



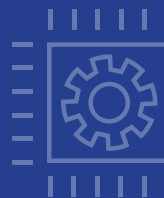
Effectiveness, Challenges and Recommendations of the **Online NGOs** information System in Tanzania

September 2022



**REPORT ON THE
EFFECTIVENESS,
CHALLENGES AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE WEB-BASED
NGOS INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
IN TANZANIA**

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**EAST AFRICAN
HUMAN RIGHTS
INSTITUTE**

PRINCIPLE RESEARCHER AND WRITER

Adv. Onesmo Olungurumwa - *National Coordinator THRDC*

Associate Researchers and Writers

Revocatus Sono - *General Secretary NACoNGO*

Adv. Paul Kisabo- *THRDC*

Dennis Bashaka - *Legal Officer at the Office of Registrar*

Issa R. Mtinangi - *Office of Registrar -IT*

Lisa Kagaruki-*THRDC*

Adv. Rehema Mwakyusa – *EAHRI*

Musa Kisena – *Bluefin Solutions*

DATA ENTRY AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Deogratius Chambi - *IT and Digital Security Officer THRDC*

Doreen Mwita - *Legal Officer Afritanza – Attorney*

Paulina Jacob – *Admin- AfriTanza Attorney*

Elizabeth Achilies – *Executive Director EAHRI*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

1. **ACHPR** The African Commission on Human and People’s Rights
2. **APIs** Application Programming Interface.
3. **BRELA** Business Registration and Licensing Agency
4. **CBO** Community Based Organization.
5. **CSS-** Cascading Style Sheets
6. **DANIDA** Danish International Development Agency
7. **EAHRRI** East African Human Rights Research Institute
8. **FCS** Foundation for Civil Society
9. **GePG** Government Electronic Payment Gateway
10. **GN** Government Notice
11. **HTML** Hypertext Markup Language
12. **ICT** Information Communication Technology
13. **INGO** International Non-Government Organisation
14. **MB-** Mega Bytes
15. **MYSQL** a combination of “My”, the name of co-founder Michael Widenius’s daughter My, and “SQL”, the abbreviation for Structured Query Language.
16. **NaCoNGO** National Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
17. **NIDA** National Identity Authority
18. **NIS** Non- Governmental Organization Information System
19. **NGOs** Non-Governmental Organizations
20. **PDF** Potable Document File
21. **PHP** Hypertext Preprocessor
22. **RITA** Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency
23. **REA** Rural Energy Agency
24. **SQL** Structured Query Language
25. **TAMISEMI** Tawala Miko na Serikali za Mitaa
26. **THRDC** Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition
27. **WCF** Workers Compensation Fund

An illustration of four hands, two from the top and two from the bottom, holding each other in a circle. The hands are rendered in a warm, reddish-brown color with soft shading and dark outlines. The fingers are interlaced, creating a sense of unity and support. The background is plain white.

NGO'S

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This study was steered to measure the effectiveness of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Information System (nis.jamii.go.tz) in Mainland Tanzania. The study was conducted by THRDC in collaboration with the East African Human Rights Research Institute (EAHRRI) and the National Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (NaCoNGO under the auspices of the Office of the Registrar of NGOs at the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups.

Objectives and Scope of the Study

The objective was to assess the impact, relevance, effectiveness, and challenges of the NGOs online system. Researchers collected and analyzed data from NGOs and other stakeholders with the view to effect change, improvement, and necessary reforms on the NIS System. The study assessed the applicability of the NGOs Information System since it was established in 2020.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods had been used by researchers to achieve the intended objectives. However, to get numerical data, quantitative research approach was employed through a structured questionnaire for collecting in-depth and actionable data from the NGOs about the use of this online system. The data collection method relied mainly through an online questionnaire. The online survey tool (survey monkey) enabled this study to reach a wider community of NGOs in Tanzania - Mainland. Developed questionnaires were circulated and a total of 253 respondents replied through online interactions. This study reached NGOs, Assistant Registrar of NGOs, and legal advisors from Tanzania Mainland. This study also processed and analyzed data from the office of Registrar especially row data from the system (NIS).

