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# **Organisational Development in the Environmental Sector in Moldova**

## Imprint

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## Preface

Civil organisations are under increasing pressure worldwide due to the political framework conditions. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in the 1990s, many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were founded to prove that power can be shared through pluralism. However, we are now witnessing the first major civil society crisis and many NGOs are asking themselves what they can do to remain economically and thematically viable while evolving under changing conditions.

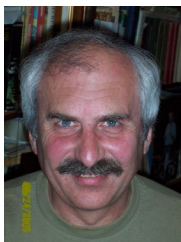
The situations of NGOs in developed and developing countries are different. High-income countries typically had a long period and tradition of democratic development, in which citizens have developed a sense of responsibility and the ability to participate in decision-making. In these countries, civil support for NGOs in which they voluntarily unite to achieve socially beneficial goals, including financial support, is thus quite large. Furthermore, these states usually allocate funds to support the public activities of NGOs.

In low-income countries, NGOs often have no domestic funds for their development, because authorities usually consider NGOs as an alternative to themselves and, due to a lack of funds, do not support their activities. In these countries, the development of NGOs depends on the dominant political trend. Under autocratic regimes, NGOs become opponents of the authorities while they are their allies, when democratic tendencies dominate. However, it is not that simple. On the one hand, even democratically oriented authorities are characterized by overestimating their abilities and a nervous attitude to criticism of their policies by NGOs. On the other hand, NGOs are often insufficiently prepared to work with changing conditions. At the same time, authorities of developed democratic countries believe in the potential of NGOs in developing countries and therefore tend to provide them with comprehensive support. This is especially true for countries associated with the European Union.

Organisational development has been practised on a regular basis by NGOs that have operated for years. It is clear that you cannot develop while disregarding the laws of your internal structure. In the long run, you need to keep an eye on your internal processes. Admittedly, this is difficult for many NGOs. Saving our planet is the external goal. Dealing with your own organisation is like dealing with your own deficits. This often requires more courage than working externally. There are no patent solutions for building internal structures in NGOs. You just have to face them.

Based on many years of experience of Moldovan and German environmental NGOs, this guide compiles some principles of organisational development and serves as a stimulus and toolbox for improving your own organisation. It has been created by representatives of both countries and reflects the experiences of both sides.

Dr. Ilya Trombisky



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Importance of NGOs

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become much more important in the last 30 years. Progressive globalisation has turned them into political actors in their own right, whose roles range from controlling state tasks and institutions to actively shaping policy in society. Established institutions such as companies, the state and the church have experienced crises of confidence at the end of the last century. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer - the largest annual survey on trust in and credibility of governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), business and the media - non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have for many years had a high trust rating - usually significantly higher than that of governments.

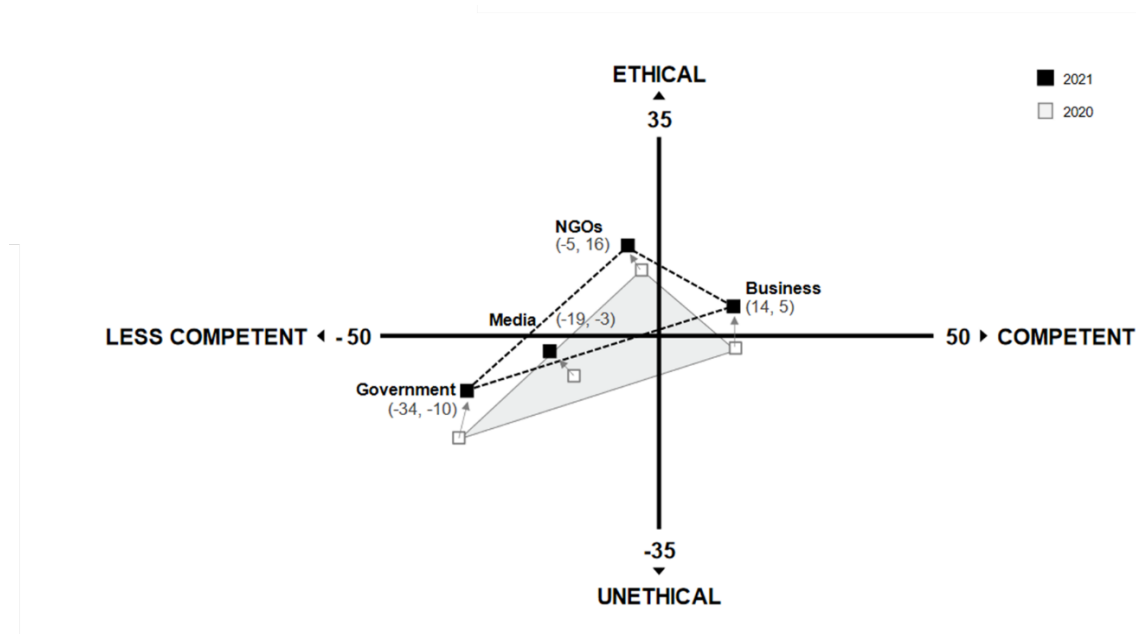


Figure 1: Edelman Trust Barometer 2021

Source: [www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2021-01/2021-edelman-trust-barometer.pdf](http://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2021-01/2021-edelman-trust-barometer.pdf)

NGOs are to be interpreted as the result of a transformation process of social protests and changes. However, they represent only one of several possibilities for the transformation of societies.

In the environmental field, NGOs have played a major role since the emergence of the issue in the 1970s in Western Europe and also since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 in Eastern Europe. As a rule, NGOs have transported their knowledge of environmental, nature and climate protection to the political level and drawn attention to shortcomings in the fight against the climate crisis. This is reflected not only by numerous well-known organisations such as Greenpeace, BUND (Friends of the Earth) or the World Wide Fund (WWF), which

are now active in many countries, but also by many agile medium-sized and small organisations. In Germany alone, according to studies by the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB), there were already about 9200 environmental protection organisations in 1998, when a nationwide survey came up with about 8400 environmental groups in West Germany and 800 environmental groups in East Germany (Roth and Rucht 2008). This number is likely to have increased significantly since then. The Survey of Civil Society in Germany reported about 600,000 associations in Germany in 2017, of which about 3.1% were active in environmental protection and nature conservation. This means that there are about 18,600 environmental associations in Germany (ZiviZ-Survey 2017). In addition, with an upward trend, around 3,000 environmental foundations are involved (Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen 2022) and for years the number of citizens' initiatives and groups in environmental protection and nature conservation has been very high (Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz 2022).

Environmental NGOs are also active in Moldova in a variety of ways. According to surveys during this project, 24 of the 53 officially listed environmental NGOs in Moldova are currently actively working in various fields. More than 15,000 non-commercial organisations were registered in Moldova in August 2022 (Register of non-commercial organisations 2022). We have to take into consideration, that i) this figure includes also religious organisations, and ii) the great majority of them is currently not functioning. The large number of new registrations of environmental NGOs in Moldova between 2000 and 2001 was associated with the emergence of the Regional Environmental Center and its support program for environmental NGOs with the assistance of the European Union. During this time the number of NGOs raised to 450. However, since this program ended rather soon, and other stable alternative sources of funding did not appear, most of the environmental NGOs registered during these years ceased to exist. However, official statistics still take them into account. Nowadays, just around 60 environmental NGOs still operate in Moldova (excluding NGOs from Transnistria). That is due to emigration of active people from the country, the intention to raise other sources of income and the weakening of the country's democracy through corruption especially between 2009 and 2019.

The NGOs which currently operate are practically acting in all spheres related to the environment. Usually, they consist of relatively small groups of people trying to realize the projects supported by the donors. Limitations are limited sources of support, insufficient English knowledge, hard economic situations and survival needs.

The founding of non-governmental organisations of Moldova, and we are now talking only about non-profit organisations, began in the era of perestroika in the USSR and smoothly flowed into the independent Republic of Moldova. At the very beginning the social movement was very active and radical. A large number of concerned citizens united under territorial or "problematic" principles and initiative groups easily broke up while solving a problem or issue.

Over time, more and more people began to understand that it is impossible to change the ecological situation by solving small local problems. That's why, environmental NGOs were founded in Moldova to solve regional environmental problems through a systematic approach and the cooperation with cross-border organisations and companies. A similar situation was observed in all countries of the post-Soviet region.



Along with the global awareness of nature came the understanding that problems could not be solved on their own, "with shovels and picks". Moldovan NGOs began to seek funding from the authorities and international foundations, try to cooperate with businesses in terms of environmentally friendly technologies, and establish information dissemination channels with local, national and international media.

As in all "small" countries, the country's economic situation and crises are very strongly reflected in the NGO sector. At the same time, NGOs of "small" countries have more opportunities to cooperate in conducting national campaigns and actions. Moldovan NGOs are less formalized in terms of documentation and formalities, more mobile on a territorial basis, and every active NGO member is always in reach.

