

**ESTONIAN CIVIL  
SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT  
CONCEPT (EKAK)**

# PROCESS

- Idea launched 1999, rejected in 2000
- New engaging attempt, 25 roundtables organized, e-engagement 2000-2001
- Estonian NGO Roundtable formed 2001 (adopted EKAK)
- EKAK submitted to Riigikogu April 2001
- EKAK adopted by Riigikogu December 2002
- Riigikogu sent EKAK to the Government for implementation in 2003
- Responsible institution – Ministry of the Interior
- EKAK joint committee of 8 government representatives and 14 nonprofit representatives convened in 2003
- First EKAK implementation plan for 2004 – 2006 adopted by the Government in 2004
- Government prepared its own Civic Initiative Development Plan (KATA 2007 – 2010) in 2006 and KODAR 2010-2016
- EKAK joint committee reformed in 2007
- All 11 objectives are being implemented
- Every two years, EKAK Parliamentary hearings

# EKAK

**EKAK** (Estonian Civil Society Development Concept) is a strategy which describes the different roles of the public sector and the nonprofit sector which supplement each other, and the co-operation principles in developing and implementing public policies and building up the civic society.

It defines:

- mutually complementing roles of public authorities and civic initiative
- principles of their cooperation
- mechanisms and priorities for cooperation

in shaping and implementing **public policies** and building up **civil society** in Estonia.

# EKAK STRUCTURE

- Introduction and goals
- Principles of cooperation and shared values
- Ways of achieving goals
- Implementation of EKAK:
  - Long-term priorities (3)
  - Short-term priorities (11)

# EKAK GOALS

1. to promote **civic initiative and involvement democracy**;
  1. to support the idea of **voluntary action**;
  2. improve the better acknowledgement and implementation of the economic, social and political **rights and obligations of citizens**;
  3. the **citizens'** sense of **responsibility** towards their family, other citizens, home neighborhood, state and world;
  5. to make conscious the **values and principles** which are the **basis of co-operation** between the nonprofit sector and public sector, to frame mutual obligations, rights and priorities of action;
  6. to establish a **favorable environment** for the functioning and strengthening of citizens' associations as an inevitable factor for the development of democracy;
  7. to develop a **support system** for nonprofit sector;
  8. to spread good **co-operation practices** and the knowledge on favorable co-operation of the public institutions, citizens and citizens' associations;
  9. to **involve** citizens and their associations more widely in the process of developing, implementing and analyzing public policies and legal acts, to develop necessary information channels and mechanisms;
  10. to acknowledge and consider the specific rights and interests of **insufficiently represented** or unacknowledged citizens and their associations in arranging public life;
  11. to create an environment supporting **charity and philanthropy**, and involve business sector.

# PRINCIPLES OF CO-OPERATION AND VALUES

- Citizen action
- Participation
- Respect
- Partnership
- Responsibility and accountability
- Political independence of civic initiative
- Preventing corruption
- Sustainable and balanced development
- Equal treatment

# **WAYS OF ACHIEVING GOALS**

- Acknowledgement and Representation
- Partnership
- Development of policies
- Resources

**Citizens' associations and the public sector**

# EKAK LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

- 1.1 Major rise in **civic education and citizen action**, and strengthening of **involvement democracy**.
- 1.2 Introduction of the **co-operation based on partnership** principles between the public sector and nonprofit sector, promotion and wide implementation of good co-operation practices and creation of co-operation network.
- 1.3 Guaranteeing of a **functioning support system** for civic initiative.



# EKAK SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES (1)

- 2.1 Mapping of the **conditions** necessary for the nonprofit sector and its sustainability, development of the classification system for citizens' associations and systematization of the **statistics**.
- 2.2 Mapping, improvement and strengthening of the **co-operation and support structures**.
- 2.3 Large-scale promotion of the **Code of Ethics** of the nonprofit sector.
- 2.4 Revision of **legal acts** related to citizens' associations and, if necessary, drafting of the amendments.
- 2.5 Elaboration of the mechanisms for **involving the representatives of citizens' associations** in the development and implementation of the policies of different areas and legislation in general.
- 2.6 Mapping, systematization and improvement of the system for **financing citizens' associations** from public budgets and informing the general public thereof.
- 2.7 Improvement of the **information channels and feedback mechanisms** between the public sector and the society.