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This study has examined the effectiveness and efficiency of the NGOs Information System in enhancing freedom of association and development of NGOs Sector in Tanzania Mainland. The findings of this study found system to effective and relevant to the modern society. Tanzania is the only Country in Africa to have a web-based NGOs management system. This conclusion has been reached by this study after collecting, collating, analyzing, and presenting the views of NIS users.

NIS system is managed by the Government of United Republic of Tanzania, under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, through the ICT Unit of the office of Registrar of NGOs. All technical issues related to NIS are handled by ICT Unit staff. Other issues, such as submissions of Contracts, change of, filing of reports and payment of fees are dealt with by Registrar Office. Currently, the Office of Registrar is manned by only 17 staff members whose task is to manage the NGOs information system. The Non- Governmental Organization Information System (NIS) is used to register an NGO electronically, file quarter and annual reports, submit funding contracts, submit changes of NGO particular and make electronic payments without the need to appear physically to the Registrar office. This system was officially launched for the first time in Tanzania on April 2020.

Effectiveness, Efficiency and Achievements of the System

The study findings suggest 91% of all 253 (229) respondents know something about of the NIS system. This means that almost all respondents are aware of the existence of the system, and they use it. These survey findings from the respondents are also supported by statistics from the office of Registrar of NGOs which indicates that out of 8114 registered NGOs 5159 use the online platform. Since its establishment a total of 2221 NGOs have been registered. For instance, in 2020/2021 a total of 765 NGOs were registered while in 2021/2022 1456 NGOs were registered. Before the introduction of this system, the Registrar of NGO was only able to register around 230 – 450 NGOs per year, as compared to the annual target of around 500 NGOs. This is a great milestone for the NGOs sector in Tanzania given the fact that the entire world is now shifting into digitalized management systems of NGOs.

The system has largely achieved in increasing the number of NGOs registered monthly as by August 2022 the online system registers an average number of 121 NGOs per month. For instance, from 1st January 2022 up to 30th July 2022 number of NGOs registered were 833 with an average of 119 per month just within seven (7) months. This dramatic increase is however associated with the ongoing pace of civic space opening in Tanzania. The system helps people to easily access information and complete the registration process remotely and at any time. It takes a short time to get feedback. Some respondents called for more transparency on the structure of the constitution as required by the ministry.

This study shows that beneficiaries really like to use the system because of its accessibility, firmness, and it has saved them so many resources (time and money). *“The system has enabled saving costs, time, and reduced bureaucracy of the registration and reporting procedures...it has also enabled proper records keeping for NGOs”*. The system has expanded the base of NGOs registration to range

between 1000-1400 NGOs per year compared to the situation before the web-based registration system. Previously and before the establishment of this web-based NGOs information system the number fresh registration of NGOs per year ranged between 100 to 200 NGOs.

According to the findings of this study, the respondents are largely satisfied by the system. They say it is user-friendly, fast, and efficient and simplify transfer of information. It provides auto response when respective fees are paid and issues receipt and the user doesn't have to travel all the way to Dodoma. The system breaks the chain of bureaucracy in sending report. It keeps reference of the report sent at national level. The portal simplifies submission of reports and fee payment. It simplifies provision of service from the registrar anywhere and access to information about NGOs.

Therefore, the system has reduced registration, clerical and travel costs, saves time, simplifies submission of documents, and correctly keep record. The system is environmentally friendly for it reduces the need for paperwork, unnecessary delays and curb corruption. The creation of the NGOs Information System has modernized the management of NGOs services in Tanzania as compared to other countries. Tanzania is only country in Africa that has an effective online NGOs management system. Other African countries still use manually operated NGOs management systems. This system has enabled the office of Registrar to improve NGOs monitoring and evaluation. Online Registration System (nis.jamii.go.tz) has widened the base of NGOs registration and compliance since its establishment as presented in subsequent sub-chapters. For instance, Since the established of the NGOs registry in 2005 (almost 15 years) the manual registration system registered only 5643 NGOs. Whereas under the NIS system a total of 2541 NGOs had been registered in the past two years from 2020-2022.

