

# THE NGO QUALITY ASSURANCE CERTIFICATION MECHANISM (QuAM)

## AFARD INTERNAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

**April 2009**

**Agency For Accelerated Regional Development**  
*Capacity Building for Sustainable Livelihoods*



## **THE QuAM INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In order to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organizations in Uganda, the National NGO Forum and DENIVA have developed the National NGO Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QuAM) in 2006. The QuAM provides the Code of Honour for NGO certification and using the indicators designed, annually AFARD undertakes to assess itself internally in order to (i) gauge its compliance status with the generally accepted principles of NGOs in Uganda; and (ii) to identify core areas that need improvements.

This report, therefore, presents the assessment findings.

### **METHOD USED**

The assessment exercise was conducted in a participatory manner. A staff meeting was held on Monday, April 20, 2009. During this meeting, the Programme Director reminded the staffs about the objectives of conducting QuAM as well as the resolution of the Board in ensuring that this assessment is conducted annually. Thereafter, each staff was provided with the list of QuAM questions (excluding that for the networks) and a dialogue ensued on a question by question basis until an agreed position was reached. Below are the findings.

## FINDINGS

The table below summarises the descriptive findings on each indicator. The areas where main gaps are identified are marked in read.

Table 1: Assessment scores.

INDICATORS	AFARD'S STATUS	REMARKS
<b>THE NGO ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE</b>		
<b>Ethical governance</b>		
1) <i>Is legally registered with the appropriate authorities.</i>	Yes. AFARD is registered with Registrar of Companies as a Company Limited by Guarantee and not Having Share Capital (Reg. No. 45170) and with the National NGO Board as an NGO (Reg. No. S.5914/3735)	The current registration with NGO in 2006 runs for 60 months and will expire in March 2011.
2) <i>Has a constitution and demonstrate it adheres to its provisions.</i>	Yes. The Article and Memorandum of Association (AoA & MoA) is in place and is always used.	The AoA & MoA are reference points for all key decisions. For instance, some provisions were used to expel non-compliant Founder Members.
3) <i>Has written and shared vision, mission/goal, objectives and values (or equivalent).</i>	Yes. VMOV are in place and enshrined in all we do.	Is visibly displayed in all AFARD offices both in Nebbi and Yumbe including the Board room. With the commencement of implementation by AFARD of West Nile Development Initiative (WENDI), the VMOV are now shared with CBOs benefitting from the programme.
4) <i>Has an office and address.</i>	Yes. Has own built office on Butime Rd. Plot 3-5, Nebbi Town Council, with postal, telephone, e-mail and web addresses.	Has also established a branch office in Yumbe. Meanwhile the construction of a regional office in Nebbi is ongoing.
5) <i>Has a development-oriented, non-partisan agenda, fostering citizens rights.</i>	Yes. Our plans are strictly anchored on development projects which are delivered without a religious, tribal, and political party biases.	We believe that poverty knows no borders of categorization and that is why we target largely the poorest of the poor typically in marginalized communities.
6) <i>Does not engage in any subversive action.</i>	Yes. We are strictly concerned with development programmes.	Even diversionary controversial issues easily tagged to politics are out of our domain.
7) <i>Has laid-down governance and reporting structures, with a governing body whose members meet regularly.</i>	Yes. AFARD is managed by a Board at the policy level and technical team at Management level. The Board is managed by the Board Regulation, a number of Board policies are in place to govern the operation of technical team namely finance and accounting guidelines, planning and budgeting guidelines, strategic plan, human resource policy, asset management policy, among others. These have delineated roles of the board and management.	The new Board was inaugurated in Nov. 2007 and its terms will expire in 5 years  The Board meets 4 times a year, twice in full board meetings and twice in Committee meetings.

