-Check by March 2014.

Objectives

JANIC thinks of accountability as “The ability to answer to the expectations and requirements of stakeholders”. Therefore it was decided that there was a need for the creation of a set of standards of accountability for all NGOs to abide.

Why is accountability important for NGOs?

- The expectations regarding NGOs role in society have grown.
- NGOs’ influence on society has increased.
- Donations, corporate entrustments, and government aid for NGOs has increased along with the donors’ expectations for NGO accountability.
- Members, beneficiaries, and average citizens now better understand the issues (the idea of leaving everything to an NGO’s judgment is disappearing).
- There have been high profile examples of the misuse of funds by non-profit organizations.

What results can an NGO get from improving accountability?

- The NGOs activities can become better known in society.
- When better trusted by society, an NGO can receive more assistance and financial support.
- The problems associated with expanding the organization (designating public information, creating a unified purpose, the difficulty of coming to agreements) can be solved.

Self-Check Process

1. The organization should come to a consensus regarding the decision to participate in ASC2012 and discuss any doubts with JANIC.
2. The organization should read and comprehend the criteria (check points) .
3. The organization should request the self-check from JANIC. Within 60 days JANIC will dispatch a facilitator. Fees are due on the day of dispatch.
4. The organization should prepare the necessary documents for the check including verifying information made available on the web as well as that in physical storage.
5. The organization should nominate 3 people: a representative, a manager, and a staff member (with 2+ years experience) to participate. Two facilitators from JANIC will explain and confirm the process of the self-check.
6. In the case of providing documents for confirmation, the organization should provide them in a format that can be visually confirmed by the facilitators.
7. In the rare case that there is a problem with the way of confirmation or the documents used in confirmation of criteria, the facilitators may request additional references or make inquiries.
8. In the above case, if the facilitators and the organization cannot come to an agreement, the self-check will be marked as “on hold” and the organization may not publish the results.
9. In the case of disagreement on the side of the organization, it is requested that they submit a formal objection to JANIC. Consultation will commence within 60 days of the submission.
10. Organizations may skip criteria that do not apply to their form of organization.
11. Organizations may quit the self-check part way through. A new request should be submitted to try the self-check again.
12. A final confirmation will be conducted between the organization’s representatives and the facilitators in order to guarantee no inaccuracy in the results
13. The number of criteria given a passing mark will be announced on JANIC’s website.
14. All organizations that participate in the self-check can use the Accountability Self-Check 2012 mark on their publications and materials. (Please see additional explanation of the mark’s usage below).
15. In the rare case that after completion falsified information or documents are discovered, the self-check will be considered invalid and fees will not be returned.
16. In the case of partial completion, fees will not be returned.

Role of the Facilitators

The role of the facilitators is to explain the suitable format and process of the Self-Check. The initial dialogue between the facilitators and self-check organizations aims to clarify the criteria and requirements of the self-check.

During the self-check process the facilitators will review the documentation provided by the organization in response to each criteria as necessary. However, the role of facilitators is not to provide guidance to the organization’s representatives during the check process, nor advise based on the results. Therefore, judgment is not given until all of the criteria have been completed. Fourteen days after completion of the self-check, the facilitators will submit a “Facilitator Report” to JANIC.

Contents

JANIC's Accountability Self-Check 2012 includes the following criteria:

Organizational Management Criteria

Vision	1	The purpose (principle, mission, etc.) of the organization is clearly stated.
Organization, Roles, Management	2	The jurisdiction, responsibility, and role of the organization's components (decision assessment, internal auditing, leadership, executive committee) is clearly stated.
	3	The procedures of the decision-making of organization's management are clearly stated.
	4	The contents and process of decision-making are shared by all staff members.
	5	The job performance of the management by boards and the organization's financial situation are assessed.
	6	Intermediate and long term strategies for achieving the purpose of the organization are decided.
	7	The present situation of the intermediate and long term plans is understood.
	8	Environment-friendly, energy and resource saving activities are engaged.
Finances	9	Donations, grants, materials, etc. are used for the purposes intended by the donor.
	10	The methods of increasing personal funds (member fees, donations, operational income, interest yield) are conducted.
Staff Ability Development	11	The manner of hire, retirement, job description, welfare assistance, wages, etc. of paid employees is clearly stated.
	12	The continuing education and training of paid employees are provided.
	13	The friendly working environment are provided for interns and volunteers.
Data Protection and Sharing	14	Information, including digital data, is managed setting with consideration to the importance of them.
	15	Data is protected to prevent the loss or falsify of information.