## EKAK SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES (3)

- 2.8 Development of the order for concluding and implementing **co-operation agreements** between the public sector and the nonprofit sector.
- 2.9 Elaboration of the general **standards for offering public services** and the principles and quality standards for transferring public services to the nonprofit sector.
- 2.10 Examination and updating of the **civil education curricula** and training materials, organizing of the in-service training for teachers of civic education.
- 2.11 Starting of the **state-financed broadcasts and programs in mass media** concerning the joint activities of civic initiative and the public sector, and creation of a related sub-section in the state server.

# 1. Acknowledgement and Representation

## Citizens' associations and the public sector:

- 1.1 **determine transparent and easily accessible communication channels**, inform the interested groups and public thereof;
- 1.2 enable that the public sector could be **responsible to the public for efficient use of resources allocated to citizens' associations**, guaranteeing the distribution and use of resources for intended purposes, transparency and reporting;
- 1.3 avoid conflict of interest of their representatives;
- 1.4 create conditions whereby citizens' associations **are able to appoint their representatives** to nonpolitical open bodies and committees, and respect the authority given to the representatives;
- 1.5 **acknowledge the role of umbrella organizations** and networks of the nonprofit sector in representing its members, which does not exclude the right of separate citizens' associations to represent their own interests;
- 1.6 **acknowledge that no citizens' association or umbrella organization can represent the interests of the whole nonprofit sector in relations with the public sector.** Widely acknowledged representative councils or umbrella organizations of certain areas of activity proceed from the following principles in the performance of their representational function with regard to the public sector:
  - 1.6.1 represent the joint interests of their members and supporters, explain to the public sector bodies what is the consultation process with their membership and to whom they hold responsible;
  - 1.6.2 **assist in infrastructure development** so as to help various interest groups to express their opinion and reach public authorities;
  - 1.6.3 provide their opinions to the public sector in a reasoned manner and within the agreed time schedule;
  - 1.6.4 support co-operation between different parts of the nonprofit sector.

## 2. Partnership

### Citizens' associations and the public sector:

2.1 co-operate with each other bearing in mind the principles of openness, trust, tolerance, flexibility and respect for the specific nature of the other party;

2.2 in mutual co-operation, **look for the representation of a possibly wide circle of persons** and assure the sufficient knowledge of their representatives;

2.3 **give necessary information** to co-operation partners to make the process more efficient, if necessary indicate clearly the confidential nature of such information and guarantee the confidentiality of the information given by the other party;

**2.4 starting from the level of finding common interests**, agree on the requirements of efficient time schedule;

2.5 promote and inform their supporters, members, employees, customers and the general public **of the mutual co-operation principles, priorities of action and good practices**;

2.6 introduce and support mutual co-operation by providing information in mass media and public presentations, and avoid providing general negative opinion.

### 3. Development of policies

#### Citizens' associations and the public sector:

3.1 co-operate in establishing, implementing and assessing the policies of different areas through their authorized members or representatives according to their areas of activity and competence;

3.2 **arrange the collection of opinions** necessary for establishing policies and initiating legal acts, present them to the authorized bodies systematically and according to the agreed time schedules and form;

3.3 **consider each others experience in establishing policies** and initiating legal acts and consult with various citizens' associations already in the drafting stage, giving them sufficient time for drafting their own opinion;

3.4 assess the effect of various policies and legal acts on the society and environment both in the drafting stage and later;

3.5 **enhance the competence of their representatives** for participating in the process of establishing, implementing and assessing the policies;

3.6 in devising the policies concerning minority groups, consider the opinions and viewpoints of the citizens' associations representing such groups, and involve them in the drafting of legislation and in political debates;

3.7 **jointly draft and follow the good co-operation practices** in order to organize the drafting, implementation and assessment of policies and to involve the nonprofit sector in the law-making process.

## 4. Resources

### Citizens' associations and the public sector:

- 4.1 use the means at their disposal for **promoting voluntary work** and involving citizens in the solution of global problems by voluntary action;
- 4.2 ensure that citizens' associations are not prevented from activities guaranteed by law for strengthening their economic basis, and acknowledge the confidentiality of the business and other sensitive information;
- 4.3 **elaborate and make public the allocation, use, reporting and controlling of necessary monetary and non-monetary resources from public funds** and devises for developing the support system of the nonprofit sector;
- 4.4 use any opportunity to introduce and **develop a tax system that supports the civic initiative and charity** in order to raise the interest of the business sector to support nonprofit activities;
- 4.5 elaborate and make public **the principles and order for transferring services to the nonprofit organizations and for financing the implementation of co-operation agreements** between the public sector offices and citizens' associations;
- 4.6 use the allocated resources for the intended purpose, in an efficient and innovative manner in order to achieve the set goals.