8) <i>Has a governing body whose members are regularly appointed or elected, in accordance to its constitution and generally accepted practices.</i>	Yes. The Board has its terms of office and how to appoint new members clearly spelt out in the Board Regulation.	At the start, AFARD founder members appointed the 1 <sup>st</sup> team of Board members. Thereafter like the current Board is self appointing according to AFARD Board Regulation.
9) <i>Actively avoids any conflict of interest among members, staff, and board members.</i>	Yes. The Board and Human Resource Policies spells out and discourages issues of conflict of interest.	We actively discourage involvement of staffs and Board members in any activities that may even remotely be construed as conflict of interest.
10) <i>Does not condone any misconduct by its members, staff, and/or board members.</i>	Yes. All policies have restrictions on misconducts.	The programme Director ensures that all staffs conduct themselves in manners befitting of AFARD rules and image.
<b>Effective Management of resources</b>		
11) <i>Documents its financial transactions.</i>	Yes. Financial statements are prepared weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually.	All financial transactions are openly discussed and documented through approved spending guidelines and bookkeeping requirements.
12) <i>Prevents any abuse of its property, whether by Board members, staff or its membership.</i>	Yes. See 9 & 10 above.	For instance, all staffs are personally responsible for the means of transport and laptops assigned to them
13) <i>Where it has staff, recruits personnel in a transparent manner.</i>	Yes. The Board recruits staffs in accordance with the Human Resource Policy that discourage favouritism and clientilism.	The Board directly recruits top management and the middle and lower level staffs are recruited by Top management on behalf of the Board. Often staffs from local government are involved.
14) <i>Produces an annual report that is publicly accessible and can fulfil the information requirements of its stakeholders.</i>	Yes. Reports are shared with all key stakeholders: donors, board, peers, registering authorities, local governments, staffs and beneficiary organizations.	Copies of annual reports are also uploaded on AFARD website. Beneficiaries also receive reports verbally during review meetings.
15) <i>Complies with reporting and other requirements, as per Uganda's laws statutes.</i>	Yes. See 14 above.	Reports are also filed together with annual plans to NGO Board and Board Resolutions to Registrar of Companies.
16) <i>Has a mechanism to authenticate its documents and safeguard its organizational identity.</i>	Yes. Logos are always used on all reports.	Letterhead with AFARD logo now in use.
17) <i>Only receives funds that are consistent with its mission or goal</i>	Yes. Resource mobilization is for vision-driven programmes.	Resource mobilization are based on proposal generated from ongoing programme inherently in line with AFARDs VMV.
18) <i>Uses any surplus funds only to further its mission.</i>	Yes. Capital reserve is built to enhance further services delivery.	Part of capital reserve is used for organizational development such as the ongoing AFARD complex construction; the recruitment and

		development of staffs, and equipping.
19) <i>Has a properly managed bank account.</i>	Yes. All bank accounts are in the names of AFARD & are signed strictly by accredited positions.	The Programme Director (PD) and Finance & Administration Manager are the two mandatory signatories to all AFARD Accounts. In the absence of the PD, the Community Development Manager is introduced to the bank and only acts within set time period and budget ceiling. Monthly reconciliations are effected
20) <i>Keeps a regularly updated register of fixed assets.</i>	Yes. An asset register is in place and is updated bi-annually.	Asset depreciation account is yet to be opened.
<b>Standards for improvement</b>		
21) <i>Maintains sound systems to ensure its resources are effectively, efficiently and transparently managed, including procedures for the acquisition, management and disposal of assets.</i>	Yes. Has and uses its financial and asset procurement and disposal system.	For finance use, a transparent check and balance modality is in place allowing for funds to only be used after approval. For assets, every officer is assigned an equipment (means of transport, computers, and desks) and damaged by negligence is at the officers peril. Assets are disposed through adverts and bids open to the public
22) <i>Adheres to gender and minority equity standards, e.g. in recruitment.</i>	Yes. Human Resource Policy promotes equal opportunity.	A gender policy is yet to be developed. Current positions show fair presence of women and men at top, middle and lower levels.
23) <i>Has, and follows, internal policies in place.</i>	Yes. All operational policies are in place and are in use.	Includes Board, Finance, Planning, Asset management policies.
24) <i>Adheres to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Standards.</i>	Yes. Uses funds as per plan with deviations sanctioned by donors. At the end of every year, the Board conducts an audit of accounts.	External audit reports are shared with major stakeholders – donors across programmes.
25) <i>Has independently audited and publicly accessible annual accounts and acts upon any audit report recommendation.</i>	Yes. Annual financial performances are externally audited. The Board resolves on the utilization of the audit management letter and almost all such recommendations have been acted upon.	The only objection the Board had since 2004 was on the placement of an internal auditor given the current level of operations.
26) <i>Has mechanisms to measure the cost benefit of fundraising and running the organization.</i>	<b>Not fully developed yet.</b> We always adhere to the acceptable 15% ceiling of administrative cost in all project management costs.	There is also a lukewarm acceptance of cost-benefit analysis given the flaws of the methodology.
27) <i>Develops and uses management tools/practices, as per its stage of development and requirements.</i>	Yes. Requisite tools for reporting, mobilization and assessments are aggregated with growth.	There is the daily activity report form, financial request and accountability form, and leave roaster in use. Now trying audiovisual documentation
<b>THE NGO PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES</b>		

