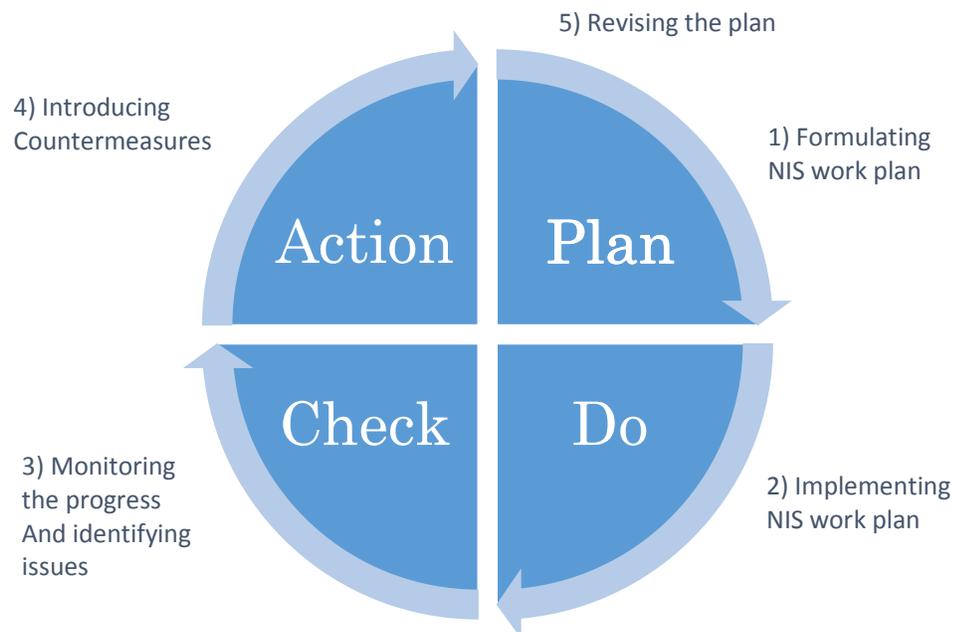


STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) OF ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. Background

The Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh has been steering the activities of promoting the practices of integrity and good governance in government organizations including ministries/divisions and selected institutions. This has been spelled out in the National Integrity Strategy (NIS) which provides the mission of 'establishing good and effective governance in state institutions and society'. Ethics Committees have been constituted in every ministry/division and selected institutions in accordance with the implementation plans of the NIS. Ethics Committees are assigned with the responsibilities of implementing the recommendations and action-plans of the NIS and thereby promote integrity and good governance in their respective ministry/division and institutions. This SOP is intended to provide a framework and clear guideline for the Ethics Committees for rendering the responsibilities as set out in their terms of reference.

One of the most useful mechanisms to that end is establishing an implementation cycle of the National Integrity Strategy (NIS). The cycle consists of the steps such as: (1) adequate planning, (2) proper implementation of the plan, (3) regular monitoring of the progress, (4) effective countermeasures to the issues identified by monitoring, and (5) revision of the plan. This implementation cycle is called "Plan-Do-Check-Action cycle" for NIS. This cycle needs to be spiralled continuously towards the achievement of integrity.



2. Purpose of the SOP

This SOP explains necessary activities to be undertaken by the Ethics Committee at each stage of Plan-Do-Check-Action cycle” for NIS. It is developed to set down uniform procedures by documenting the specific operational processes for repetitive or recurring activities of the Ethics Committee toward promoting integrity and good governance.

3. Scope of the SOP

3.1 Target Users

The SOP is designed mainly as a guidebook for the Ethics Committee members and the integrity focal points in rendering their responsibilities of implementing the NIS action plans. It may also be useful for the members of National Integrity Implementation Unit (NIIU) and relevant officials of the Cabinet Division as a ready reference for performing their respective duties in this regard.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. Ethics Committee

The terms of reference of the Ethics Committee have been defined by a letter of the Cabinet Division dated 4 April 2013 as follows:

- Identification of successes and problems encountered in establishing integrity in the concerned sector;
- Formulation of a time-bound work-plan to resolve the identified problems;
- Assign responsibilities to personnel for implementation of the work-plan;
- Implementation and monitoring of the work-plan undertaken for establishment of integrity in the concerned sector; and
- Sending progress report on establishing integrity in the concerned Ministry/Division/ Institution to the National Integrity implementation Unit (NIIU) of the Cabinet Division.

4.2. Integrity Focal Point

The member secretary of the Ethics Committee is appointed as the Integrity Focal Point of the institution. The Integrity Focal Point is expected to have the responsibility to coordinate NIS-related activities within his/her institution and to liaise with the NIIU.