The prevailing understanding of the role of environmental NGOs in the first decades of their existence was to act as a watchdog towards the state or, as the German climate researcher Prof. Hartmut Graßl aptly described it, to be a "ankle biter" towards state institutions. Today, large environmental NGOs serve many different roles in modern societies. They act as moderators of societal conflicts, as advisors for necessary reform processes or as initiators of societal breakthroughs. Civil society organisations are also national and international policy pioneers, using their expertise to set issues and offer solutions, as well as performing important service functions e.g. by providing information for parties and governmental policies. A particular strength is that NGOs can mobilise the masses in different ways. Lastly, environmental organisations serve as advocates, watchdogs, innovators and service providers.

## 2. What are NGOs?

NGOs belong to the organised civil society and operate in a broad field of tension between social movements and political public spheres. This ranges from the private lives of individuals to institutions of the state at various levels and actors in the economy.

NGOs are civil society organisations in various legal forms (in Germany often organised as associations). They are characterised by the following features:

- ▶ **Non-governmental:** This does not mean financial independence, but programmatic independence from governments and state institutions. NGOs can receive funds from governments or governmental or intergovernmental institutions.
- ▶ **Non-profit:** Although income can be generated to finance the work of the NGOs, the generation of profits (profit-making) is not the aim of the organisations.
- ▶ **Pursue public welfare-oriented goals:** In general, addressing and remedying social problems (lack of human rights, environmental degradation, etc.) and providing sufficient information and discussion to the public on socially relevant issues and problems.
- ▶ **Learning organisations:** NGOs are adaptive organisations that respond to external and internal stimuli. They promote the development of internal and external networks that serve the generation and exchange of knowledge.

The characteristic of being a learning organisation as an NGO also requires accepting its development process as a constant task. This in turn requires permanent activities for the development of your own organisation as a whole.

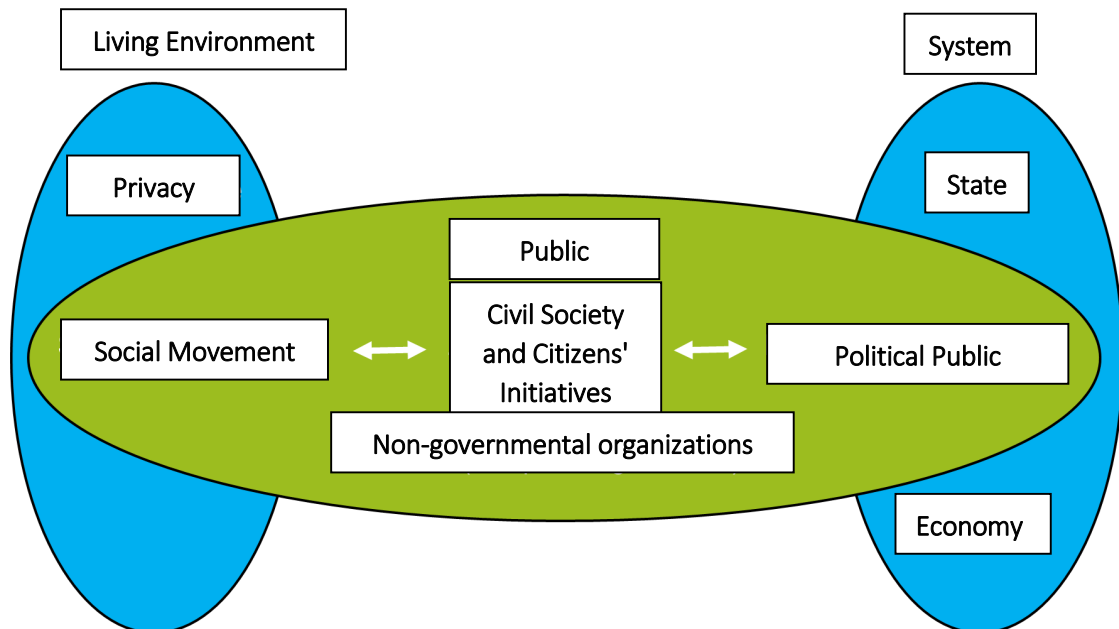


Figure 2: Visualisation of the field of tension in which NGOs operate (quoted from Hölzing 2012)

### 3. Why is the organisational development of your own NGO a necessary topic?

For organisations working as NGOs, there are a few fixed rules and legal requirements in each country. If you choose a certain legal form, you are subject to certain legal requirements and obligations. The state tax office imposes requirements if, for example, you want to become a non-profit organisation in order to benefit from tax advantages. The state district court or registry court also wants information, for example, about the leaders of an NGO and about the respective statutes. In addition, there are corresponding tax regulations, etc. However, the vast majority of internal agreements in NGOs, the way the work is organised, who runs an NGO, what salaries are paid, how the work is organised can be (almost) freely arranged in every country. This means that you are not only free to choose the content-related topics within a range specified by the statutes, but also how you want to work and with whom, what kind of projects you carry out and which ones not. Because NGOs live particularly from the ideas, creativity and motivation of their staff, there are many different cultures in NGOs, depending on which people and ideas have been influential.

How the organisation sets itself up and develops internally is subject to organisational development. Even if you do not consciously keep this in mind or you do not change anything and do not care about it, you may or may not develop as an organisation. However, many NGOs are now aware of the importance of consciously taking care of their own development, purposefully addressing questions about the ideal structure, about adequate staffing of positions, about the content-related orientation, an acquisition strategy and about good

processes and potent partners. All of this is part of being a modern NGO. The following questions might be important for each NGO from time to time:

- What are the original strengths of your own organisation?
- What distinguishes your own organisation from other organisations and where do the competences lie to a particular extent?
- What is the dimension of the issues with which the association has made its mark? (local dimension, national, international?)
- Do staff and members have the organisation's goals in mind?
- What internal rules are in place (salary grading, handling of employment contracts, return donations, distribution of free funds, overtime regulations, etc.)? Are these rules transparent for all, are they right and do they motivate the staff?
- How are employees motivated? Is this even an issue in the organisation?
- Who decides on new projects? How do ideas evolve? Randomly or "planned"?
- How openly is decision-making communicated and justified in the organisation?
- Is there transparency about development paths (e.g. of staff) and the different ways of dealing with commitment?
- Are all functions of the association equipped with competence and how is this seen by the staff and members?

These are just a few of the many questions around the topic of organisational development that arise practically every day and that should be discussed sometimes more or less intensively in NGOs.

Anyone who has experience with the development of NGOs knows that when you tackle organisational development issues, you feel as if you are just scratching the surface before suddenly a horizon opens up. Sometimes suppressed wishes, expectations and unfulfilled hopes come to light. The congestion is sometimes immense. It grows under the daily pressure to acquire content-related projects, to produce ideas, ultimately to "save the world". This is especially big when you do not deal with these questions for years and then have the impression that it suddenly becomes too much. The daily wear and tear in NGOs' can be high due to the often glaring discrepancy between the resources of your own organisation and your ambitious goals. This inevitably saps your strength. Anyone who wants to keep this up over the years needs not only robust physical and mental health, but also the ability to suffer and an inexhaustible store of altruism.

## 4. Who and what are NGOs as an organisation?

It is not so easy to grasp the reality of an NGO and thus to answer the question of who or what an organisation is. Unlike companies, for example, which produce material products such as pears, bottles or cars and then do this for years, in NGOs the projects, topics, people and requirements sometimes change very quickly and so do NGOs as a whole. Of course, there are content-related issues for which an organisation stands permanently according to its statutes. However, the goals stated in the statutes, such as environmental protection, nature conservation, climate protection or resource conservation, are large and broad social dimensions and working on these topics does not sufficiently characterise the organisation's own profile. After all, there are now many organisations in every country working solely on environmental protection (see 1.1. for the numbers of environmental NGOs in Moldova and Germany).

What an organisation as an NGO ultimately represents can best be grasped by first trying to grasp the essential characteristics and elements of such an organisation. In a next step, it should then be determined how these characteristics and elements relate to each other in the specific case of the organisation.

Models are used to grasp the reality of organisations. Certain models known from business consulting can also be used for NGOs as well in order to better fathom the question of who or what an NGO is. In the following, two of these models and variants for determining reality will be presented. Each of these models attempts to abstractly capture the essence of the organisation by generalising certain characteristics, but the focus is always slightly different. Therefore, the provisions serve as offers to find out which model fits your NGO best or whether there is another way to define the essence of your NGO as an organisation with regard to its elements.

### 4.1 The 7-S model

The 7-S model is based on the realisation that an organisation is more than just a structure. Rather, an organisation is characterised by seven elements that are essential for shaping the organisation and at the same time offer starting points for interventions, for example on the part of counselling.

The visualisation of the seven S-model is also often referred to as the "happy atom". Graphically, the goals are arranged around the "shared values/ superordinate goals". When making adjustments, it should be noted

that a change in one goal area always has an impact on the other areas. For a well-functioning organisation, a good balance between the seven elements should be aimed for.

