Governance & Disclosure Practices

All About Meetings, Notice, Agenda, Minutes & Resolutions
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Principal Author:
Manoj Fogla, Director, SAGA

Advisory Support * :
Aarti Madhusudan, Founder, Governance Counts
Arpinder Singh, National Director, Ernst & Young (P) Ltd.
B. N. Makhija, Advisor, SOSVA
Jagadananda, Chairperson, Credibility Alliance
Mathew Cherian, CEO, HelpAge India
Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India
Noshir Dadrawala, Chief Executive, CAP
Pushpa Aman Singh, CEO, Guide Star India
S. P. Selvi, Executive Director, Credibility Alliance
Subhash Mittal, Secretary, SRRF

Credibility Alliance
Improving Governance Building Trust

* The Advisory support members have contributed to the document, however, the entire content is not necessarily the opinion of the advisory group.
Foreword

For any Voluntary Organisation, the Governing Board is a crucial and critical component of ensuring sound governance.

A Governing Board of Members is a collective consensus decision making entity where the whole is far greater than the sum of the individuals.

It is the Governing Board that provides policy guidance and supervision of the Voluntary Organisation, promote the organisation within the community and public at large, enhance the organisation’s reputation and credibility, lead the fundraising efforts and are legally responsible for the activities and operations of the organisation.

It is therefore of utmost importance that the Board processes of a Voluntary Organisation are of high quality and are highly effective.

In order to deliver effective governance, the Board Meetings should happen as per stipulated norm, the matters discussed are of strategic in nature, refining and reshaping its approach towards achieving the Vision of the organisation.

The Board needs established procedures for doing its work. A defined code of conduct on the Board processes, strengthens accountability, enhances efficiency, and provides a solid framework for collective action. The best guide for the board’s operations is a set of well-written basic documents, which give instruction in matters such as the selection of members, meeting schedules, and decision-making procedures.

In the experience of Credibility Alliance, it is observed that there is a tremendous need for enhancing the procedural understanding on the conduct of Meetings, Agenda setting and Minutes.

This second issue of CA Learning Series provide necessary information relating to organising Meetings, Issuing timely Notices, procedures relating to participation, role of a Chair, Secretary, Resolutions etc. with an aim to enhance the governance practices that will lead to effective governance of a Voluntary Organisation.

CA gratefully acknowledges the high quality input from the Principal Author, Mr. Manoj Fogla and the members of the Advisory Support Panel that enriches the quality of this material.

S. P. Selvi
Executive Director,
Credibility Alliance
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Introduction

1.01 Sound governance largely depends on the effective interaction between the decision making persons of the organisations. It is very important that regular meetings are conducted for various policy matters and legislative and executive decision making.

1.02 The general members and the Board/trustees exercise the power entrusted to them as per the governing documents such as Trust Deed, Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. The provisions of the statute of registration also regulate the procedure for conducting Board and General Meetings. In an VO two types of meetings are normally held, (i) General meetings, (ii) Board meetings. The VOs which are formed as companies or registered under the Societies Registration Act, normally have both General Body and the Board. But VOs registered as trusts normally do not have a General Body and therefore the trustees happen to be the ultimate body.

General Members’ Meeting

1.03 A meeting of the general members normally should be held at least once in a year to discuss and approve important matters like approval of audited accounts, appointment of statutory auditors, review of activities during the year, election of the Board members. This meeting is called Annual General Meeting (AGM). It is normally conducted within six months from the end of the financial year.
and all the activities and accounts for the previous financial year are placed.

1.04 Apart from the AGM, General Meetings can also be called during the year if the circumstances so demand. All General Meetings other than the AGM are normally called as Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM).

1.05 Whether it is an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting, all the members of the organisation have a right to participate and vote. Therefore all the decisions of enduring significance should be taken in a General Meeting.

**Board Meetings & its frequency**

1.06 The meeting of the governing body or the Board of an organisation should ideally be held at least once in every three months. The Board may meet more frequently if it is required.

1.07 A Board meeting in every quarter is not legally mandated under any central statute. Even Section 25 company registered under the Companies Act are allowed to have only Board meeting once in every six months. All other registered companies are required to hold Board meetings at least once in every three months and four meetings in a year. However Section 25 companies are exempted from the four meeting clause [vide Notification No. SO 1578 dated 1-7-1968] as they can have Board meetings only once in every six months.

