

Guideline

Election Working Group-EWG



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Preamble

The Election Working Group (EWG) is a non-partisan, 29-member national coalition of civil society organizations that share a common commitment to free and fair elections and good governance in Bangladesh. It was established in 2006 and has been working on supporting free and fair elections through pre-election, Election Day, and post-election observation, conducting civic and voter education and awareness in key thematic areas to encourage all segments of society to participate in the electoral process and promoting public dialogue on electoral reform.

EWG activities promote greater accountability and integrity among candidates and elected officials, women's participation, the needs and interests of youth voters, and the rights and participation of religious and ethnic minorities, disabled persons, and residents of geographically remote areas. EWG activities also aim to reduce the risk of election and post-election violence. The EWG intends to expand its scope of work in the field of governance in future.

The EWG is funded by several international development partners with The Asia Foundation acting in a lead technical and coordinating role.

1. Name:

The name of the Coalition is Election Working Group-EWG

2. Office:

The office of the Coalition is situated in Dhaka, Bangladesh

3. Aims & Objectives:

The EWG was formed with a mission to strengthen democracy through promoting free and fair elections in Bangladesh. The major objectives of EWG are to:

- Support free and fair elections through citizen's participation in observing and monitoring electoral processes including long term observation (LTO) and election day observation (STO)
- Voter and civic education
- Strengthening citizen's initiatives and participation for greater accountability and transparency.
- Electoral reform advocacy that represents the collective, non-partisan view of its members
- Capacity building of all stakeholders

4. Working Area:

All over Bangladesh

5. Activities of the Coalition:

Activities of the EWG coalition will be outlined in detail in EWG's Action Plan which should be developed and updated annually.

6. Membership:

Any organization engaged in democratization, governance, voter education, election observation and other relevant activities can apply with EWG for its membership. **However, the Steering Committee will develop a set of criteria for the EWG membership.** The Steering Committee after review of the application and necessary assessment shall decide on providing membership. The decision regarding the membership shall be taken with the presence of at least two-third members of the Steering Committee. Currently EWG has 29 member organizations.

7. General Council:

- i) The Coalition shall have a General Council and it shall be comprised of all the members of the Coalition.
- ii) General Council shall be the highest authority of the Coalition.
- iii) The Coalition shall hold a General Meeting every year at such place, time and date, as the Steering Committee may determine.
- iv) The above named General Meeting shall be called Annual General Meeting (AGM). All other General Meetings of the Coalition shall be called Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
- v) The Steering Committee may, whenever they shall think fit, or shall upon a requisition made in writing by at least two third members of the Coalition, convene an EGM.
- vi) The Steering Committee may invite any person other than a member to attend a meeting of the General Council. Such invitee, to be known as Special Invitee, shall not, however be entitled to vote at the meeting.
- vii) In case of requisition meeting, notice shall be signed **by simple majority** of the members of the Coalition, requisitionists shall be submitting the notice at the office. The meeting shall be convened by the Steering Committee for purposes specified in the requisition.
- viii) If the Steering Committee does not proceed to cause a meeting to be held within twenty one days from the date of the requisition being submitted, the requisitionists may themselves convene a meeting to be held not more than three months, from the date of submission of the requisition.

8. Notice:

- i) At least fourteen days notice (exclusive the day on which the notice is served or demand to be served, but inclusive the day on which the notice is given), specifying the place, the day and the hour of meeting will be given.
- ii) A notice may be given by the Coalition to any member either in person, by sending it through post/courier service or through e-mail.

iii) The unintended omission to give any such notice to or the non-receipt of notice by any of the members shall not invalidate the proceedings of any such meeting.

9. Proceedings at General Meetings:

i) The agenda of an AGM shall be to receive the annual report of the Steering Committee and of the auditors, approve the annual budget, the selection of a panel of auditors and the election of the members of the Steering Committee.

ii) Two third of the existing members of the Coalition, present personally shall be a quorum for a General Meeting for all purposes. No agenda shall be discussed at any General Meeting unless the quorum requisite to be present at commencement of the meeting.

iii) The members of the Steering Committee present may choose one of the members of the Steering Committee to take the chair. Alternatively, the meeting can be chaired by the EWG National Coordinator.

iv) The members of the Steering Committee may, with the consent of any meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting), adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place but no agenda shall be discussed at any adjourned meeting other than agenda left unfinished at the meeting from which the adjournment took place. When a meeting is adjourned for ten days or more, notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given as in the case of an original meeting. No quorum is required for an adjourned meeting.