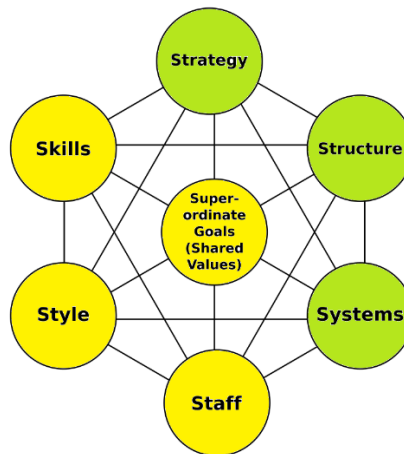


Figure 3: 7-S-model

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21898389>

The seven elements are divided into hard and soft 'S'. The hard elements (green circles) are usually tangible and concretely presented in the organisation. They are comprehensible in strategy papers, plans, organisational charts as well as in the documentation of the organisational structure and processes.

The four soft 'S's (yellow circles) are hardly tangible and also more difficult to describe. Skills, values, and cultures are constantly evolving in an organisation. They can only be planned and influenced to a limited extent, as they are strongly influenced by the people acting. Although these soft factors are rather hidden, they can have a great influence on the "hard" structures, strategies and systems.

A further area of application is found in strategy implementation: After choosing a strategic alternative, the fields of action can be derived on the basis of the 7-S model and concretised individually with corresponding measures to be implemented.

This is also the origin of another name as a diagnostic model for organisational effectiveness. Any change in one element will have an impact on all other elements. If, for example, components of the HR system change, such as internal career planning and promotion training, this will also lead to changes in the organisational culture, in the leadership style and thus in the structures, processes and ultimately in the characteristic capabilities of the organisation.

Table 1: Elements of the 7-S-model

Element	Description	Possible questions for the implementation of the elements
<b>Strategy</b>	All actions planned by the organisation in anticipation of or in response to changes in its environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we want to achieve our goals?</li> <li>• What do we do today to reach our goal tomorrow?</li> </ul>
<b>Structure</b>	The basis for specialisation, coordination and cooperation of individual organisational areas. It is essentially determined by the strategy, the size of the organisation and the variety of products/services provided. It shows who has to report to whom and how tasks are divided and delegated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we organise ourselves?</li> <li>• Are our information and decision-making processes satisfactory?</li> </ul>
<b>Systems</b>	Provide the framework for formal and informal processes that occur in the ordinary course of business/day-to-day operations, e.g. information systems, budgeting, quality control and performance measurement, to implement the strategy within the given structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who takes responsibility?</li> <li>• Which systems and processes are necessary?</li> <li>• How is the efficiency of our systems?</li> </ul>
<b>Style</b>	The culture of the organisation, consisting of two components: The culture of the organisation - the dominant values and norms that develop over time and can become very stable elements in the organisation. The management culture or style - more a question of what management does rather than what they say; what managers spend their time and energy on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is our management style?</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	The design of human resources, such as staff development processes, socialisation processes, promotion of junior staff, integration of new staff into the organisation, promotion opportunities, mentoring and feedback systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important are our employees to us?</li> <li>• How do we value our employees?</li> </ul>
<b>Skills</b>	The distinctive capabilities, what the organisation does and can do best; measures to extend and develop such essential capabilities and competences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much do we invest in our staff?</li> <li>• How good are training and staff development?</li> </ul>
<b>Shared values/ subordinate goals</b>	The basic ideas on which the organisation is based on, the vision of the organisation - of great internal and external impact for the organisation, usually formulated in simple words at an abstract level. These values must be shared by as many employees as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are we?</li> <li>• What do we want to achieve?</li> <li>• What can we do?</li> <li>• For whom are we important?</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Model of organisational capacity

The organisational capacity model offers another way of understanding the organisation. The starting point and core of this model is the determination of the respective organisation as the sum of its capacities. The various aspects of organisational capacities can thus be divided into five categories or "dimensions". Each of these dimensions has several sub-dimensions.

**Organisational resources:** Organisational resources consist of the tangible materials and physical assets that support programmes, practice improvement and service delivery. They include adequate and stable funding, staff, facilities and equipment, technology, information resources and programme materials. Adequate resources enable an organisation to meet ongoing needs and make targeted improvements. For example, to implement a new project, an organisation needs additional staff to provide services, additional office space for the new staff, project materials to support service delivery. All these organisational resources contribute to the organisation's ability to implement and sustain the new project and ultimately achieve the desired results. In many cases, it is not possible to add new staff and facilities, so the organisation may need to reallocate or realign organisational resources to meet the needs of a new project.

**Organisational infrastructure:** Organisational infrastructure consists of the systems, protocols and processes that provide structure to the organisation, support its main functions and embed routine practice. Infrastructure may include the policies and operating procedures that guide the practice. Infrastructure also includes systems for operations - from human resources, training, supervision and ongoing communication systems to systems for data, evaluation and continuous quality improvement. An organisation's structures, processes and systems institutionalise practices, procedures and rules to ensure their consistent execution regardless of changes in staff or leadership. The organisational infrastructure also supports the organisation in achieving its vision, mission, goals and values. The organisational infrastructure often forms the basis for other organisational capacities. For example, recruitment and staff selection processes lead to the availability of adequate human resources. Similarly, training systems help build staff knowledge and skills.

**Organisational knowledge and skills:** Organisational knowledge and skills consist of the essential expertise and competencies needed to do the job. This can be thought of as the 'know-how' of the organisation. For an employee, this includes understanding and applying effective knowledge, practice, decision-making, management and competence. For managers and administrators, it also includes knowledge and skills related to leadership, management, critical analysis, policy making, human resource development and change management.

**Organisational culture and climate:** Organisational culture and climate consist of shared values, norms, attitudes and perceptions that influence the behaviour of people in an organisation. An organisation's priorities, leadership commitment and staff motivation reflect its culture and climate. For new programmes and practices, an organisation's culture and climate can influence employees' acceptance and support for change. Although the terms 'culture' and 'climate' are often used interchangeably, Charles Glisson, a leading researcher in the field, makes the following distinction:

- Organisational culture refers to the shared expectations and norms of behaviour in a work environment. This is the collective view of "the way work is done".

- Organisational climate represents staff perceptions of the impact of the work environment on individuals. This is the view of 'how it feels' to work in the agency (e.g. supportive, stressful).

**Organisational Engagement and Partnership:** Organisational engagement and partnership consist of collaborative relationships within an organisation and with external partners and the community to support the integration of services and share improved practices. Productive relationships include building trust, seeking feedback and actively collaborating towards common goals. Organisational engagement and partnerships often require structures that facilitate collaboration and these structures are part of the organisational infrastructure. This dimension describes the resulting relationship and collaboration between partners.

In addition, there are other models and descriptions of NGOs as organisations. From all the models, descriptions and attempts to approach the reality of organisations, it becomes clear that the deeper you delve into organisations, the more complex it becomes. It is not easy to grasp the reality of NGOs, even if it looks that way on the surface. This applies more than ever to the type of medium-sized and larger NGOs, which are also very dependent on the personal skills of the respective staff members (Capacity Building Collaborative 2022 and CIO Wiki 2022).

## 5. Is it possible to control the development of an NGO consciously and according to plan?

According to the prevailing organisational theories, there is reason to believe that developments in NGOs are not entirely random. Therefore, a fundamentally important question is that of the regularities that take place in NGOs independently of individual persons. There are certainly special characteristics and phases that almost all NGOs go through over the years.

In order to be able to control the development of an NGO consciously and according to plan, you must first be aware of the typical development phases and be able to evaluate which phase your own NGO is currently going through. Social science findings and condensed empirical knowledge, which will be discussed in the following, are helpful in this regard (Glasl, 2020).

### 5.1 Typical development phases of NGOs

Basically, management theory distinguishes between four phases of development (Figure 4). None of these phases is passed through ideally by NGOs. In addition to developments, there are also setbacks, repetitions, abrupt changes, depending on the personnel tableau and organisational culture. Therefore, some organisations have elements of all phases or cannot be clearly assigned to one phase.





Figure 4: Phases of organisational development (Own illustration based on Socius Organisationsberatung (2021))

There are also lagging developments, for example, when the differentiation phase was never taken very seriously and therefore certain processes still lead to permanent problems. So, phases of the development process sometimes get mixed up. However, what characterises the individual development phases and what are typical features, basic situations or characteristics of NGOs?

**Pioneering and founding phase:** At the beginning of every NGO is the pioneering phase, in which the organisation often functions as a close-knit community. The characteristic of this phase is that there is less planning and more improvisation. There is a lot to do, because the goals are ambitious but the possibilities are still very limited. Therefore, motivation has to compensate a lot. There is also a lot of spontaneous and direct contact among the staff as well as with the respective target groups. In this phase, organisations are usually very flexible. At the centre, there is usually one or more charismatic persons who pull the strings and steer the organisation and its staff. The organisation owes its first successes to their ideas and concepts. They are the opinion leaders and often think along the lines of whatever the issue requires, we'll do and we do it immediately. The dangers of this phase are cult of personality, succession and power struggles, growing chaos, lack of transparency as well as dependent and gradually dependent employees.

**Differentiation phase:** The pioneering phase is followed by the differentiation phase, in which the organisation develops into a rational apparatus. Here, the organisation strives for transparency, systematics, logic and controllability and uses the means of a technocratic corporate doctrine to rationally construct the organisation. Standardisations, specialisations, coordination and formalisations emerge and there is a separation into different departments. There is a concentration on the so-called "constraints". The danger is that in this phase the individual departments move far away from each other, develop their own ways of thinking and working and then speak a different language. Moreover, there is more regulation, organisation and planning than perhaps necessary. Bureaucracy increases and the shared experience of the staff is lost.