1.08 The Trust Deed or Articles of Association may specifically provide for the number and procedure of Board meetings to be held during the year.

**Notice & Agenda**

1.09 A notice of every meeting is required to be given in writing. Care should be taken to provide for the length of the notice while framing the bye laws of the organisation. In the absence of any time limit of notice in the bye-law, it is desirable to give 21 days notice for a General Meeting and 7 days notice for a governing body meeting.
1.10 Along with the notice of a meeting, it is necessary to enclose the list of items to be discussed/resolved, such list is known as AGENDA. It is very important that the agenda of a meeting is sent in advance preferably with the notice. It helps a member to prepare for the meeting. Issue of a meticulous agenda in advance shows the transparency and democratic functioning of an organisation.

1.11 Some matters which normally may form a part of the agenda are as under:
- Reading and confirming minutes of the previous meeting.
- Any matter arising out of the previous minutes.
- Issues which were deferred in the previous meeting.
- Various specific matters planned to be discussed in the meeting.
- Any matter involving related party transactions requiring confidential or restricted decision making.
- Matters requiring special or unanimous resolutions.
- Listing out the action points.
- Date of the next meeting and deadlines of documentation.
- Closure or adjournment of meeting.

A format of notice and agenda is enclosed as per Annexure-01.

**Recommended Agenda for Quarterly Board Meetings**

1.12 The Board of an organisation should perform specific tasks in various quarters of the year. Apart from the various mandated and discretionary functions, the Board should preferably include the following issues in the agenda for various quarters:

- In the Board meeting held during the January-March quarter the Board should include in the agenda issues such as (i) approving programmes/budgets of the forthcoming year (ii) status of statutory compliances to be done within 31st March (iii) major deviation in planned and actual activities.

- In the Board meeting held during the April-June quarter the Board should include in the agenda issues such as (i) Review of the previous year, (ii) Performance appraisal (iii) Pay determination for CEO/key personnel (iv) Status of closing and finalisation of accounts and reconciliations.

- In the Board meeting held during the July-September quarter
the Board should include in the agenda issues such as (i) Recommending audited accounts and annual report of previous year for the General Body for approval (ii) Nominating directors/Board members to be approved at AGM (iii) Recommending auditor for AGM to approve.

- In the Board meeting held during the October-December quarter the Board should include in the agenda issues such as mid year review of programmes, financials etc.

### Quorum

1.13 The term quorum implies the minimum number of members that must be present to make the proceedings of a meeting valid. Normally the bye-laws of an organisation specify the quorum required for different meetings. An organisation should carefully devise the requirement of Quorum for general and Board meetings.

1.14 In case of Board meetings if the quorum is high (example: 50% of Board members) then it may become difficult to hold valid meetings. And if it is too low (example: 2 of Board members) then important decision may be taken without the involvement of the majority. Therefore, the bye-laws may be drafted or amended accordingly.

1.15 In case of General Meetings even a small percentage of the quorum may prove to be very high (example: 25% of members in case of an organisation having 1000 members) then it may become difficult to hold valid meetings. And if it is too low (example: 3 of general members) then important decision may be taken without the involvement of the majority. Therefore, the bye-laws may be drafted or amended keeping in view the size of the General Body.

1.16 If the bye laws or trust deed is silent then it to suggested that the quorum for General Meeting should be at least one third of the total members in case where the total members are less than 30. For VOs with larger General Body a suitable basis quorum may be fixed depending on the size and nature of the organisation. For Board meetings at least 33% of the Board members should be present to form the quorum. If the quorum is not present in any particular meeting then the meeting should be adjourned to a future date by the members present on that day. It is not advisable to convene a meeting without quorum on the same day after allowing an adjournment of 30 minute or 1 hour. If on the adjourned future date again the quorum is not present then the members present
(not less than 2) should be considered as valid quorum. The future date for the adjourned meeting should ideally be within 7 to 14 days.