Project Implementation Criteria

General	16	Codes of conduct for project implementation are created.
	17	The process of project implementation and continuation is systemized.
Planning	18	An intermediate and long term (multi-year) project plan is created.
	19	Project plans based on the long term plan are created annually or according to the project period.
	20	Project plans are drafted based on stakeholders' feedback.
	21	The contents of the project plan are shared with stakeholders.
Implementation and Monitoring	22	Project implementation is conducted as ascribed in the project plan.
	23	Consistent monitoring takes place.
Evaluation and Reporting	24	A project report is created at the end of the year or at the completion of a project.
	25	Evaluation is conducted at the end of the year or at the completion of a project.
	26	The contents of the evaluation and project report are shared with stakeholders.

Accounting Criteria

General Rules	27	Rules for the accounting process are clearly stated.
	28	An accurate account book is created for all financial records.
	29	In the case of multiple project implementations, incomes and expenditures are managed on a project basis.
	30	Receipts for incomes and expenditures are appropriately sorted and stored.
	31	The account manager and the treasurer are separate.
Daily Accounting Process	32	Payments are made in cash or by bank transfer only after receiving approval from the appropriate person.
	33	In regards to cash and deposits, the account book and the actual available balance is compared in predetermined periods.
Account Balancing	34	A suitable budget estimate for each year's project plans is devised.
	35	Budget estimates and actual incomes and expenditures are checked at regular periods.
	36	Financial statements are authored every fiscal year.
	37	Financial statements are approved by the decision-making body.

Public Information Criteria

General	38	Project reports and account balances are made public.
	39	The official organization name, address, contact information, and board members are made public.
	40	Information published is updated at regular periods.
	41	Personal information collection and privacy policy are fully considering in regards to any public information.

Self-Check Mark

The Accountability Self-Check 2012 mark was designed to distinguish the organizations that have completed the self-check. Any organization that completes the self-check and announces the results is encouraged to use the mark on publications, booths, websites, and any other promotional materials, regardless of the results of the self-check.