**Integration phase:** After the differentiation phase comes the integration phase, in which an attempt is made to combine the power of the pioneering phase with the rationality of the differentiation phase. The organisation grows into an organism. Here, smaller manageable work units are often formed, which make the organisation more flexible again. The smaller units also take on holistic tasks and can largely plan, organise and exercise self-control by themselves. A central body in the organisation does not control and regulate but offers supporting and advisory services. The danger in this phase is, among others, that the organisation

concentrates too much on its own world and functioning, so that the outside (target group, partners) is lost from view.

**Association phase:** The integration phase is ideally replaced by the association phase, which is still the least researched scientifically and perhaps only achievable in some areas and teams. In the association phase, the organisation enters into intensive relationships with other organisations, with whom joint strategies can then be developed. Moreover, there is constructive exchange in difficult situations and a lively exchange of experience. The focus is on continuous learning. Trusting in your own abilities and strengths as well as structural necessities dissolve in favour of teamwork, which is only put together according to abilities and expertise. Dangerous in this phase are power networks that strive for monopolies and the relapse into old patterns from earlier phases.

## 6. What are the conditions for steering an NGO?

Organisations usually pursue goals. In order to achieve them, plans are drawn up and consciously worked through. According to such a - admittedly relatively rough - scenario, one can steer development. Control is important in order to be able to achieve goals, because you almost always need corrections and, to a certain extent, have to readjust. However, what is it like in NGOs? Is it possible to consciously steer development in a similar way? Can you predict roughly what the organisation will be like in - let's say - seven years and what new structural and content-related developments will have taken place by then? All those who work in NGOs will admit that control is possible, but not directly and immediately, as it is perhaps in business.

In order to be able to consciously steer NGOs development, you should first describe certain conditions that are necessary to be able to consciously develop the organisation. Everyone will admit that the best intentions, goals and plans in NGOs are of no use if no human and financial capacities and resources can be allocated to them or the resources and capacities are there, but the projects are ultimately so badly implemented that no one wants to work with the NGO anymore. So, what are the conditions that make continuous steering possible?

Conditions outside the organisation:

- Stable political and legal framework. If there are sanctions against NGOs, there are possibilities to have the state sanctions reviewed by an independent body.
- NGOs are allowed to use foreign funds from non-profit sources without this being understood as interference in internal affairs.
- There are also domestic programmes and funds for the work of NGOs. The civil society NGO sector is a recognised sector of society, similar to the economy, state organisations or the church.

Conditions within the organisation

- The organisation has sufficient structural and human resources.

- There is an awareness of being able to develop, describe, convincingly represent and implement new projects.
- Openness and learning is a permanent process and a lived attitude.

To achieve control, the levels you address are relevant.

## 6.1 Levels of an organisation

Capacity-building is the process of developing an organisation's strength and sustainability. It is essential for your non-profit's health and longevity. Capacity-building enables you to focus on your mission—not simply on survival. All levels are usually addressed by corresponding projects but not always equally. Being aware of where you are operating makes it easier to understand what you can ultimately achieve and influence.

## 6.2 The mission statement of an organisation

The mission statement of an organisation briefly and concisely formulates the mission, the strategic goals (vision) and the essential guidelines for their implementation (values). It is intended to give all members of the organisation a uniform orientation and to support identification with the organisation. It also promotes the organisation to the outside world by creating a concise image of the mission the organisation performs for society. No matter how big it is, every NGO should have developed a mission statement, because it embeds its work and describes its values.

For the development of a mission statement, the following questions should be clarified together:

- ▶ What are our objectives?
- ▶ How do we want to/could we achieve this?
- ▶ What are our values?

Inspirations for mission statements can be found on the websites of [Oxfam](#) and [UfU](#), for example.

## 7. What are the timeframes for development processes?

The art of organisational development processes in NGOs is to work only as much as necessary on the inside in order to be able to continue working more powerfully on the outside. Very few NGOs have enough resources to be able to elaborate organisational development processes. You do organisational development when you have to do it.

Nevertheless, this is not an easy step to do, because organisational development requires relationship development. Since working on relationships is perhaps even more important in NGOs than in companies, it takes some time.

How long one has to estimate for sustainable development processes depends on the organisation, the readiness for internal processes and on the available resources. There are organisations that take a lot of time

for development processes spending a year on organisational development and drastically reducing their workload. However, such organisations have special opportunities. As a rule, it is difficult for NGOs to free up a week just for organisational development or to book and pay professional organisational developers for a few days.

It is also important to bear in mind that it is seldom possible to change everything immediately. Day-to-day work, project necessities, lack of free resources and personnel commitments often prevent you from immediately eliminating certain shortcomings. At the end of the day, the goal is to ensure that, as far as possible, the staff and members of your own organisation are of the same mind and have the same basic understanding of the work. It is always important to ask yourself how can I treat my other staff members with respect and what I expect from them in return.

So, how can you proceed to discuss manifest problems, disturbing patterns or inadequacies in the organisation and move forward together:

- At the beginning, there is always an analysis. It sounds quite banal but not everyone in an organisation has the same understanding of a problem or conflict. If something is fundamentally going wrong or is disruptive, if the work results are affected or if functions are no longer filled with competence, it should be analysed well and thoroughly – as far as possible from all sides and different perspectives. If this can be done without external moderation, the SWOT analysis (See 7.2.2) can achieve good results. If there are deeper problems and conflicts in the team, you need an external consultant. In this case, a SWOT analysis carried out by yourself is usually no longer useful, because the problem is no longer the analysis but the relationships in your team. In this case, you should at least seek discussions with external consultants in order to develop options on how to solve the existing conflicts.
- In less deadlocked situations, targeted and well-prepared team meetings are sufficient, which involve everyone and are designed in such a way that, in addition to analysing a problem, responsibilities are defined at the end and put on a timeline. It is also crucial to determine, when the first review will take place in relation to the timetable. If such constructive meetings are held, you can deal with a lot of issues in a relatively short time, whether it is the improved equipment of functions, a more professional process planning with corresponding handover points or the formulation of new tasks to improve the quality of work.

#### Trap: Reinventing the wheel

The achievements of former colleagues, especially unfinished ideas such as a draft mission statement or a press distribution list, are not preserved and passed on, so that new colleagues often have to start from scratch.

- ▶ Time must be taken to allow changes by staff to become part of everyday routine
- ▶ Bringing new and young staff along by sharing experiences

## 8. What tools help to promote development in NGOs?

There is a wide range of tools available to measure the state and development of companies. Most of them can only be applied to NGOs to a limited extent or with many compromises. However, it is true that there is no single right means or tool that can be used in a universally valid way for all organisations. Each organisation has to find its own set of tools and the rhythm in which to use them.

In the following, we would like to present two tools for analysing the status quo and the development of NGOs. Both are characterised by concepts that can be adapted very well to the individual needs of your organisation.

### 8.1 Organisational radar

The organisational radar is a tool for analysing and visualising the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation in the categories of identity, structures, strategies, people/staff, functions, processes and resources/finances. These categories are based on the 7-S model. Therefore, the organisational radar offers you the advantage of applying the 7-S model to your organisation in an efficient and structured way.

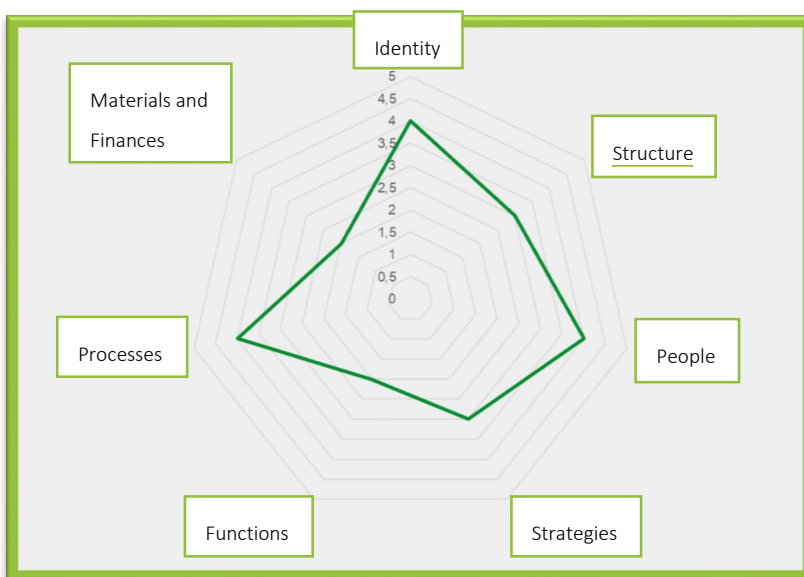


Figure 5: Organisational radar chart (Own illustration)

The organisational radar maps the point in time of the stocktaking. If used for the first time, it shows the status quo or the starting point for development, or if used several times, it shows the review of developments. The visual component makes it easy to compare inventories with each other.