v) At any General Meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, unless a poll is (before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands) demanded. Unless a poll is so demanded, a declaration by the Chair of the meeting that a resolution, has on a show of hands, been carried unanimously or by a particular majority, or lost and an entry to that effect in the book of the proceeding of the Coalition shall be conclusive evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favor of or against, that resolution.

vi) If a poll is duly demanded, it shall be taken in such manner as the Chair shall direct, and the result of the poll shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the poll was demanded.

vii) In case of an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or on a poll, the Chair of the meeting at which the show of hands takes place, or at which the poll is demanded, shall be entitled to a second or casting vote.

viii) A poll demanded on the question of the election of a Chair of the meeting or on the question of the adjournment shall be taken forthwith. A poll demanded on any other question shall be taken at such time and place as the Chair of the meeting shall direct.

ix) The demand of a poll shall not prevent the continuance of a meeting for the discussion of any agenda other than the question on which a poll has been demanded.

10. Steering Committee:

i) The Steering Committee shall consist of 11 members.

- ii) The National Coordinator as the Chief of the Coalition Secretariat will be the Ex-officio Member Secretary of the Steering Committee.
- iii) All members of the Steering Committee shall serve for a term of two years. No member shall be eligible for re-election for more than two consecutive terms and in each election there shall be at least one third new members elected.
- iv) The Steering Committee, subject to the general control and supervision of the General Council, shall generally pursue and carry out the objectives of the Coalition and shall be responsible for the management and administration of the Coalition affairs in accordance with the guideline.
- v) The Steering Committee shall have the responsibility to determine the direction and scope of the activities of the Coalition. It shall also have the responsibility to approve projects and administer the annual and supplementary budgets. The Steering Committee shall exercise full management and financial control over the Coalition subject to such direction as may be issued by the General Council from time to time..
- vi) Shall lay down terms and conditions governing scholarships, fellowships, deputation, consultancy, grants-in-aid, research schemes and project.
- vii) Shall enter into agreement with the government and international agencies, foundations and organizations and other public or private bodies or organizations or individuals for securing and/or accepting grants to the Coalition on mutually agreed terms and conditions, provided that such terms and conditions shall not be contrary to or inconsistent with the objectives of the Coalition as detailed in the guideline.
- viii) Shall take over, acquire (by purchase, gift exchange, lease, hire or otherwise) from the government and international agencies and organizations and other public or private bodies or organization(s) or individuals, institutions, libraries, laboratories, bank, museum, immovable or movable properties, endowments or other funds together with any attendant obligation so that neither the transition nor the terms and conditions thereunder it is concluded as inconsistent with the objectives sets forth in the guideline.
- ix) Shall appoint sub-committees **under special circumstances**, consisting of persons who may or may not be members of the Coalition or employees of the Coalition to deal with any specific task.
- x) The Steering Committee may by resolution delegate such administrative, financial and other powers to its Member Secretary or any other officials of different level of the Coalition as it may consider necessary and proper, subject to condition that action taken by them under the powers so delegated shall have to be confirmed and/or ratified at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.
- xi) The Steering Committee shall be responsible for the Coalition staff selection as per HR policy.
- xii) The membership of the Steering Committee may be terminated on happening of any of the following:
 - a. On his/her ceasing to be a member of the Coalition.
 - b. On his/her resignation from the Steering Committee.
 - c. Due to his/her absence without prior notice for three consecutive meetings.

11. Meetings of the Steering Committee:

i. a) Steering Committee shall hold quarterly meetings and shall be called by notice under the signature of the EWG National Coordinator.

b) The members of the Steering Committee present may choose one of the members of the Steering Committee to take the chair.

c) Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded by the Member-Secretary or in his/her absence, by a member nominated by the Steering Committee. The minutes shall be circulated among the Steering Committee Members and be duly approved or corrected at the following regular meeting. The minutes shall be filed in the permanent record of the Coalition.

ii) Every notice calling for a meeting of the Steering Committee shall state the date, time and place of the meeting and shall be sent to every member of the Steering Committee ordinarily five calendar days before the day fixed for the meeting. In case of emergency, a shorter notice of twenty four hours may be served.

iii) Any unintended omission to give notice or the non-receipt or late receipt of a notice by any members shall not invalidate the proceeding of the meeting. However attempt to be made to ensure on-time receipt of the notice by each of the members.

iv) Two third members of the Steering Committee present in person shall constitute a quorum. No meeting shall proceed with its agenda unless a quorum is present at the commencement of the meeting. No quorum shall however be necessary for the adjourned meeting.

v) All questions at meeting of the Steering Committee shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, provided that in case of equality of vote, the National Coordinator shall have a casting vote.

vi) The proceedings of all meetings of the Steering Committee and resolution passed by circulation shall be recorded in a book which shall be maintained by the Coalition for the purpose.