1.17 It may be noted that proxies are not permissible for the determination of quorum both in general and Board meeting.

**Proxy**

1.18 Proxy refers to a person or a representative empowered to attend a meeting on behalf of a member. Any member of an organisation who is entitled to attend and vote at meetings is also entitled to appoint a proxy who can also attend & vote. A proxy has to carry an authorisation form; the member entitled to attend the meeting should authorise his/her representative in writing in a proxy form, see *Annexure-02*.

1.19 A proxy form should be deposited in advance at the registered office of the organisation atleast two days before the meeting the date of the meeting.

1.20 A proxy is not permissible for Board meetings and should be used in General Meetings only. Proxy should preferably be avoided in a voluntary organisation.

**Chairperson of the Meeting & Its Role**

1.21 All meetings are normally facilitated and directed by a Chairperson. The bye-laws of the organisation normally provides for the person who would be the Chairperson and preside over the meetings. In the absence of any such provision in the bye-laws, one of the members present should be elected as the Chairperson for that particular meeting. A Chairperson is the leader of the Board provides in effective decision making.

1.22 The Chairperson should ensure that the noticed and agenda for the meeting where properly served prior to the meeting.

1.23 The Chairperson should ensure that the time is managed to complete all the agenda items, he/she should also ensure that all the present members get a fair opportunity to participate and expressed their views.
1.24 The Chairperson shall have a Casting Vote in all meetings. It is desirable that the bye laws should also provide for such a casting vote. The Chairperson can pass or reject a resolution in case of a tie in the number of votes. In other words, whenever there is a tie over a resolution the Chairperson can vote once again and resolve the issue.

1.25 The Societies Registration Act is silent about the casting vote of the Chairman but clause 54 of table A to schedule 1 of the Companies Act, 1956 clearly provides that in case of equality of vote, the Chairperson shall be entitled to second or casting vote. This convention is normally followed by all types of organisation.

1.26 The Secretary of the organisation is generally responsible for the convening of the meeting. He is required to send the notices, agenda, and making relevant document prior to the meeting.

1.27 The secretary is responsible for the planning of various factors, timelines and procedures related to the meetings and resolutions. Some examples are as under:

- Identifying and appropriate venue and time.
- In case of election sharing the nomination procedures prior to the meeting.
- In case of General Meeting there might be matters which needs to be first approved at a Board meeting; approval of accounts, appointments of auditors etc.
- Setting a time table for the agenda items.
- Availability of the necessary bye laws, documents and records at the time of the meeting.
- The necessary logistic arrangements for special resolution and voting wherever necessary.
- Preparing proper records of the meeting which later could be minuted.
- Preparing a proper attendance registered to be signed by all the members present, such formal attendance is the most important evidence of a meeting.
- Verifying and Recording proxies, quorum, absence, special invites etc.
- Keeping track of the various decisions taken by the Board and the implementation thereof.

**Meetings through Electronic Medium**

1.28 The various statute governing the charity law are silent about the various modern forms of meeting through electronic mode such as video conferencing etc. However, under section 2, 4, 5 and 81 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 various electronic medium/platform used for meeting, communication, voting etc. shall be valid. The Section 81 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 provides that the provisions shall have an overriding effect on all existing provisions. In other words it shall be legally permissible to conduct meeting through electronic mode.

1.29 The Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India has also issued various circulars* regarding the validity of General meeting and Board meetings through electronic mode.

1.30 Under Section 13 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 it shall be permissible to send notices and agenda through electronic medium such as email. However, the time period of notice should be as per the bye laws or the applicable statute of the organisation. *(The detailed procedure of Board and General meeting through Electronic Medium shall be elaborately discussed in an independent issue of CA Learning Series.)*

**Minutes**

1.31 Minutes is the formal record of the proceedings of the meeting. It is important to record the summary of the proceedings of the meeting in a written form. A minutes book can be of loose sheets chronologically bound together or a bound register. The pages of the minutes should be consecutively numbered.

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* Circular No. 21/2011, dated 02.05.2011 issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
  Circular No. 27/2011, dated 20.05.2011 issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
  Circular No. 28/2011, dated 20.05.2011 issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
1.32 Minutes of the previous meeting should be read and confirmed at the beginning of the meeting. The confirmed minutes should be signed by the chairperson and subsequently it cannot be altered or corrected. A minutes remains informal and unconfirmed until they are approved in the subsequent meeting. A confirmed minutes have to be signed by the chair person in order to become a legally valid document enforceable in the court of law.