The assessment of the categories: Identity, Structures, Strategies, People/Staff, Functions, Processes and Resources/Finances is carried out by the employees themselves based on a total of 72 questions. It is up to

them whether they answer the questions individually or as a group. However, it is recommended that individuals answer the questions in order to make perceptions between different departments and the administration as well as between different levels of the organisation visible. The perceptions can sometimes differ dramatically. However, these results provide a suitable starting point for identifying construction sites in your organisation in order to tackle them together and to drive forward and, most importantly, steer measures to overcome these challenges and thus the development of your organisation.

## 8.2 Strategy development

### 8.2.1 From vision to strategic goals

In order to act collectively in a planned way as an organisation and to use scarce resources effectively, it is necessary to agree on goals and to review them regularly. First of all, basic concepts need to be clarified in order to be able to set and review strategic goals as an organisation.

Guiding questions to determine: Vision - mission - strategic goals

- ▶ **Vision: What does the organisation want to change in the world, for what purpose was it created?** The answer should be short and precise, the vision does not have to be directly realisable and achievable. Ideally, there are processes in the organisation where an understanding on vision and mission can take place with a large circle of stakeholders. This prevents misunderstandings and conflicts and creates motivation for working towards the same goals; it also enables responsibility to be shared within the organisations.
- ▶ **Mission: What specific contribution does the organisation make to achieve the vision?** The answer should be short and precise and make clear which path the organisation chooses, for example, in distinction to other NGOs pursuing the same vision. In large and differentiated organisations, the formulation of several missions can make sense, for example if the organisation pursues several strategies.
- ▶ **Strategic Goals: What strategic goals can be formulated?** The answers should be short and precise and make clear which goals are to be achieved strategically. Distinguish between outputs and outcomes of individual projects, which alone have only short- to medium-term effects, and the impact, i.e. long-term effects, through the implementation of the strategic goals.

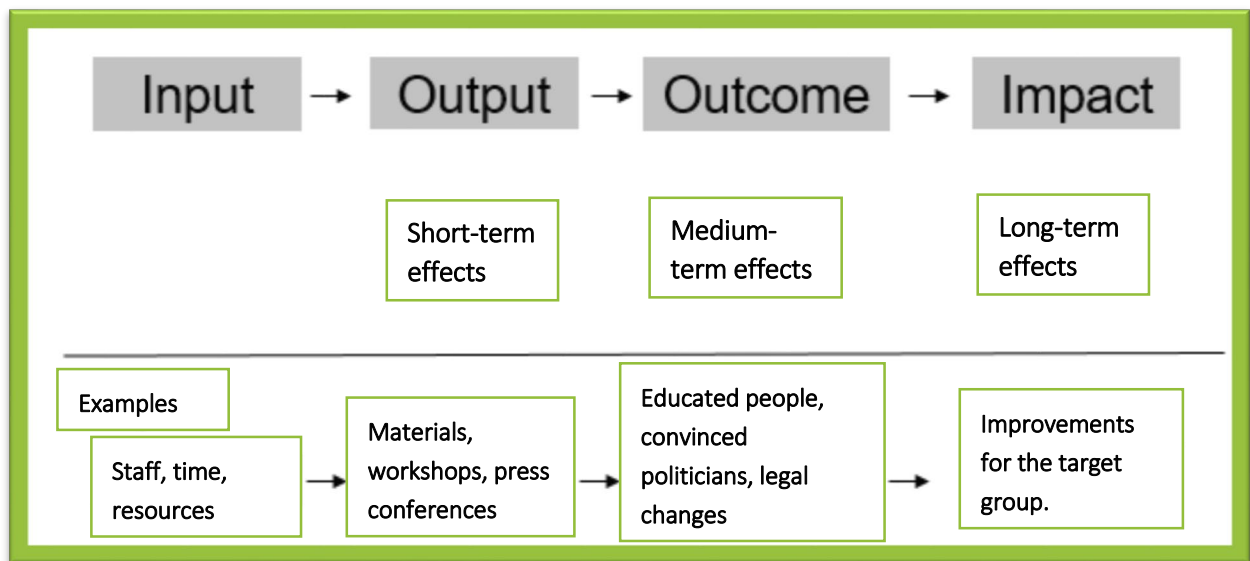


Figure 6: Strategy development (Reade (2008) quoted from: Sperfeld et. al 2018))

Unlike companies, environmental organisations will rather name the effects of their work than their products. The organisation's goals should be balanced with its mission, but also with its capacity (number of staff, projects), as increased capacity also helps to better fulfil its mission.

**For a meaningful review of objectives, they should be SMART:**

- ▶ **S – specific:** Clearly formulated and oriented towards the mission of the organisation
- ▶ **M – measurable:** Determine qualitative and quantitative measures. This is often problematic, because measuring qualitative and quantitative indicators requires resources. It is important to agree on how to know if you are getting closer to the goal.
- ▶ **A - achievable:** Plan in such a way that your staff also has the desire to achieve the goals and is geared towards significant change.
- ▶ **R - realistic:** Strike a balance between ambition versus feasibility of the task within the time and with the available resources.
- ▶ **T – timed:** Set a deadline by which the goal is to be achieved

**Accompanying this, success factors should be defined. The following questions serve as orientation:**

- On what, apart from your own effort, does the achievement of the goal depend?
- Which of these can be influenced, which not?
- Does the objective need to be reworded if necessary?

### Trap: The unequal relationship between goals and resources

Sometimes the goals are too ambitious for the available resources. For example, there may be a lack of:

- ▶ Ability of the management and employees to conduct business and to work in an economically sound manner
- ▶ Contacts with important social figures to improve access to funding
- ▶ Self-reflection and the consistent pursuit of changes recognised as correct
- ▶ Creating and releasing creativity/ creative solutions

### 8.2.2 SWOT-Analysis

SWOT analysis is a useful support for strategy development. As a basis for organisational and project analysis, it links the view of the internal situation of the organisation (or of a project) with a diagnosis of the environment and provides data for strategic planning.

The SWOT grid includes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organisation (or project).

While the strengths and weaknesses analysis refers to the internal factors of the organisation, the opportunities and threat analysis examines the environment. A common variant of the internal-external dichotomy is the distinction between the present (strengths/weaknesses) and the future (opportunities/risks).

The SWOT analysis is an exciting tool, especially for comparing different assessments: What are the most important opportunities for the board, what for the accounting department, what for the project management?



Figure 7: SWOT-Matrix

The analysis of strengths and weaknesses examines the existing or lacking capabilities and resources of the organisation or project. Possible aspects are:

- Skills of the employees



- Quality of internal processes
- Financial resources and funding structure
- Target group loyalty
- Position in partner networks
- The ability to develop new programmes and organisational culture.

The analysis of opportunities and risks examines environmental factors over which the organisation/promoter has no direct influence. The focus here is on essential influencing factors and trends like:

- Political
- Economic
- Socio-cultural
- Technological
- Legal
- Ecological

### 8.3 Which tools exist in Moldova?

In Moldova, the conditions of the NGO strategy development also exist but are limited due to an unclear perspective on financial resources, human emigration and political instability. Being a candidate for the European Union (EU), Moldova has a pronounced action program supporting environmental NGOs to plan their priorities. The geopolitical instability in the region, on the opposite, creates obstacles for planning in the long run. The key issue is to invest in the human potential of NGOs, taking into account the main needs for fundraising, juridical skills, and environmental policy knowledge with special attention to the EU priorities, as well as the capacities of the members and supporters. Such activities need close contact with the universities, local communities and authorities, high and higher students, youth, and women organisations.

Choosing priority areas is crucial for NGO in order to ensure the dominance and quality of services provided in any of the environmental areas at the national or local level. Team building is important to make sure that every team member is committed to the overall success, to avoid staff turnover, and to create a positive and creative atmosphere at work. Decisions should be discussed within the team. Projects should be of interest to the performers and carry public benefits. Discussing your organisation's strategy for several years ahead entails the setting of feasible tasks and the timing of their achievement. The strategy should not cover too many areas but concentrate on the main ones to achieve significant benefits. The real situation, of course, is determined by the NGO leaders' behaviour.

Every NGO should have a development strategy primarily influencing its goals and objectives. For environmental youth organisations in the field of environmental protection, the development strategy is a program document that is developed by the management of the organisation. However, medium- and long

term strategies are developed and adopted by the members of the organisation. When developing programs, a command method can be used. Several areas of activity are designated and members of the organisation choose the type of activity that is the closest to each of them in terms of topic, abilities, skills and interests. The teams are being temporary created and fully responsible for the following tasks:

- Resources
- Finances
- Volunteers
- Target audience
- Development and implementation

The teams quarterly report a financial statement to the NGO Council within the framework of individual programs and projects in accordance with the requirements of sponsors and grantees. This is ideally and according to the rules. In real life, such NGOs are rare. However, the NGOs of Moldova fit well into the system of combining efforts and resources in solving various environmental problems. Moreover, they have temporary alliances in programs and projects not only among themselves, but increasingly with NGOs from neighbouring countries. So, new experience appears and partners for future programs are being developed.