Challenges

Despite these progressive developments, majority of NGOs are complaining that the NGOs information system is not effective in responding to some of the key concerns during the process. The system doesn't have a default of quick mechanism of notifications and feedbacks during after completion of the process. These challenges are common to all levels starting from registration level, at the time of change of particulars, during contract submission as well as at the time of reporting. The system doesn't produce certificate online after the registration process is completed, as a result people are compelled to incur unnecessary travel expenses to and from Dodoma to fetch the certificate of registration. Likewise, people incur travel expenses when registering an NGO. The need for the administrators of NGOs information system to devise a mechanism for issuing online certificate provoked a heated debate among many respondents.

Although the web-based NGOs information system has attained remarkable progress in just two years since its introduction there were also several challenges that the users of the system encountered that have necessitated the review of the system. For instance, although more than 70% of all registered NGOs are currently using the NIS web-based system, the findings of this study show majority of people know the system but face many challenges how to use it.

The main problem according to the findings is hinged on lack of technical know-how among the users. The study findings indicates that majority of users don't have the capacity to operate the system themselves without seeking help from other firms or knowledgeable individuals. Most users said they were facing difficulties to use the system due to lack of awareness, poor internet connectivity, language barriers and the system itself which makes it hard to complete one stage

The effective usage of the system depends on how the users have the capacity and knowledge to use the system. Level of understanding of NIS includes but not limited to integrated set of components for collecting, uploading, downloading, storing and processing data and for providing and getting information concerning different organizations through online platform. Under this area the level of understanding of NIS users will be examined in Registration Level, Submission of the Contracts, and Changing of Particulars.

Other challenges are associated with the use and management of the system like delayed registration process, insufficient timely feedback at registration level or at the level of changing particulars of an NGO already existing, limited space for uploading attachments during reporting or submission of funding contracts or agreements for approval. The following is the summary of key challenges.

- (i) The available user guide is not user friendly since written in English. It should also be in Swahili so that many people can understand it.
- (ii) During the survey, respondents stated that they have insufficient knowledge on how to use the NGOs information system. A few NGOs use the system in submitting reports. Other concerns are about the instability of the internet connectivity
- (iii) Many people have complained about inaccessibility of the network whenever they log into the system thus causing unnecessary inconvenience. However, others said the connectivity problems is caused by lack of modern equipment such as laptops or smartphones with high capacity.
- (iv) The respondents have pointed out several issues that need to be solved. The constitution format uploaded in the system has some important sections

- missing. The Format of the Constitution online was developed with inadequate knowledge on the structure and modus operandi of the modern NGOs in particular the format is not compatible to many constitutions of NGOs networks and those of INGOs.
- (v) There is an issue of discrepancy of language used on the constitution and others said the system does not fulfil the need of NGOs.
 - (vi) Many respondents complained about the delay on getting the feedback, and the system does not have automatic feedback mechanism to notify users if their documents have been received.
 - (vii) Others say the changes made in the system are not always quickly verified. “The process is good the problem lies on the operators and the system itself. It is not working efficiently as expected thus forcing some people to visit the office physically,” says a respondent
 - (viii) The system doesn’t have a user-friendly dashboard to read the content.
 - (ix) Sending large attachment i.e. PDF files is not always easy due to internet connectivity challenges also the capacity limit of the system to upload document not above 2 MB (megabytes). Some respondents say the system shouldn’t have the maximum size of file to be uploaded because that creating inconvenience to modify documents. “It is not possible to upload large files with their quality, if the file is big it has to be reduced in size thus reducing its quality” a respondent said
 - (x) No good telephone feedback is obtained; this is because the designated phone number go unanswered. The system operators not always respond to phone enquiries.
 - (xi) There is no alternative system for people with disabilities to access the website such as large font for visually impaired people and braille for the blind.
 - (xii) The system has no segregated data of NGOs. Other thematic areas of NGOs are not mentioned on the system
 - (xiii) The system doesn’t have its own website hence can’t easily be accessible by users of NGO’s information.
 - (xiv) Ordinarily communication is a two-way traffic, that is there must be a sender and the receiver of the information. With the introduction of NGOs information system, information is channeled through online system.