4.3. National Integrity Implementation Unit (NIIU), Cabinet Division

Terms of Reference of the NIIU, approved by the Executive Committee to National Integrity Advisory Council (NIAC) on 3 September 2013, are as follows:

- Inter-ministerial coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the NIS;
- Capacity development activities for implementation of the NIS;
- Implementation of the Grievance Redress System (GRS) and monitoring of public service delivery;
- To conduct research on the progress of NIS implementation at different ministries and divisions, quality of public service delivery and administrative reforms, and to assist researchers in these areas;
- To submit proposals, recommendations and advice on the NIS at the meetings of the NIAC and the Executive Committee; and
- Performing the responsibilities as assigned by the NIAC and the Executive Committee.

5. Operational Procedures

5.1. Preparatory activities before the formulation of Ministry/Division/Institution specific NIS work-plan

The Ethics Committee needs to undertake necessary preparation before formulation of the NIS work-plan. Consultation of the relevant documents, stakeholder meeting/workshop and the previous experience may be helpful in undertaking such preparation.

Activity 1: Identify actions listed in the NIS document that are related to its own organization

The Ethics Committee will consult the NIS and the other related strategic documents to identify the Government's visions and commitments towards good governance. The Committee needs to identify the actions listed in NIS which are related to the organization. Ethics committee also needs to identify the organizational requirements based on its vision, mission, objectives and development targets. Good governance deficiencies are also needed to be identified along with the organization's strengths and weakness in rendering the responsibilities spelled out in the Allocation of Business¹ and the charter of duties. The previous initiatives for promotion of good governance and the best practices within the organization may also be revisited. The Committee will consider the assignments, recommendations and instructions provided by the NIIU during the focal point workshops or meetings or in any formats.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Consulting related documents and prepare a complete concept note/working paper for the Ethics Committee
- Identifying the NIS actions related to his/her organisation.
- Arranging Ethics Committee meeting.

Activity 2: Hold a meeting/workshop with stakeholders/officers.

The Ethics Committee will organise a meeting/workshop with the stakeholders and/or with the officers for identification of organization's status of good governance, challenges and the achievable targets for the next year.

The Committee may conduct SWOT analysis to understand the organization's strength, weakness, opportunity and threat towards NIS implementation. Understanding of the present capacity of the organization for NIS implementation is a good start for NIS planning.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Arranging meeting/workshop with stakeholders/ officers of the concerned organization.
- Conducting SWOT analysis on behalf of the Ethics Committee and report the result of the analysis to the Ethics Committee.

¹Allocation of Business is the Schedule 1 of the Rules of Business, 1996.

5.2. Formulation of ministry/division/organisation specific NIS work plan

The NIS itself provided some indicative work-plan for the selected institutions. The Ministries/Divisions need to formulate their individual work-plan following the NIS messages and indications. The selected organizations also need to formulate a comprehensive work-plan incorporating some specific governance related activities with the work-plan provided by the NIS document. This is one of the major responsibilities of the Ethics Committee spelled out in its terms of reference.

Activity 3: Draft work plan for NIS

The Ethics Committee will formulate a draft work-plan following this guideline and a template attached with it (**Annexure 1**). In preparation of the guideline, the Committee will consider the recommendations of the previous meetings/ workshops, identified actions in Activity 1 and the unfinished activities of its existing or previous work plan.

In the work-plan, measurement indicators will be set for each activity with time-frame. The indicators will be used to measure progress of the plan. Responsible organization/unit/person for each activity will also be stated in NIS work plan.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Formulation of a draft work-plan following the template developed by the NIIU
- Submission of the draft to the Ethics Committee meeting

Activity 4: Finalise NIS work-plan

The Ethics Committee will discuss the draft NIS work plan and finalise it. The Ethics Committee may invite concerned officials of the organisation to the Ethics Committee meeting to discuss the draft plan. The Ethics Committee assigns official(s) or unit(s) to execute the specific activities. The Committee may constitute one or more sub-committee(s) or team(s) to implement the identified activities. The finalised NIS work-plan will be signed by the Chairman of the Ethics Committee. The approved work-plan will be distributed among officials and will be sent to the NIIU. The Ethics Committee may revise the work-plan if necessary.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Organizing Ethics Committee meeting
- Submission of the draft action plan to Ethics Committee
- Sending the approved work-plan to the NIIU

Activity 5: Secure necessary budget

The Ethics Committee will estimate the resources required to implement the NIS work-plan and arrange allocation from the own budget of the Ministry/Division/institution. The organization may request the Finance Division for additional budget allocation in the specified time, in case of additional fund is required.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Estimation of necessary budget for NIS implementation and formulate the annual NIS budget plan for coming fiscal year
- Submission of the financial plan to the Ethics Committee

5.3. Monitor the implementation status of ministry/division specific NIS work plan

Effective monitoring may help proper implementation of the NIS work-plan and the NIS itself. Monitoring may be conducted at different levels by different authorities such as: the focal point, Ethics Committee, NIIU and the National Integrity Advisory Council (NIAC) and its Executive Committee (ECNIAC) etc. A separate monitoring framework will be developed for effective monitoring of NIS implementation.