## 9. How does development become visible?

Changes within the organisation and in society, which affect new standards, projects, structures, people and resources as well as the effectiveness of their own work are the most visible steps of development within a NGO.

Quantitatively, this is expressed in:

- More employees
- A larger number of projects
- More financial and material capacities and resources

Qualitatively, it becomes visible in:

- Greater impact of one's own activity
- A higher recognition of the organisation
- Employees with more skills than before.

However, not every development is visible at the first glance. Especially in the area of qualitative development, there is always the challenge of communicating it. Our society is strongly oriented towards superficial and quantitative parameters. Even NGOs, which often represent other values, are not free of this.

Therefore, the topic of making development, especially qualitative development, visible is one that NGOs should address, but which has not yet led to many tools and standardised methods either.

In Moldova NGOs are visible due to their activities and mass media support. The interest in NGOs raises when something important is happening in the sphere of their activities like droughts, floods or the raise of energy costs. In 2017 the Parliament of Moldova adopted the “2%” Law, which permits every physical person to transfer 2% of his/her income tax in favour of any NGO, which want to accept such funding. 818 NGOs in 2021 announced the interest to get such funds. The Moldovans actively use this mechanism in favour of NGOs, which, organizes campaigns to demonstrate their public utility.

There are more ways of NGOs to make their development visible:

- **Media:** All actions, campaigns and projects are almost always covered in the media.
- **Social networks:** There is practically no project in which volunteers do not take part and where have you seen a volunteer without uploading a couple of photos from the scene? This is a very important type to disseminate information about the work of NGOs. In addition, it is also a method of attracting new volunteers.
- **Flash mobs.** In NGOs where there are a lot of young people, flash mobs become very important to attract new supporters and public attention to certain environmental problems.
- **Work with school and university teachers.** Attracting people who might influence adolescents and young people to work in NGOs.
- **Work with independent laboratories** to test the results of the project.
- **Conducting social surveys** online and offline.

## 9.1 Assessment of strategic objectives and impact measurement

Measuring the impact of your NGOs work is an important part of the strategy development. However, does the principle of impact measurement already take place in Moldova? If not, how can it be better established.

At the moment of creation, every project, program or action predicts what results and long-term consequences should be achieved in the future. There are performance indicators in every project, which are prescribed by the authors and checked by donors and sponsors. However, the long-term consequences and the impacts on the population are rarely assessed.

After the Chernobyl accident, for example, there were many projects and programs for the complete closure of the plant. At the same time, no one took into account the socio-economic consequences of the closure for the population of an entire city - the city of power engineers -Slavutich. None of the environmental NGOs could answer the first question from the donors, what the station employees would do and who would finance their relocation, new career guidance and the life of their families during the period of obtaining new

professions there?

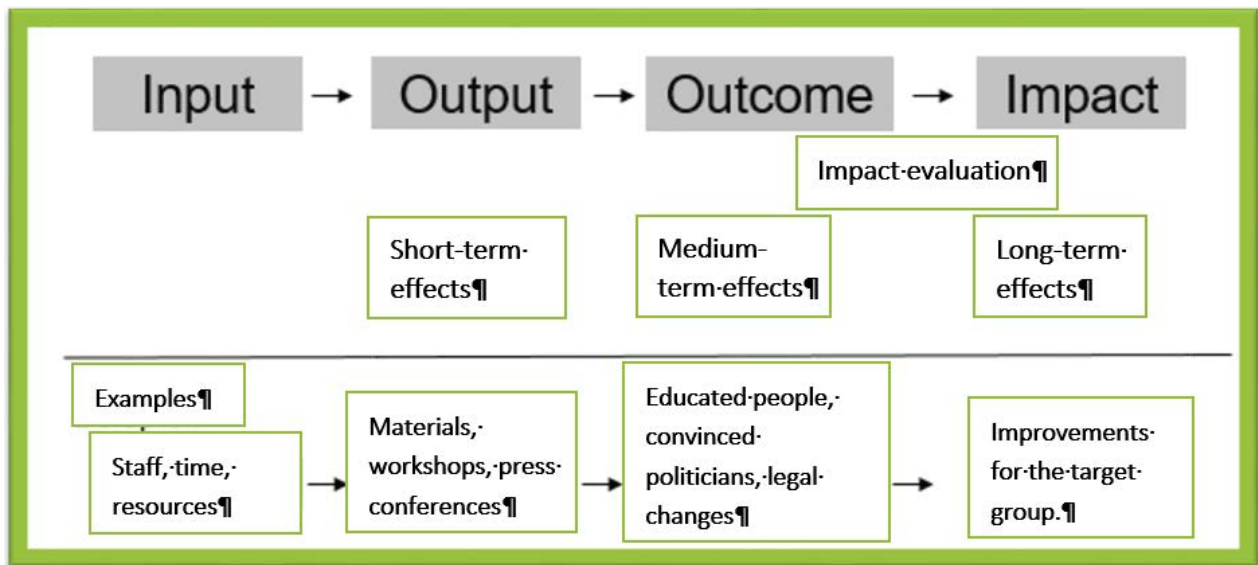


Figure 8: Strategy development (Reade (2008) quoted from: Sperfeld et. al 2018)

There are practically no projects that do not overlap in consequences with other spheres of life. That is why environmental projects and programs that take into account such consequences are always successful, and their implementation is fully funded and necessarily (by 80%) duplicated to other regions.

Projects in which new jobs are created, alternative energy sources are supported and a system to continue the actions of the project after its implementation is being developed always have sufficient funding and a large number of volunteers and partner organisations. These projects often have good support from local authorities and business structures.

The introduction of the principle of responsibility of environmental NGOs for the long-term consequences of the project will help to increase the level of confidence in the activities of NGOs and raise the authority of public environmentalists in society.

## 10. Seeing NGOs as businesses - advantages and dangers

NGOs are not in themselves companies. At least not companies of the kind that are primarily concerned with monetary profit. However, if you take a closer look, you will see that certain strategies, management tasks and decisions in good NGOs are often not so different from successfully run businesses. Without good planning and consistent implementation as well as subsequent evaluation, no NGO, no matter how committed, can be successful. Without entrepreneurial skills, one cannot really develop an NGO in leadership positions and without the attention and consistent growth of quantitative indicators such as turnover, number of employees, donations and membership etc., an NGO cannot really develop.

Therefore, it makes sense to use certain management tools of companies in NGOs as well. The following advantages can be achieved:

- Good implementation and ratio of resources used
- View of your own quality through constant comparison with competitors
- Adequate human and financial resources for the tasks and goals

The following disadvantages can occur as a result:

- Little distinction between NGO and a company
- Willingness to donate decreases, as NGOs are hardly seen as worthy of support any more
- Internal processes are too focused on growth and quantitative aspects

NGOs do not exist because there is a market, but because the market and the state do not fulfil social tasks that have to be addressed and dealt with by NGOs. Therefore, it is important to always keep the difference to companies in mind but to use some management tools internally in order to be able to do your own work better.

## **10.1 Public image**

### **10.1.1 Trends in communication**

NGOs have become much more important in the last 20 years. Progressive globalisation has turned them into political actors in their own right, whose role ranges from control to active political participation while established institutions such as companies, the state and the church are facing a crisis of confidence.

Large NGOs in particular are communication experts. For them, communication is more than just one competence among many. It is the core competence of many non-governmental organisations, because the success of large NGOs is measured above all by their ability to communicate. Some success factors can also be transferred to smaller NGOs.

Top politicians strive for a certain narrative with which they are publicly associated. This often context-free image overrides all questions of argumentatively underpinned factual politics. Otherwise, they do not meet the demands of a media attention economy that demands simple images and has lost the desire for differentiation, nuances and contexts. As a result, rational arguments, considered factual debates and thus a lively culture of debate take a back seat. This trend is driven by the media, sometimes even created; the visibility of people and their (personal) stories fit better into the media agenda than coherent arguments, mature concepts and consistent policy designs.

Large NGOs are increasingly adapting to these needs of journalists and media logic, especially in campaigning, in order to generate media publicity for their issues. Smaller NGOs in particular do not have the necessary know-how, infrastructure or budget for appropriate campaign work. This makes it all the more important for smaller NGOs to communicate extraordinarily well within the scope of their possibilities.

### **10.1.2 Vulnerability**

Depending on their thematic focus and target groups, NGOs exercise functions of social control. Some of them act offensively or critically in public. With their increasing public presence, however, the need for legitimacy also increases and the resistance of opponents from business and politics can grow. Against this backdrop, NGOs also increasingly come under the scrutiny of public criticism or are exposed to the danger of being politically exploited. There are even verbal threats via social media channels like the threat of physical violence against your own person or members of your own family. Therefore, NGOs working in some areas have to pay a lot of attention to protecting their own staff (Defend the defenders). The organisation as a whole can also be attacked. In some countries, NGOs face legal proceedings that threaten their existence. For example, so-called slapps (strategic lawsuits against public participation) are used to silence and intimidate NGOs.

In order to counter critical processes against the work of NGOs, a basic communication strategy adapted to the organisation is needed, as well as an efficient internal network to clarify misinformation as quickly as possible.