- (xv) The NGOs Act under section 29 requires every organization to submit a report of its activities and financial audited report in every calendar year to the registrar of NGOs. Therefore, according to the NGOs Act an NGO is supposed to submit a report only to the registrar. NGOs have encountered challenges because in some areas, the local government officers have been claiming for reports from the NGOs. This is backed up by the NGOs guidelines which was issued in 2021 requiring NGOs to submit reports to the district council or at municipal offices.
- (xvi) Moreover, NGOs submit quarterly reports and annual reports. NGOs have been using much of their time in preparing reports. It could be sufficient only if the NGOs could submit only the annual activity report and financial audited report. This will also minimize the backlog of reports at the office of the registrar of NGOs. The registrar should only be the custodian of NGOs reports and any government office that intends to get a report of a certain organization should seek it from the office of the registrar.
- (xvii) One of the most observed challenges that have been noted is system slowness in most of the pages when clicked, it takes a longer time than normal to load a normal page, this makes a system very slow and not user-friendly. The slowness of the system leads to delays in transmitting or processing data which can be caused by a wide variety of reasons. This delay forces the user to wait for a long time before seeing anything meaningful on a page or being able to interact with the system. Example on admin panel when contracts link is clicked it loads for a very long time up to 11.83 seconds whereby the required time should not exceed 3 second in one page this is because all contracts are loaded at once, this scenario appear in most of the pages, best practice should be loading only the contracts available on that page (this is referred to as Lazy loading and when well implemented the system speed is optimized).
- (xviii) The backend system consists of duplicated menus, there are multiple menus which are repetitive thus NGOs App, Contract App and Report App (3 duplications each). Having multiple menu headings creates confusion to end users and distorts the menu's look. Duplicate codes are caused by Code bugs which are sequence of source code that occurs more than once in a system. To solve this challenge, there is a need to conduct code review and optimization which is a process of finding and detecting duplications in source codes in each area.
- (xix) This audit found that important functionalities like certificate downloading, download and export button not working, document upload should be increased from 2MB to at least 10MB.

- (xx) Certificate Downloads-When designing such a system the main aim is to automate most of the tasks and make the process easier, Getting the certificate through the system after all the procedures have been completed will make the system more meaningful hence fulfil the automation purpose to the maximum.

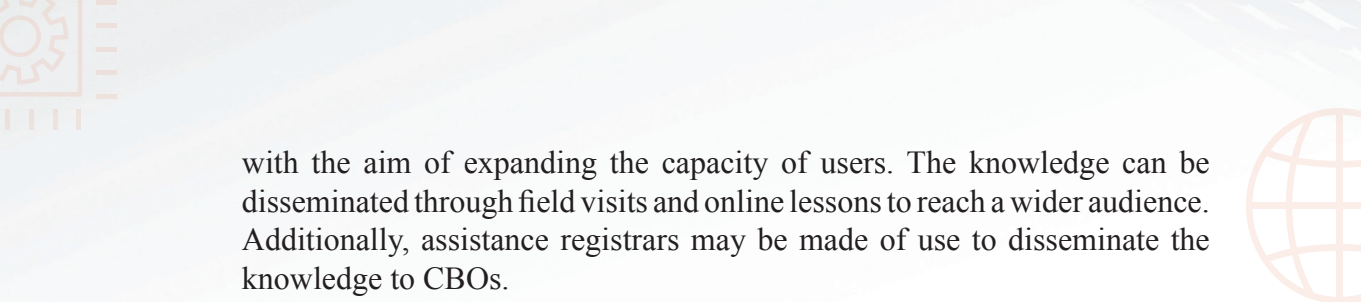
RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous recommendations have been made to improve the system. A video guide to direct users can be useful to improve the capacity of users. Some say registration should be decentralized at district level. Delayed response should also be worked on. The ministry should routinely educate the public on changes of the constitution. NGOs should be prioritized to get registration earlier. Certificates should be issued in time and through an online system. Government officials, NaCoNGO and NGOs networks to visit the regions where NGOs operate to educate them about the use of this new system.

More capacity building initiatives are needed to raise community awareness to understand this new technology of online application. There should be an equal footing between registration requirements in Tanzania. Feedback mechanism should be expanded to allow many stakeholders to air their views about the system. There should be a mechanism where individuals can directly chat with an official in case, they have any questions. Public employees should be trained to expediently process the applications. There should be an avenue in the system that allows open debate on pertinent issues regarding the constitution.