<b>Minimum standards</b>		
28) <i>Has written programme/activity plans that aim at achieving its objectives, mission and/or goal.</i>	Yes. A 5-year Strategic Plan, approved by the Board, is in place. Meanwhile, a WENDI strategic direction is also in place. And an annual plan and budget 2009 is also in place and use.	A review of the direction to cater for WENDI is on-going involving Programme Committee and staffs.
29) <i>Understands and is able to identify its current/actual programme outputs and/or outcomes.</i>	Yes. Performance measures are done for all projects. Has a fully fledged M+E framework developed to enable tracking of outcomes and impacts.	Outcome mapping is done during every quarterly and annually participatory review process done with staffs and beneficiaries to identify outputs and plausible outcomes.
30) <i>Documents its programme work.</i>	Yes. All project reports are written in a process and outcome management design able to capture and explain what was done, how, and with what results. This is also true for annual reports.	Produces guidelines, books, articles in magazines containing narratives and photos. A nascent video documentation is in the making.
31) <i>Has made efforts to monitor and evaluate its programme activities.</i>	Yes. All projects are monitored and evaluated periodically.	A strategic evaluation was done once.
32) <i>Has shared its objectives with its members/intended beneficiaries.</i>	Yes. This is done during every partnership setting.	Developing Concept Framework paper with WENDI beneficiaries deepened this sharing process.
33) <i>Keeps appropriate government authorities informed of its plans activities and programmes.</i>	Yes. Always seek government approval of its projects. Provides notices for approved projects. Share approved plans and progress reports too.	Often engage in joint monitoring. Also cross-skills with government technical staffs e.g CDOs are now lead trainers in the project LLGs
34) <i>Has made efforts to relate with others actors (beyond its membership) working in its operating environment.</i>	Yes. Has co-implemented programmes and project activities with peers like Caritas-Nebbi & Action Aid Nebbi. Is also a member of District Networks in Nebbi and Yumbe	AFARD is a member of network organizations at National , regional and district levels – NGO Forums, UNASO, PELUM, UWASNET, etc
<b>Standards for improvement</b>		
35) <i>Mainstreams such issues as gender, human rights, social justice, poverty focus, environmental sustainability, disability, HIV, as cross-cutting in its activities.</i>	Yes. Integrates all aspects in the strategic direction and projects especially proposals and implementation.	The aspect of disability is still not deliberately addressed given the priority on household outreach approach.
36) <i>Has developed, maintains and uses an appropriate M and E system.</i>	Yes. Project specific M&E systems are in place. A holistic M+E framework has been finalized.	Putting to effect this framework awaits the completion of the baseline survey.
37) <i>Is able to define and measure its programme outcomes.</i>	Yes. All projects have participatory and standard M&E integrated.	This is a mandatory requirement for all projects.
38) <i>Has made efforts to track the impact of its programmes.</i>	Yes. All project impacts are tracked periodically.	
39) <i>Is able to analyse the cost benefit of making an impact.</i>	<b>No.</b>	We consider this conceptually flawed.
40) <i>It has used M and E to</i>	Yes. All M&E review findings are used for	It is mandatory that all new