### **10.1.3 Communication strategy**

The goals and purposes of a communication strategy vary from organisation to organisation. Some even do not have them written down, but still pursue them with great determination and meticulousness. In the end, it is always about influencing the public opinion. Compared to government agencies or companies, NGOs are doing quite well. The following contents can be part of an NGO's communication strategy:

- Create a desired image and consciously steer towards a desired goal with regard to your own organisation in the public sphere
- Educate the public on issues such as the environment, nature and climate protection
- Generate a high level of identification and credibility as well as correctness of the actions of your own NGO.
- Prepare for possible reactions on your public communication
- Address possible worst case scenarios and prepare responses

### **Digital communication**

The cornerstone of digital presence is the organisation's own website and possible social media accounts. Modern tools, such as WordPress, make it easy to create self-managed websites. A landing page should contain basic information about the organisation and news about the organisation and its outputs. The website as a whole should be kept lean and uncluttered, with a consistent and clear menu structure. The design should be suitable for mobile devices (tablet, smartphone) in order not to exclude young target groups who increasingly use smartphones and tablets exclusively. In addition to Romanian and Russian, it helps enormously to also offer an English language version. The aim is to increase the visibility for international interested parties and stakeholders (potential project partners, project promoters, foundations, investors). This is because the partners must also be presented in detail in the communication with project promoters

during the acquisition process. A website that can be referred to helps enormously. The findability of the website is improved by good key wording of images uploaded on the website.

Especially with the emergence of the social web, e.g. social networks, blogs and video platforms, new forms of communication have emerged in the NGO sector.

Activity reports can be made more tangible with high-quality images, because image series and videos convey emotions better than texts. External communication should thus be rich in images. These aspects must be taken into account in project planning and implementation. In addition, attention should be paid to image and property rights, when taking pictures. Junior staff and young employees usually have a better understanding of graphics and design for their target group and should be consulted in the provision and preparation of visual material.

In order to use social media accounts with the appropriate frequency and in a way that is appropriate for the target group, an overarching strategy is needed that includes all projects. Without regular content, social media accounts are not worth the effort.

For a social media account to be successful, everyone has to pitch in. This means that in all projects, well communicable outputs must be documented with pictures and videos. A central person should manage the account. This includes sifting through and archiving the image and video material as well as consistent and target group-oriented communication.

If these requirements are not feasible for an organisation due to the high effort or the fact that the content is simply not as visible and participative, other platforms such as Twitter or newsletter format are recommended.

Twitter offers a different framework for targeted updates to its community on publications and events. The simplest alternative is to offer a monthly or quarterly email newsletter. An integral part of the communication strategy should be an annual report to members and partners on the progress of the project and the issues dealt within the NGO. It should be considered whether a small number of copies of this report should also be made available in physical form.

In the communication strategy it is also important to find an individual solution according to the needs and possibilities of your own organisation. The external communication strategy should be regularly reviewed and further developed.

If an organisation has an archive of images and video footage to portray the work of the organisation well, and if staff is willing to make short concise statements, it is advisable to create an image video for your organisation. An example of a successful implementation of such a project for the communication strategy is the [image video of the Moldovan NGO Ecovisio](#) in the framework of the CapaMol project.

## **Events**

Events are an integral part of the organisation's annual planning. As they serve to inform an audience about specific contents and the NGO's work on these topics, they are also part of the communication strategy.

The formats and contents depend on the work and possibilities of the organisation. For example, in planning a distinction can be made between established and regular events in comparison to action-oriented formats. However, this separation is not strict, as successful formats can always be consolidated and experiments with formats are needed to address the target groups.

Examples of established and regular events organised by organisations are:

- **Summer festivals** every one or two years provide an opportunity for exchange with project partners, sponsors and between project teams.
- **Neighbourhood meetings** are informal gatherings for which various formats and topics are available; they enable people to talk to neighbouring organisations and neighbours about various topics and to exchange ideas.
- **Future Forums** are formal meetings with befriended NGOs on specific topics and development issues
- **Summerschools** are suitable opportunities to offer targeted trainings of several days for a specific target group in cooperation with partners.

Examples for formats that can take place as actions on specific topics:

- **Readings** on interesting publications (reports, books, position papers)
- **Theme evenings** in suitable premises or urban garden projects
- **Marketplace meetings** on a topic with other NGOs to join forces and strengthen networks.

## 11. Finding the ideal structure in each case - what does that mean?

There is no structure in NGOs that is ultimately valid. In this respect, there is also no "ideal" structure. However, there are certainly more and less suitable structures. The people who have to fill them are decisive for the fit and NGOs always need a certain creative restlessness. The enemy of all development is complacency. Therefore, NGOs also need the attitude that everything can be made even better. Ultimately, internalising this means being a learning organisation. The hallmark of this is that everyone strives - internally and externally - to develop further, to tackle new things and to critically question past activities. In detail, tools and management tasks also help to implement the critical creative attitude in daily activities while communication and organisation play an important role.

### 11.1 Communication structures within the organisation

Communication is a constant and very important activity in NGOs, not only externally, but especially internally. Roughly speaking, communication can be divided into the following levels:



**Between individuals:**

- Induction
- Development talks
- Conflict talks

**Project team/department level:**

- Coordination of resources
- Communication on availabilities
- Allocation of responsibilities
- Distribution of tasks. according to competences

**Organisational level:**

- Control of the working climate within the organisation
- Developing and affirming an organisation's own culture
- Ways of celebrating specific successes

**11.1.1 Why is internal communication important for NGOs?**

Communication within NGOs is essential for the overall organisational culture and climate. It is particularly important for the organisational infrastructure and the appropriate use of staff competences.

**The on-boarding Process:**

The on-boarding process should be designed in such a way that there is time for personal familiarisation and follow-up. During the process, information on the rules of the organisation like behaviour in case of illness, rules for marking files, regular services, access rights to emails, etc. should be provided.

Expectations regarding the fulfilment of tasks must also be clarified in the discussion, for example, whether only activities or also decision-making competences are delegated and what work resources and budgets are available?

It should also be asked for the expectations of the new person during the interview. For example, what do they hope to learn or what activities of the organisation are they interested in outside of their area of responsibility?

If possible, a tandem partner should be set up to accompany the new person so that questions can be clarified quickly at the working level.

**Coordination and exchange:**

It is important to ensure regular contact points and exchange in the organisation between decision makers and different project staff. The coordination meetings should be kept short and only involve groups responsible for making decisions and developing results (e.g. set up project teams).

Longer meetings such as retreats are a good way to work creatively on things together and to redefine or readjust visions, missions and goals.

It is also important to promote the personal level between colleagues through birthday greetings, tributes and occasions without an agenda such as parties or regular meals.

#### Trap: tendency to avoid conflicts instead of resolving them with each other

Often people who prefer to avoid conflicts work in NGOs, so that solutions are not found for a long time. Therefore, here are some possible stages of conflict resolution:

- ▶ Put conflicts on the table
- ▶ State your own goal
- ▶ Identify the other person's goal
- ▶ Look for common ground
- ▶ Search for, accept and evaluate ideas
- ▶ Negotiate an agreement

If this is not so easily possible, it must be weighed up against:

- ▶ The risk for not achieving objectives or harming the relationship with the employee if nothing is changed.
- ▶ The loss of opportunities such as learning effects and trust-building if solutions are not sought in the discussion.
- ▶ The risks of frustration and loss of trust

In addition, options should be chosen to end a conflict:

- ▶ Conduct an open conversation without or with support (neutral moderation)
- ▶ Let the matter rest and find your own peace with it
- ▶ Direct change or termination of cooperation

## 11.2 Team development

There are five phases of team development (Figure 9):



Figure 9: The five phases of team development (own illustration)

The **formation phase**: The team members carefully get to know each other. This phase is characterised by a certain reserve and politeness. The team members are strongly oriented towards the new group and rarely show their individuality. The team members orient themselves to the "one".

The **storm phase** (or "conflict phase"): Here (subliminal) conflicts easily arise. This phase is often characterised by the self-presentation of the (new) team members and the struggle for (informal) leadership. The team members are "me"-oriented and tend to form cliques.

The **standardisation phase** (or "rule phase"): This phase is characterised by the development of new group standards and new manners, e.g. for feedback and exchange between team members. There is a "we" orientation.

The **performance phase** (or "work phase"): This phase is characterised by work orientation, flexibility, openness, solidarity, performance orientation and goal-oriented action of the team.

The **dissolution phase**: In case teams only work together for a certain period of time, e.g. for a temporary project, the "dissolution phase" follows. In this phase, the team members celebrate their successes together, look back on what they have achieved and consciously say goodbye to each other. They are warned not to "just run away from each other".

Trap: tendency that too few staff members take responsibility for the association

Do you have the feeling that too few people in your organisation take responsibility for the organisation? To get to the bottom of the problem, it is helpful to answer the following questions:

- ▶ Are there defined tasks in your organisation that no one performs? If yes, why?
- ▶ Do role and function descriptions of the staff not cover important tasks?
- ▶ To what extent do staff members take initiative for tasks for which they are not formally responsible? What is the impact of this?
- ▶ Do you know any examples of staff behaviour that contradict the formal objectives of the NGO and indicate a low level of compliance?