Activity 6: Monitoring of the NIS work-plan implementation

Ethics committee will monitor the implementation of NIS work-plan on regular basis. A monitoring framework and/or a monitoring chart will be used for this purpose. The implementation monitoring may be an agenda of the monthly coordination meeting of the Ministry/Division/institution. The Ethics Committee organises Ethics Committee meeting in every three months for monitoring progress of implementation of the NIS work plan.

To make the monitoring activity effective and efficient, the NIIU will develop and provide a monitoring sheet/format. The Ethics Committee will fill out the sheet/format and submit it to the NIIU.

NIIU will organize focal point workshop in every three months and will monitor progress of implementation of the NIS in each organizations in the workshop. NIIU may conduct research for assessing the progress of implementation of the work-plans. The monitoring results will be placed before the NIAC and ECNIAC meeting as arranged from time to time.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Monitoring of the implementation of the work-plan following a monitoring framework
- Making work-plan implementation monitoring an agenda of the monthly coordination meeting
- Organizing Ethics Committee meeting in every three months
- Collecting information on progress of implementation of the work-plan and place before the committee meeting
- Participating in focal point workshop organised by the NIIU and sharing the progress with others.
- Disseminating the monitoring results in the organisation and uploading the results to the website

Activity 7: Take actions based on the monitoring results

Ethics Committee elaborates necessary activities for next three months and requests the related units to implement the activities based on the monitoring results. For poor performance, Ethics Committee analyses the causes and discusses a countermeasure with the units in charge.

Please note that Ethics Committee may need to revise NIS work plan based on the monitoring result.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Conduct problem analysis on poor performance and report the results to Ethics Committee
- Disseminate the instruction of Ethics Committee to the relevant units towards better implementation of NIS
- Revise the NIS work plan by following the decision(s) of Ethics Committee

5.4. Public Relations of NIS

The concept and contents of NIS needs to be widely shared and clearly understood among the government officials. Ethics Committee members, especially the Integrity Focal Point plays a major role for public relations of NIS within his/her organisation with assistance from the NIIU. It is noted that the public relation strategy of NIS is formulated by the NIIU.

Activity 8: Disseminate the NIS concept and contents

The Ethics Committee makes the officials of its organisation fully aware of the concept and contents of NIS by conducting public relations (PR) activities. The reference is the public relation strategy formulated by the NIIU.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Organising an event such as an awareness/dissemination seminar at the organisation
- Conducting PR activities by using PR materials developed by the NIIU
- **Disseminating** the activities of Ethics Committee throughout the organisation, i.e., uploading the activities on the organisation's website.

Activity 9: Disseminate best practices

The Ethics Committee disseminates information regarding best practices of its organisation that obtained from NIS monitoring. Good practices of other organisations may also be used as good reference for motivation and good guidance. NIIU will compile and disseminate good practices among different public offices.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Organising an event to disseminate best practices gathered through NIS monitoring
- Collecting best practices of other organisations and disseminate them in the organisation, i.e., uploading the activities on the organisation's website.

5.5. Grievance Redress System (GRS)

Redressing citizens' grievance is an integral part of management of any organization. It is considered as an important indicator of a responsive public administration which is a component of good governance. The Cabinet Division is preparing a guideline for establishing an effective GRS system in the public sector.

Activity 10: Oversee the Grievance Redress

The Ethics Committee will monitor the timely disposal of public grievances within the organization. The Committee will also ensure that the grievance reports are regularly sent to the Cabinet Division by the grievance focal points.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Inserting GRS in the NIS work-plan
- Incorporating GRS issues in the Ethics Committee meeting
- Facilitating compliance of the GRS guideline of the Cabinet Division

5.6. Right to Information

Right to information (RTI) is an effective tool for promoting transparency within the public offices. Proactive disclosure of public information in accordance with the RTI Act 2009 and the related regulation for disclosure of information may be an integral part of the NIS work-plan.