1.33 The minutes should be written by a person who is not directly involved in the decision making process.

1.34 Minutes are not considered to be open documents available for inspection for the public at large, unless the bye-laws provides for any such requirement. The minutes should be available to all the Trustees and formal persons such as statutory auditors or the evaluator or auditor appointed by a donor or government who substantially contribute to the organisation. The general members are entitled to inspect the minutes of all the General Meetings. Generally outsiders do not have legal rights to access Board and General minutes, however, an organisation may consider providing access to such outsiders as it may deem fit in the interest of transparency.

1.35 The minutes book can be broadly divided into two types of recording of discussions, endorsements and approvals:
- Minutes of discussions.
- Minutes of resolutions.

1.36 **Minutes of discussions**: A minute book should also includes the various discussions and happening along the agenda items, apart from the resolutions. The recording of such discussions should be on the following principles and procedure:
- A brief overview of the circumstances or relevant facts around the item of discussion.
- Summary of the views and counter views on the matter of discussion.
- Summary of the reasons leading to a decision or rejection of a motion.
- Summary of the procedure followed for the approval, endorsement or rejection of a motion; voting, unanimous etc.

1.37 **Minutes of resolutions**: The main part of the minutes is to record the formal resolution. A resolution is a motion which has been approved or endorsed by the required majority. A resolution should be recorded in “*inverted commas*” preferably in Italic.
1.38 All the members are required to sign in an attendance register during the meeting, but if the number is small then the members can sign in the minutes itself. A model format of minutes with resolutions is given as per Annexure-03.

**Motion**

1.39 A motion is a proposed resolution or a recommendation which is formally placed by any member for the consideration of the members present. Normally a motion would become a resolution if it is approved through voting or unanimously.

1.40 The members present may formally approve, endorse or just take note of the various motions moved during the meeting. A motion is formally approved only when the committee or the Board have the final authority for such approval. For example the Board may approve a motion regarding purchase of an asset but it can only endorse a motion regarding appointment of auditor which can be finally approved by the General Body only.

**Resolutions**

1.41 A resolution is a formal expression of the decision taken by the members in a meeting. It is required to specifically mention the decision or opinion in the shape of a resolution along with the number of members voting in favour and against that particular resolution.

1.42 There are two kinds of resolutions i) General Resolution where a simple majority is required to pass, ii) Special Resolution, where a higher percentage of support is expected to pass the resolution. Normally the support of 3/4th of the members present is sufficient for a special resolution. However one should verify its bye-laws for the numbers required to pass a special resolution. A resolution should be written in a short, unambiguous and affirmative language. If there is any document or policy which is relied upon then the mention of such policy should be made inside the resolution itself. Few examples are as under:

- **RESOLVED** "to change the registered office of the society from ................................................. to ................................................................."
under the power conferred upon the Board under clause xx of Articles of Association, subject to the approval of the Registrar of Society under section xx of the Societies Act”.

Further Resolved “that the Mr./Ms. .................................................................
be authorised to do the necessary documentation and representation in this regard”.

- RESOLVED “to purchase 2 acres of land for a consideration of ₹ ......................... in ‘X’ district for the organic nursery for the ‘Y’ project under the power conferred upon the Board under clause xx of Articles of Association”. Further resolved “that the recommendation of the purchase committee regarding the price and procurement parameter be approved. [Encl. purchase committee]

Further Resolved “that the Mr./Ms. .................................................................
be authorised to do the necessary documentation and representation in this regard”.

Resolution by Circulation

1.43 The Board or the Trustees may pass resolutions by circulation when it is not possible to call a physical board meeting. The relevant issues in this regard as discussed hereunder.

1.44 The organisation can circulate the copy of a resolution to all the members of the Board/Trustees for approval by circulation. The Board members should give their consent by way of physically signing on the resolution and send it back to the organisation. The resolutions which are passed by circulation are required to be noted and ratified by the Board in its next meeting.

1.45 No ‘resolution by circulation’ can be passed if the number of Trustees/Directors available at less than the number which is necessary to form the quorum.