### 11.3 Promoting young talent and volunteer management

Establishing a progressive NGO culture is hard enough. To establish and develop it over several decades requires not only strategic skills, visionary thinking and good management skills, but also a conscious selection of personnel. This means that in NGOs great importance should also be attached to the promotion of young people. For this purpose, large environmental NGOs such as BUND and NABU have their own youth organisations, which in a sense represent a permanent laboratory for future leaders in NGOs. However, small and medium-sized NGOs also need to think about and consciously select committed young people. Special seminars and youth exchanges are a good way to do this. Moreover, small programmes (e.g. trainees) are an option to make it easier for young people to gain a foothold in your organisation.

#### 11.3.1 What makes NGOs interesting for young professionals?

NGOs can be of particular interest to young professionals. Clear structures and low bureaucracy coupled with flat hierarchies help them to find their way around quickly. The often grassroots-democratic and argument-based decision-making supports this process. Due to small-scale structures, mistakes can be corrected quickly. Due to a wide range of tasks, e.g. content-related work, project management, acquisition, policy advice, administrative, volunteer and member support, dealing with citizens' enquiries etc., it is possible to quickly take on responsibility. Through hands-on activities, learning experience can be gained quickly. In addition, your own competences can be used to implement and acquire your own project ideas. This leads to a strong identification with the organisation, which in turn leads to a high level of responsibility.

### **11.3.2 What does and what does not make NGOs interesting for young professionals in Moldova?**

To have a development perspective, any Moldovan NGO with a strategy and vision for the future should attract young professionals. The youngsters usually have skills that the older generations do not have, especially in IT and social media. Moreover, they could be helpful in fieldwork and to attract young volunteers.

There are specific reasons that make memberships and volunteering in NGOs attractive:

- New acquaintances expand ties not only in your country but also abroad.
- A wonderful spoken and written practice of a foreign language and completely free of charge.
- The possibility of foreign trips to get impressions with other cultures.
- Excellent career guidance. Thanks to programs and projects of environmental NGOs, young people find their vocation.
- Opportunity for internships in serious companies and international projects and foundations.

However, financial limitations hinder the youth to become members and volunteers of environmental organisations. Many young members of organisations study and work in parallel to earn extra money. Taking time off from work is often difficult, because participating in programs and projects is often not remunerated. Lastly, there are no constantly working programs with stable funding.

### **11.3.3 How to gain the interest of young professionals?**

In order to gain the interest of young professionals in your organisation, formats and capacities appropriate to the target group should be organised during the projects.

Experiences have shown that the following activities are interesting for pupils:

- Internships during the summer holidays
- Projects with schools
- Summerschools/Summercamps
- Action days
- Conferences for schoolgirls

Possible student work can be taken into account in the project planning and advertised accordingly. Formats for involving students are:

- Provide positions for compulsory internships
- Advertise general internship positions
- Plan positions for student assistants in the projects
- Advertise topics for bachelor and master theses
- Offer trainee positions for career entry

#### **11.3.4 How works the promotion of young professionals in Moldova?**

If an NGO is interested in sustainable development, it needs young professionals. However, the environmental sector in Moldova is usually not attractive to them, since they are interested in a certain level of income that allows them to start a family. Natural sciences have largely lost their appeal, because working in them does not generate high incomes, at least at the initial stage. The same applies to environmental NGOs. A lack of English skills might be another obstacle. Therefore, it is necessary to “catch” young professionals like students, who are interested in working in an environmental NGO and agree with temporary losses. In turn, the NGO can support students to find a topic for their thesis and offer them a workplace.

Being an ecologist is not only constantly cleaning landfills, picketing factories and clearing rivers, although it is important and necessary. Programmers and teachers, journalists and engineers, doctors and lawyers can also be engaged in environmental protection. Any profession is connected in one way or another with the environment and this is the first thing that needs to be shown to new volunteers and NGO members. Moreover, at the junction of many professions, new ones are born when solving environmental problems.

The expansion of borders, the exchange of experience, the introduction of new technologies and new techniques in your profession and in your country gives you the opportunity to be a pioneer in your field of activity. Furthermore, there is the economic component. This means that young professionals should be rather lured with foreign trips, free or conditionally paid, than salaries and high fees. Learning new professions and new knowledge on free programs might thus give young professionals a career boost.

## **12. NGOs can also die - how do you say goodbye to an organisation?**

There is a topic that is rarely talked about, even in NGOs. It is about the death of organisations. Admittedly, this does not happen very often. However, especially in the case of smaller or even medium-sized NGOs, which consist of only a few and sometimes equally old people, this is quite possible. In itself, this is not tragic. Organisations that essentially live on people of the same age can be a generational project and simply be unlucky not to find suitable people who see themselves in a position to continue the organisation with the same motivation and passion as the founders. There are also organisations where the plans of certain people

change and important competences get lost or the organisation no longer functions. This can happen and is as tragic as it is normal.

What can sometimes also be observed in NGOs can be described as an indifferent state of limbo, neither existing well nor having the courage to stop working. In such NGOs, there is hardly any real impetus to develop further. In principle, the organisation no longer has a future, because there is no one to take responsibility and push forward a contemporary reorganisation. Moreover, there is no real talk about this. Not even a general meeting is held any more or the voluntary board meets rather sporadically and completely irregularly. Nevertheless, no one dares to wind up the organisation or transfer it to another organisation from the essentially voluntary staff that is still there. Those who know such an organisation may ask themselves what should be done more sensibly.

If the time for consciously transferring the organisation to another is missed, the only thing left to do is to dissolve it, which often leads to frustration and anger for those who have to take this step administratively: One finds an office with all kinds of documents that do not really make sense. There are hardly any funds left in the bank account, membership fees are only transferred by those who have not noticed that the organisation is actually no longer working and the tax office has already asked for documents several times. You know that if you want to complete the process, you might need private money in addition to the time you have to spend. In addition, you know that two years ago, in a kind of desperate attempt to save the company, the board of directors left the remaining money in the account to a basically untrustworthy person who quickly spent it and then, just as predictably, made off with it. Although you had foreseen all of this but could not get your way in a democratic vote in the board, you are supposed to clean up the mess. That is not really a pleasant task. You can only call out to all those who suspect that their organisation is not far from such a status, wind up your organisation quickly and consistently before no one else can do so.

In Germany, every association must state in its statutes to whom the money is to be transferred when its own association dissolves. As a rule, there is a name or a superior area that has not been taken very seriously over all those years. Nevertheless, this is the legal choice and you do well to observe it.

If you have no more money and no more activities, you should have the courage to shut down and end the organisation organisationally, legally and culturally. On the internet, there are numerous tips and offers to support the legal dissolution. Organisationally, this means unwinding and cancelling all contracts. This is like when a close relative dies. Then memberships have to be cancelled, telephone, energy, insurance and other obligations have to be terminated. In this respect, it is also clear what has to be done. Culturally, this may not be an obligatory task, but it is certainly no less important in any case. It means "celebrating" a farewell party with all those to whom the organisation still means something or used to mean something, in order to remember the good moments of existence. There are no limits to the imagination here. In any case, stories and anecdotes around an organisation are a good occasion to discuss not only the insufferable legal and organisational issues.

In Moldova, the trend of environmental NGOs disappearing is not a problem, because it is rather a normal process of an evolving ecological movement. When a local environmental problem is solved, the initiative group breaks up. If more time or finances are needed, the initiative group joins a local NGO to jointly create a project or program to solve it. After the successful completion of the project, some of the volunteers will be

leave and some will remain in the organisation. Over time, many environmental NGOs outgrow themselves, professionalize and "leave" either in science or in business. Nevertheless, they stay "environmentally conscious". Moreover, many NGOs unite in temporary alliances, which we wrote about earlier. Often the alliance turns from temporary to permanent, when members of different NGOs begin to understand that joint efforts in most areas are more effective and bring bigger benefits. However, it is worrying that environmental NGOs have been used in the political games and speculations during election campaigns in the last decade.

### **13. What characterises an intact NGO?**

An intact NGO has its antennae equally directed inwards and outwards. It sees itself as an organisation that combines a high level of competence with an equally high level of curiosity and openness. In an intact NGO, criticism is always possible at any time and justified criticism is also met. In addition, there is a shared joy in successes, as well as empathy when activities go wrong or fail. Intact NGOs constantly ask themselves what they can improve. The highest authority for ideas and new projects is the team. Lone fighters that essentially only want to do their own thing have no future. Intact NGOs share what is there in a transparent and fair way, even in times when things are not going well. Moreover, problematic issues are addressed in a timely but not hurtful manner. An opportunistic "none of my business" tends to be alien to intact NGOs, because they see who has what role in the organisation and do not overestimate themselves. However, they also do not hide their light under a bushel. Intact NGOs are always tempted to work together with other organisations. They do not close themselves off but try to find reinforcement for their projects and ideas in networks. Intact organisations are also not afraid of competitors, because they can rely on their own strengths. There are certainly other characteristics of intact NGOs. We challenge you to think about and find them. Based on the aspects compiled so far in the individual chapters, this should not be difficult.

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