Member Secretary:

i) The National Coordinator of EWG (appointed by the Steering Committee) shall be the Ex-officio Member Secretary of the Steering Committee.

ii) Shall be the Chief Executive of the Coalition Secretariat.

iii) In consultation with the Steering Committee will undertake all sorts of activities, programs, proposals and their monitoring..

iv) Shall be responsible for distribution of work among the Secretariat officials.

v) Shall carry on and have charge of all program related correspondence and keep in safe custody of all documents and papers, furniture and all other properties, movable and immovable, belonging to the Coalition.

vi) Shall be responsible to approve all sorts of bills, vouchers and financial reports after proper checking.

vii) Shall be responsible to financial transactions and all other correspondences.

viii) Shall play direct role in budget formulation of the Coalition.

ix) Shall maintain regular communication with all members of the Steering Committee.

12. Funds and Properties of the Coalition:

i) The funds of the Coalition shall consist of the following:

- a) Membership fees
- b) Grants made by the Government
- c) Donations and contributions received from members and other sources including agencies or foundations from abroad, foreign government bodies, international agencies and organizations.
- d) Income and receipts from other sources

ii) All properties of the Coalition, movable and immovable, shall vest in the Coalition and shall be administrated by the Member Secretary, on behalf of the Coalition within the parameters set by the Coalition in its General Meeting or otherwise as directed by the Steering Committee.

iii) The Coalition may purchase, hire, lease, exchange or otherwise acquire property, moveable and immovable, tangible or intangible (including copyrights, patents and intellectual properties) which may be necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Coalition and construct, alter and/or maintain such buildings and works as may be necessary for carrying out the objectives of the Coalition.

iv) All funds shall be deposited into the Coalition's bank account and shall not be withdrawn except by cheque signed by the Co-Chairs assigned or by such officials of the Coalition as may be duly delegated by the Steering Committee.

13. Accounts:

i) The management deployed by the Steering Committee shall cause to be kept proper books of accounts within spent to:

- a) All sums of money received and expended by the Coalition and the matters in respect of which the receipts and expenditures take place.
- b) All sales and purchases of goods/services of the Coalition.

ii) The books of accounts shall be kept at the office of the Coalition and shall be open to inspection by the members of the Steering Committee during office hours.

iii) The Steering Committee shall from time to time determine whether and to what extent the accounts and books of the Coalition or any of them shall be open to the inspection for the members of the Coalition not being members of the Steering Committee.

iv) The Steering Committee may open accounts in Commercial Banks for different activities. The Member Secretary or other officials assigned by the Steering Committee will operate the Bank Accounts.

14. Audit:

i) The Coalition at each AGM shall appoint a panel of Auditors being Chartered Accountants or Accountants to audit the accounts of the Coalition. The Steering Committee shall appoint one or more Auditors from the panel. The auditor/s so appointed shall hold office until the AGM in the following year. The remuneration of the auditor/s shall also be fixed by the Steering Committee.

- ii) The auditor/s so appointed shall have the right of access at all reasonable times to the books of accounts of the Coalition and shall inquire any information and explanations as may be necessary to the performance of their duties.
- iii) The auditor/s shall submit a report to the General Council of the Coalition on the accounts examined by such auditors on every balance sheet and income and expenditure account laid before the General Council in the AGM during their tenure of office.

15. Election:

- i) The Steering Committee shall be elected for a term of 2 (two) years. The election shall be completed within **2 (two) months before expiry** of 2 (two) years.
- ii) The General Council members shall be qualified for election.
- iii) The Steering Committee shall be elected by direct or indirect votes.

16. Election Commission:

- i) The Election Commission will be formed with **3 people of which at least one shall be woman**, 1 (one) Chief Election Commissioner and 2 (two) Commissioners, other than the candidates either from General Council Members or from outside. It will be formed in the meeting of the Steering Committee.
- ii) The Election Commission is entitled the power and functions of general administration, supervision, management and other affairs regarding election.

17. Amendment:

This guideline may be amended, substituted, altered or repeated by a **two third majority** of the members of the General Council present and voting on a special resolution for the purpose at an EGM.