**monitoring practices:**

# 1. Implementation of EKAK principles

	Good practices and how these are followed
METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN	<p><u>Planned:</u> invitation to CSOs and public officials to report on cases where partnership has not worked</p> <p><u>Actual:</u> NENO selected cases where CSOs had publicly expressed their concern about partnership. Taking cases into “pieces” and comparing steps in a dialogue with EKAK and good practice of involvement.</p> <p>Suggestions for improvement stressed.</p>
INVOLVEMENT	Facilitating dialogue between partners to understand the reasons why principles were not followed
PUBLICITY	More in regular CS information channels, discussed in the Joint Committee.
RESULTS	Understanding systematic problems and needs in consultation and cooperation practices
FOLLOW-UP	Ministries were asked to give feedback on the suggestions, some other initiatives and projects have taken the results into account



## 2. Monitoring implementation of the Guidelines for Funding CSOs from the State budget

DESIGN and METHODOLOGY	Detailed overview of funding practices, introduction of 6 funding principles. Interviews with officials, discussions with CSOs. Statistics and so far missing analyse. Attention to politically affiliated money.
INVOLVEMENT	Officials in the ministries, CSOs. Politicians.
PUBLICITY	Media was involved before the report was published. Media-NENO.
RESULTS	Awareness. Push for reforms.
FOLLOW-UP	Roundtable of funders for CSOs Planned: methodology for monitoring amounts of money moving from state budget to CSOs complemented with analyse of practices.

Legitimacy, Transparency,  
Accountability

# Code of Ethics

## Democratic governance

1. A nonprofit organization has a **clear and understandable mission**. In carrying out its mission a nonprofit organization is guided by its statutes, internal documents and operating standards.
2. A nonprofit organization expresses and represents a **diversity of interests** and needs of people. A nonprofit organization engages people in the development of civil society through civic education, participatory democracy, advocacy and other forms.
3. A nonprofit organization as a voluntary association of the members of the society **values its members, ensures democratic governance of the organization**, holds the governing bodies and employees of the organization responsible and reacts to their misconduct.
4. A nonprofit organization considers **involvement of people and voluntary work** as a foundation for civil society, values citizens and their voluntary work.
5. A nonprofit organization consistently pursues skilled actions, professionalism and perfection in order to achieve better results in its work.
6. Getting funds for its activities mainly from supporters and donors, a nonprofit organization **uses the funds efficiently and in accordance with designated purposes**.

# Code of Ethics

## **Civic courage and care**

7. A nonprofit organization demonstrates **civic courage in fighting against social injustice.**

8. When discovering incompetence and disregard for the principles of social justice in legislation, a nonprofit organization **works to amend such legislation.**

9. A nonprofit organization **does not use or advocate the use of violence to express its opinions,** achieve its goals or gain the attention of the public.

# Code of Ethics

## **Sustainability and prudence in using funds and resources**

10. In seeking to achieve its goals a nonprofit organization **uses natural, human and intellectual resources, as well as material and financial assets with sustainability and prudence**, considering the needs of both present and future generations.

11. A nonprofit organization in its capacity as both applicant and donor, **complies with generally accepted funding principles**, uses only justified and transparent budgets and avoids duplication in funding.

## **Responsibility and accountability**

12. A nonprofit organization **is accountable its activities** and is responsible to the founders, members, stakeholders, supporters, donors and the general public.

13. A nonprofit organization considers important readiness to account for its activities, achieved through professional management, internal accountability and pursuing generally accepted accounting principles.

14. A nonprofit organization **discloses a report of its activities** and finances at least once a year.

# Code of Ethics

## Openness and transparency

15. Information regarding the mission, membership, activities and funding of a nonprofit organization are public and understandable, its **activities transparent**.

16. A nonprofit organization communicates in an open and direct manner with all parties concerned and **does not act anonymously**.

17. A nonprofit organization is **open to new and diversified ideas and opinions**, as well as cooperation in achieving common goals.

# Code of Ethics

## Independence and avoiding conflicts of interest

18. A nonprofit organization **is independent in setting its goals**, decisions and activities and refrains from being controlled by political parties, public institutions or companies, resulting in losing its independence, autonomy and ability to act for the public benefit.

19. A nonprofit organization and persons involved therein **prevent from entering in the conflict of interest**. In the event of a conflict of interest the necessary measures to eliminate such conflict of interest must be applied.