

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Task Force on Accreditation Held on Friday, the 7th
May 2010 in the Conference Room of CAPART**

1. The Director General welcomed all the participants and thanked them for making it convenient to attend the meeting and for sending their comments. All the comments received on the first draft of the report were circulated among the participants.
2. Shri B. N. Makhija pointed out that initially there were to be two task forces – one set up by CAPART and the other one by the Planning Commission. The one set up by CAPART was expected to limit itself to suggesting ways and means of providing accreditation to the voluntary organisations that approach CAPART for assistance – meaning thereby that the organisations that were involved in rural development activities.

However, subsequently, the Planning Commission also notified a Task Force for a similar purpose, though the mandate of the one set up by the Planning Commission was much wider.

3. The Director General concurred with Shri Makhija and stated that since the two Task Forces had several common members and were essentially involved in similar task, the Council decided to co-opt Members of the first task force in the one set up by the Planning Commission. In addition, some other experts and interested institutions were also co-opted in the Task Force.
4. Shri Makhija felt that the proposed National Accreditation Council has to be established in a manner that it would take the matter further by outsourcing the job, on the lines of ISO rather than have a huge infrastructure and bureaucracy for taking up the assignment. He suggested that Accreditation could not be purely a mechanical exercise and has to take into account the spirit of voluntarism.
5. Shri Gagan Sethi suggested that NAC should not become part of CAPART on a permanent basis. However, to kick start the process, CAPART could act as a facilitator and provide infrastructure for a period of say, first three years.

6. Regarding selection of the Chairman of the proposed NAC, Shri Sethi suggested that the Selection Committee should have five members including the Vice Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Chairman of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission, and the Minorities Commission.
7. Ms Ruth Manorama suggested a maximum of two three-year terms for the Chairman, NAC. She also felt that the 50% of the Council should comprise women, besides various other interest groups.
8. Shri Sethi also felt that no politician should be made the Chairman of the NAC. Regarding the constitution of the Council, he felt that it could be a 20 member Council with certain ex-officio members. Ex-officio members would comprise representatives of various grant making bodies/ministries of the government. However, in order to ensure that NAC is not a tool in the hands of the government, the ex-officio members should not have voting rights.
9. Shri Sethi suggested that the General Body of the Council should be constituted in such a manner that for every five crore of population there is one member of the Council. The Executive Committee of the NAC should have 11 members.
10. Shri Makhija stated that the norms for accreditation do not come out expressly in the draft report. The process of accreditation has to begin with norms.
11. Keeping in view the large number of NGOs that are there in the country, the primary accreditation had to be web-based, on the lines of NGO portal already in place. The information considered essential for accreditation could be added to the information already available on the portal. For smaller NGOs (with limited budget/turnover) this should be regarded as adequate.
12. In case of large NGOs the accreditation should be based on more intensive scrutiny and face to face interaction as well as visits to the area of operation.

13. It was also suggested by him that in case of certain kinds of NGOs, for example, those who have FCRA registration, Green Channel methods should be followed.
14. He suggested that the entire job of accreditation should be done by qualified accreditators, and the Council's job should be only to certify the accreditators.
15. Shri Gagan Sethi suggested that the NAC should set certain minimum norms and the voluntary organisations should be fully compliant to these norms and should also agree to comply with the provisions of the Right to Information Act.
16. Ms Ruth Manorama felt that voluntary organisations are asked to submit too documents at too many places. Accreditation should not mean more documents in different formats that are to be filled up annually. The accreditation process, on the other hand has to be an enabling process.
17. It was explained that as per the process envisaged, no documents would be required in form of hard copies. The NGO concerned would be only required to upload documents/information on the website of the NAC. They would also be free to change it at their will.
18. Shri Sethi suggested that in addition to its primary job of accreditation, the NAC should have research orientation and should disseminate information about best practices. He also saw an important role for NAC in the matters of advocacy.
19. Shri Sethi felt that in place of proposed seven committees, the NAC should have just three committees – namely, the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee and the Ethics Committee.
20. Shri Makhija and Shri Sethi felt that the proposed 3x9 matrices need a relook and promised to send notes on the subject.
21. Shri Sumedh Gurjar suggested that NAC should primarily create a set of norms for certifiers.

22. The status of Chairman in the hierarchy also came up for discussion. It was felt that the Chairman, NAC should have status of a Union Minister of State.
23. Shri Gagan Sethi suggested that while CAPART and the Planning Commission should incubate the process, ultimately the organisation should become autonomous and independent.
24. Shri B.N. Makhija Suggested that since the role of NAC is going to be to certify the accreditators, there would be no need for regional councils. Shri Gurjar however felt that regional outfits would be essential.
25. There was general consensus that accreditation should not be mandatory but rather optional.