1.46 The passing a resolution by circulation does not involve any meeting, therefore serving of notice or agenda is not necessary. However, it is important to send all the relevant papers and informations explaining the purpose and need of passing the resolution by circulation.

1.47 The various statutes, under which the voluntary organisation are register, are silent about the types of resolution which could be
passed by circulation. However, under Section 292 of the Companies Act, it is provided that various key decision cannot be taken by a circulatory resolution. In context of NPOs some issues which should not be decided through circulation are suggested as under:

- Issue related with recommendation regarding admission or removal of members or board members.
- To invest, borrow or to give loan.
- Giving grant to other voluntary organisation.
- Related party transaction where any director is interested.
- Shifting of the registered office.
- Appointment for removal of senior staff.
- Appointment of Internal auditor/project auditors.
- Approval of half yearly or annual accounts.
- Approval of annual budget.
- Sale on purchase of high value assets.
- Legal matters of material nature.

**Special Invitees to the Meeting**

1.48 The Board or the Trustees may invite special invitees to some of the meetings. The following issues are pertinent in this regard:

- A Board member should not send representative as special invitee.

- A special invitee may be a technical or a professional person who is invited for specific agenda items. In such cases the special invitee should normally participate for that particular agenda item only.

- The statutory auditor, advisors, donor representative etc. may be invited as special invitees. Such special invitees should participate in the discussions but should not vote against or in favour of a motion.

- As a principle special invitees should not possess any voting right and the organisation should formulate a policy regarding the role and participation of special invitees in a meeting.
Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Governing body members of “................................................................................................” will be held on ................................., 20 .............., at ................. a.m./p.m. in the registered office at ........................................................... to transact the following items/issues:

1. To read and confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Governing body members held on ........................................, 20 ...............
2. To discuss the matter arising from the previous minutes of the last meeting of the Governing body members held on ........................................, 20 ...............
3. To discuss the matter arising from the previous minutes (if any) of the last meeting of the Governing body members held on ........................................, 20 ...............
4. To consider the appointment of Mr./Mrs./Ms. ....................................................... as a member of the organisation;
5. To consider opening a new bank account with .......................................................
   bank at .........................................................;
6. To consider investment of surplus organisation funds;
7. To review the various project activities;
8. To consider the project proposal to be sent to the funding agency;
9. To discuss and review the remuneration and consultancy contracts with the functionaries and board of directors.
10. Listing out the action points.
11. Date of next meeting and deadlines of documentation.
12. Any other matter with the permission of the chair;
13. Closure or adjournment of meeting.

Secretary
Annexure 2

A Model of Proxy Form

I, the undersigned, being a member of the ............................................................... hereby, appoint Mr/Ms ................................................................. or ................................................................. as my proxy to vote for me and on my behalf at the annual general meeting of the organisation to be held on ..........................................., 19 ............, and at any adjournment thereof. He/she would be entitled:

1. To receive and adopt the governing body's report and audited accounts.

2. To elect each retiring managing committee member as named in the notice.

3. To re-appoint the ................................................................. auditors.

................................................................. .................................................................
Signature Date

Name ..................................................................................................................................................

Address ..................................................................................................................................................
(In block letters)
A meeting of the board of members of “................................................................. Organisation” was held on ................................., 20 ............. at ........... a.m./p.m. in the Registered Office at .................................................................................................................................

**Members present :**

i) .......................................................
ii) .......................................................
iii) .......................................................
iv) .......................................................
v) .......................................................

**Present by invitation :**

i) .......................................................
ii) .......................................................
iii) .......................................................

1) Mr./Mrs/Ms. .............................................................. was voted to the chair.

2) **Leave of absence :**

Letters from Mr./Mrs./Ms. ................................................................. and Mr./Mrs./Ms. ................................................................. regretting their inability to attend the meeting was placed on the table and leave of absence was granted.

3) **Record of late arrival/early departure :**

4) **Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting :**

The minutes of the meeting held on ................................................., 20 ................. were read and confirmed.

5) **Matters arising out of the minutes of the previous meeting :**

6) **Items deferred or adjourned in the previous meeting :**
7) **Opening A New Bank Account**

The governing body member, Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. proposed that for administrative convenience, a new savings account be opened with ................................................. bank at ......................................... The proposal was seconded by Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. and passed unanimously.