Activity 11: Implementation of RTI Act and proactive disclosure

Ethics Committee will monitor effective implementation of the RTI Act and proactive disclosure provisions on regular basis. Update of official website and disposal of RTI requests also need to be monitored by the Ethics Committee.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Facilitating proper implementation of the RTI Act and proactive disclosure within the organization
- Inserting RTI and proactive disclosure in the NIS action-plan
- Monitoring regular update of official website

5.7. E-governance and Innovation in official activities and service delivery

Digitization and E-governance is a priority area of the Government for improvement. Cabinet Division has issued circular for constituting innovation team in every public offices from central to Upazila levels. Ample scopes are there for promoting e-governance in the public offices for improvement of quality of services. Promotion of e-governance may be facilitated by effective function of the innovation teams. A guideline has been prepared with the purpose of promoting innovation and preparation of innovation plan by the innovation teams.

Activity 12: Promoting E-governance and Innovation

Ethics committee will undertake necessary measures for promotion of e-governance within the organizations. Providing ICT equipments and effective use of ICT in governance will be strengthened for improving quality of service delivery. The Ethics Committee will monitor the activities of the innovation teams within the organization and the subordinate offices. Regular meeting of the innovation team, preparation of innovation action plan, implementation of innovation decisions may also need to be monitored by the Ethics Committee.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Identify the e-governance areas for improvement
- Facilitate procurement of ICT equipments
- Monitor use of ICT and e-governance
- Inserting preparation of innovation action plan within the NIS work-plan
- Including implementation of innovation action-plan and decisions of the innovation team in the Ethics Committee meetings

5.8. Capacity Development

Activity 13: Capacity Development

Ethics Committee will undertake capacity development initiatives for the staffs and officers. In most cases, the Ministry/Division receives budget for training and capacity development programme. Ethics Committee will help in implementing the training

programmes by utilizing the regular budget. Ethics Committee may also arrange additional budget and additional training programmes in the areas where staffs need skills development in rendering their responsibilities.

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Identifying areas for skill development for officers and staffs;
- Arrange or help admin wing arrange training programmes;
- Secure additional budget for additional training programmes.

5.9. Research and Internal Audit

Activity 14: Research on Governance and Performance

Research may help understand the actual situation and scopes for improvement. Many of the Ministries/Divisions receive budget for audit, but most of them can't implement this fund. Ethics Committee may use the audit fund for conducting performance audit or research on different governance issues. Additional fund may also be secured for conducting research

<Role of Integrity Focal Point>

- Prepare plan/proposal for conducting audit or research;
- Conduct audit or research by hiring consultant for constituting research team with the experienced officials;
- Secure additional fund, if fund is not adequate or allocated at all.

NIS Work Plan (Specimen)

<u>Ministry A</u>		Approved by date:			
Activities	Time frame	Indicator			Unit/Person in charge
		Baseline No. (as of Jan 2015)	Target No.	Unit	
1. Institutional Arrangement					
(1) Hold Ethics Committee Meeting	Continuously	0	4	time/year	
(2) Formation of Ethics Committee in the subordinate offices, including field administration	June, 2015	10	80	% of all subordinate offices	
(3) Arrange the stakeholder meeting	Continuously	0	4	time/year	
2. Awareness raising					
(1) Hold awareness meeting	October, 2015	0	5	Number of meeting	
		0	100	Number of participants	
3. Capacity Development					
(1) Provision of training for NIS in the fields of XXX	October, 2015	0	100	Number of participants	
(2) Provision of training for NIS in the fields of YYY	March, 2016	0	100	Number of participants	
(3) Provision of training for NIS in the fields of ZZZ	October, 2017	0	100	Number of participants	
4. E-governance					
1) Internet facility	June, 2016	All 1st class officials	All 1st and 2nd officials	Coverage of PC with internet connectivity	
2) Online response system					
3) E-payment					
4) Online complaint					
5) E-procurement					
7) Service portal					
2) GRS					
Long pending complaint	April, 2016	50	10	% of all	
3) Formation of Innovation Team					
	June, 2016	20	60	% of all	
2) Department level	June, 2016	0	0	% of all	
3) Filed administration level	June, 2016	0	0	% of all	
(4) Internal audit	June, 2016	0	1	time/year	

(5) Right to Information					
(6)					
(7)	Ministry-specific activities addressing the identified challenges and problems and NIS recommendations				
(8)					
(9)					
(10)					
(11)					
(12)					
(13)					
(14)					
5. Budget allocation					
Budget amount secured for the NIS implementation	July, 2015	100	120	Taka	
6. Monitoring					
Formulate a monitoring report		0	4	time/year	
Submit the report to NIIU		0	4	time/year	

Signed by the Chairman of the
Ethics Committee