<i>improve on its practice and its impact.</i>	programming improvement.	programmes learn from old lessons in both designs and implementation
41) <i>Engages productively with government, where appropriate, in its area of competence.</i>	Yes. Undertakes double engagement – cross-skills use and advocacy	We acknowledge that NGOs provide services outreach gap-filling and thus need to be in close contact with government.
42) <i>Has influence on other actors present in its operating environment.</i>	Yes. Advocates for replication of tested impacting approaches as by JOYODI, NAADS and student internship.	Is also influencing regionally through representation on MAYAANK and NARO's Zonal Agricultural Competitive Grant
43) <i>Contributes to cohesion within civil society in its area of operation.</i>	Yes. Is an active member of 3 networks in Nebbi and 1 in Yumbe. And actively participates in Public-private partnership events	Has also encouraged its partners to join such networks
44) <i>Has established and uses feedback mechanisms from its beneficiaries or constituencies.</i>	Yes. Undertakes periodic beneficiary project reviews where issues identified are integrated in programming and implementation	Herein bi-directional feedback is conducted between AFARD & beneficiaries
<b>FURTHER IMPROVING OUR PERFORMANCE</b>		
<b>Minimum standards</b>		
45) <i>Has made efforts to reflect on its past successes and challenges.</i>	Yes. Quarterly and annual reviews are conducted to assess progress and learn lessons	It is regularly done on a quarterly basis
46) <i>Is able to identify and has documented how it or its membership has learnt and responded from past challenges and successes.</i>	Yes. Progress reports mandatorily explores this aspect	However, it is not effectively documented for all programmes e.g., good governance and livestock sectors have ventured less into lessons learning
<b>Standards for further improvements</b>		
47) <i>Has made efforts to reflect on its past successes and challenges as an organization, with input from other stakeholders, including beneficiaries.</i>	Yes. During the quarterly beneficiary organization review AFARD willingly accepts views of stakeholders in guiding how things can be done better.	Two district networks are now in place in Nebbi and Yumbe and 2 more to come in 2010 in Arua and Moyo
48) <i>Has actively tried to learn from other (re) sources available in its operating environment.</i>	Yes. Because of the need to adopt best practices AFARD openly learn from others	Cases in point are Tally Accounting from Caritas Nebbi; local government planning processes from community development office; and final accounts preparation refresher for FAM from CEFORD, customising HIV prevention messages with inputs from UNAIDS.
49) <i>Has undertaken regular events to reflect on its core business and rationale for existence.</i>	No	There is still no disposable income to allocate into this area still seen as a "wine, dine and crow" luxury event.
50) <i>Has learning practices that involve its Board, members, and/or staff.</i>	Yes. To keep the Board aware of all programme, during one of the two Board meetings, a filed visit is conducted.	The Board has also been part of the West Nile expansion drive.

51) <i>Has developed a staff development system where relevant, which is in use.</i>	No. The Human Resource Policy is under review yet	Currently we support in an informal way the studies for skills development of staffs. Meanwhile internal coaching is routine to help staff deliver better results
52) <i>Has developed and is using its own learning system.</i>	Yes. We develop proposal basing on past experiences and current best practices. We also ensure that management and control tools are compliant with best practice	All our project reports have sections for lessons learned
53) <i>Has identified, documented and shared its best practices.</i>	Yes. Through publications of books, magazines, project and annual reports	These are disseminated through circulation, web posting, and stakeholder meetings
54) <i>Has undertaken and makes use of organizational development/review processes.</i>	Yes. In 2008 conducted a Job evaluation exercise, QuAM assessment, and regular reviews on what can make AFARD better services delivery agency	These assessments are starting point for Board decision making on organizational development.

## GAPS AND PLANS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Between 2008 and now, a big leap has been achieved in the QuAM score. While in 2008 there were deficits of 11 scores (43/54 – that is 80%), in 2009 the number of deficit scores declined to only 4 representing 93% achievement (50/54). Yet, for 2 of the deficit scores, AFARD does not believe in them for basic reasons that cost-benefit analysis is skewed to attempting to tag financial cost to even what cannot be costed. And it is not likely that such areas will be ventured into in the near future.

Notwithstanding, critical gaps exists is building AFARD as a 'learning, all inclusive and reflective organization' through:

- Improving AFARD documentation practices by moving upstream into a multimedia approach that uses video, audio, web, and the usual written formats in order to widen the marketing and accountability frontier.
- Taking a critical look at dealing with Persons with Disabilities (PWD) within the household based targeting, planning, implementation, and monitoring and reporting approach.
- Formalizing the staff development plan as a basic personnel right in order to build services delivery capacity as well as to motivate staff.
- Widening the Board-Beneficiary contacts to include also local government officials in monitoring of our activities.