Accordingly, the following resolution was passed:

“RESOLVED that a new savings account be opened in the name of “ .......................................................... Member” with ............................................ bank, ......................................... branch.

FURTHER RESOLVED that Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................., Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. and Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. be the authorised signatories and the account may be operated by any two of the authorised signatories jointly”.

8) **Investment of funds**

Mr./Mrs./Ms. proposed that the surplus of Rs. ............................................... lying in the saving account with ................................................................. bank be invested in ......................................... Bonds which offer a return of 10% p.a. and is an approved investment as per Section 11(5) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The proposal was seconded by Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. and the following resolution was passed unanimously:

“RESOLVED that sum of Rs. ................ be invested in the name of “ ................ Organisation” in ......................................... Bonds for a period of three year @ 10% p.a.

FURTHER RESOLVED that Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................., Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. and Mr./Mrs./Ms. ............................................................. be the authorised signatories”.

Also RESOLVED that in the event of either the death, resignation or non availability of any one or all the aforesaid applicants, the aforesaid bonds, may be redeemed at any time, by any two or more board members of the organisation and all the proceeds, together with the accrued interest, be credited to the account of the organisation.

9) **Review of Operation**

A detailed report of the activities of the organisation during the month of ................. 20 ........ as submitted by the General Secretary was tabled, discussed and noted.
The Governing Body Members expressed their satisfaction over the activities of the organisation and also noted the increase in the number of beneficiaries and the local mobilisation of resources in kind at various communities.

10) **Consideration of Final Accounts**:

The final accounts for the year ending ................. 20......... were tabled before the governing body alongwith the notes thereon, were considered and approved.

11) **Listing out the action points**:

12) **Date of next meeting and deadlines of documentation**:

The date of the next governing body meeting was considered decided that the same would be held on ................. 20 .......

13) **Closure or adjournment of meeting**:

The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair

Chairman
About Credibility Alliance

Credibility Alliance (CA) is a consortium of Voluntary Organizations committed towards enhancing Accountability and Transparency in the Voluntary Sector through good Governance. Registered in May 2004 as an independent, not-for-profit Organization, CA emerged as an initiative from within the Sector after an extensive consultative process over a period of two years involving thousands of VOs all over India. As an Organization, CA aspires to build trust among all stakeholders through improving Governance within the Voluntary Sector. As an initiative whose hallmark has been the participatory approach, CA has developed suitable Norms through wide-ranging consultation with and participation of diverse Organizations within the Sector by developing a large membership base.

With the mission ‘to build credibility of the Voluntary Sector through creation and promotion of Norms of Good Governance and Public Disclosure’, CA’s core programme areas comprise of: Accreditation, Capacity Building, Networking and Information Dissemination.

I. Accreditation: Accreditation of Voluntary Organizations refers to the certification of upholding of the quality of an organization, which adheres to the minimum norms or desirable norms set by Credibility Alliance. The main purpose of the Accreditation exercise is to develop a cost effective mechanism of periodic evaluation of VOs in the country.

‘Minimum Norms’ are the Norms that all VOs should follow. It is mandatory for all the Accredited Members of CA to comply with the Minimum Norms or give an undertaking that they will do so within an year, whereas ‘Desirable Norms’ are the next level of Norms for good Governance and public disclosure. These are the practices that are at present not mandatory and some Organizations may require time to adopt such practices.

II. Capacity Building: Credibility Alliance focuses on the Capacity Building process to maximize its potential and sustain its work by adopting the existing best practices. CA plans the Capacity Building initiatives for the Voluntary Organizations by identifying and outlining the gaps in the Sector, assessing the needs and finally instituting the programs to address those needs.

III. Networking: Credibility Alliance facilitates interaction between experts in different areas and promotes the sharing of ideas and information between the Voluntary Organizations and the experts. CA helps VOs to seek issue-based information in the Sector that they are working in, which helps in building the professional capacities of VOs through training, thereby enabling them to increase institutional capacities.

IV. Information Dissemination: Credibility Alliance sensitizes, spreads awareness, assists, educates and apprises on the recent developments, responsibilities and other critical issues pertaining to Voluntary Sector by disseminating vital information periodically to all VOs.