Participating Organizations: as of March 2014

- 1 Action Against Child Exploitation (<http://acejapan.org/>)
- 2 Action for greening Sahel (<http://sahelgreen.org/>)
- 3 Action with Lao Children (<http://homepage2.nifty.com/aspbtokyo/>)
- 4 Adventist Development and Relief Agency Japan (<http://www.adrajpn.org/index.html>)
- 5 Africa Japan Forum (http://www.ajf.gr.jp/lang_en/index.html)
- 6 AIDS Orphan Support NGO PLAS (<http://www.plas-aids.org/>)
- 7 Asian Rural Institute (<http://www.ari-edu.org>)
- 8 Association for Aid and Relief Japan (<http://www.aarjapan.gr.jp/index.htm>)
- 9 Association for Rengein Tanjo-ji International Cooperation (<http://reng.e.asia/>)
- 10 AYUS:Network of Buddhists Volunteers on International Cooperation (<http://ngo-ayus.jp/>)
- 11 Bridge Asia Japan (<http://www.baj-npo.org/>)
- 12 Campaign for the Children of Palestine (<http://ccp-ngo.jp/>)
- 13 Care International Japan (<http://www.careintjp.org/en/index.html>)
- 14 CARING FOR YOUNG REFUGEES (<http://www.cyr.or.jp>)
- 15 Child Fund Japan (<http://www.childfund.or.jp/>)
- 16 Community Action Development Organization (<http://www.cando.or.jp/>)
- 17 Doctors of the World Japan (<http://www.mdm.or.jp/english/>)
- 18 Earth Tree (<http://e-tree.jp/>)
- 19 Education Sponsorship in Asia (<http://www.esajapan.org/>)
- 20 Foundation for International Development/Relief (<http://www.fidr.or.jp/english/index.html>)
- 21 Free The Children Japan (<http://www.ftcj.com/>)
- 22 FRIENDS WITHOUT A BORDER JAPAN (<http://www.fwab.jp>)
- 23 GLM Institute (<http://www.glminstitute.org/>)
- 24 Good Neighbors Japan (<http://www.gnjp.org/>)
- 25 Habitat for Humanity Japan (<http://www.habitatjp.org/>)
- 26 Helping Children in the Holy Land (<http://seichi-no-kodomo.org>)
- 27 Hunger Free World (<http://www.hungerfree.net/>)
- 28 Institute of Environment Rehabilitation and Conservation (<http://www.erecon.jp/>)
- 29 Intercommunication Center for Asia and Nippon (<http://www.ican.or.jp/>)
- 30 International Volunteer Center of Yamagata (http://www.ajf.gr.jp/lang_en/index.html)
- 31 Japan Asian Association and Asian Friendship Society (<http://www.jafs.or.jp/>)
- 32 Japan Association for Refugees (<http://www.refugee.or.jp/>)
- 33 Japan International Center for the Rights of the Child (<http://www.c-rights.org/english/index.html>)
- 34 Japan International Volunteer Center (<http://www.ngo-jvc.net/>)
- 35 JAPAN LAY MISSIONARY MOVEMENT (<http://jlmm.net/>)
- 36 Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (<http://www.janic.org/>)
- 37 Japan NGO Network on Disabilities (<http://www.normanet.ne.jp/~jannet/e/index.html>)
- 38 Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service (<http://www.jocs.or.jp>)

- 39 Japan Team of Young Human Power (<http://www.jhp.or.jp/>)
- 40 Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (<http://www.joicfp.or.jp/>)
- 41 JEN (<http://www.jen-npo.org/>)
- 42 Kamonohashi Project (<http://www.kamonohashi-project.net/english/>)
- 43 Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (<http://www.knk.or.jp/>)
- 44 Live with Friends on the Earth (<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/life/home/>)
- 45 NPO2050 (<http://www.npo2050.org/>)
- 46 Oxfam Japan (<http://www.oxfam.jp/>)
- 47 Peace Winds Japan (<http://peace-winds.org/>)
- 48 Plan Japan (<http://www.plan-japan.org/>)
- 49 RESULTS Japan (<http://www.resultsjp.org/english/index.html>)
- 50 Save the Children Japan (<http://www.savechildren.or.jp/>)
- 51 Services for the Health in Asian and African Regions (<http://share.or.jp/>)
- 52 Shanti Volunteer Association (<http://sva.or.jp/index.html>)
- 53 Shapla Neer (<http://www.shaplaneer.org/>)
- 54 Terra People Act Kanagawa (<http://www.tpak.org/index.html>)
- 55 Terra People Association (<http://tpa.nk-i.net>)
- 56 The Institute for Himalayan Conservation (<http://www.ihc-japan.org>)
- 57 The Institute of Cultural Affairs : Japan (<http://www.ica-japan.org/>)
- 58 The Japan Center for Conflict Prevention (<http://www.jccp.gr.jp/>)
- 59 The Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and cultural Advancement-International
(<http://www.oisca.org/>)
- 60 Todai (<http://www.jca.apc.org/~todai87/index.html>)
- 61 Women's Empowerment 21 Japan (<http://www.we21japan.org/>)
- 62 World Runners Japan (<http://www.wrj.jp/>)
- 63 World Vision Japan (<http://www.worldvision.jp/>)

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