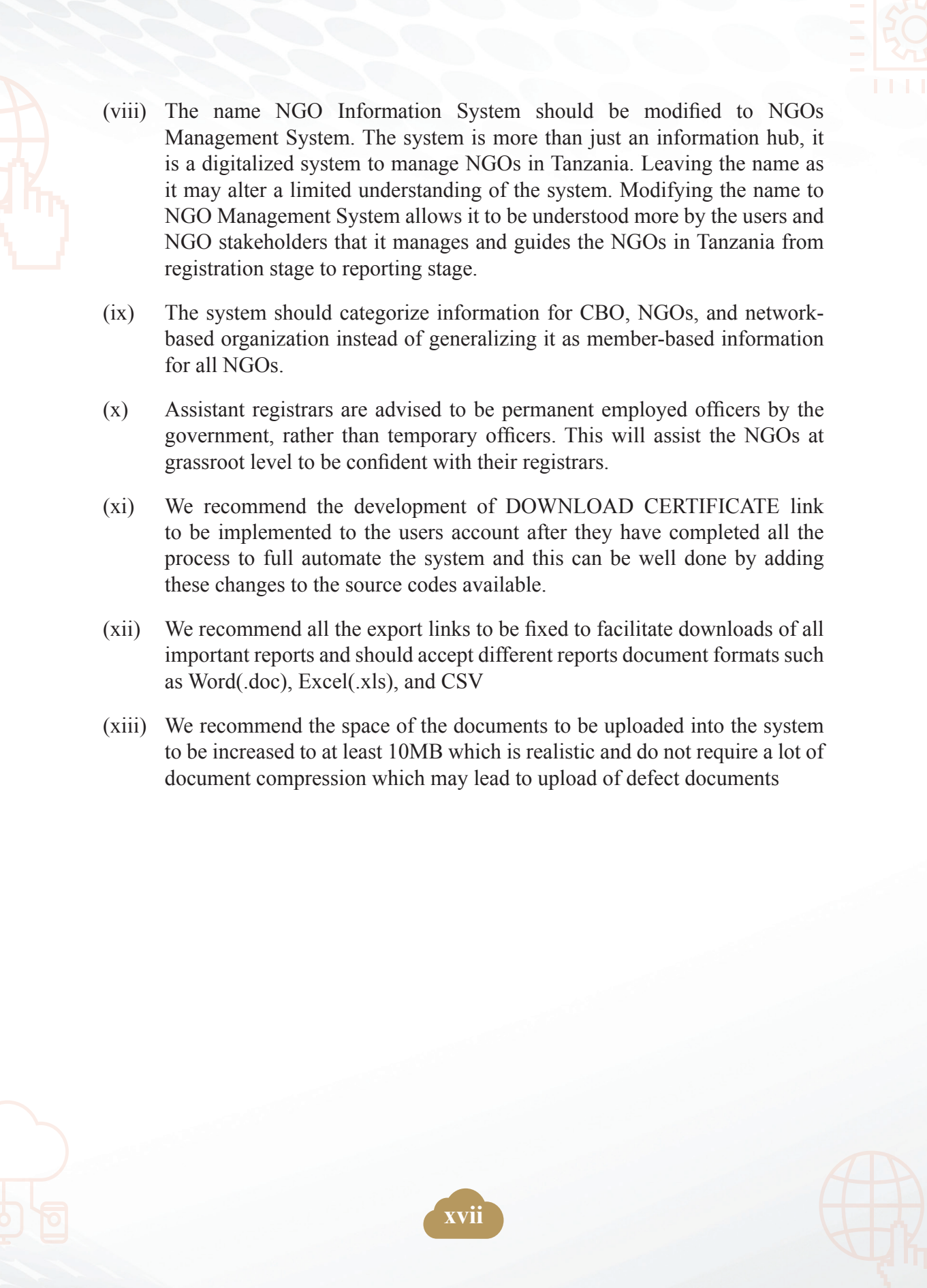
According to the observations made the NIS system need to be well optimized and developed to solve the available problems that are associated with performance, security and User-interface interactions. There is no need for overhauling of the entire system but rather solving the available challenges by involving software development experts who can make the system serve the purpose by adding important features as can be observed in this report and solving all challenges related to performance and user interactions. The following are summarized key recommendations.

- (i) NIS should be renovated and modified by a competent expert team. The office of Registrar should revamp the whole system and re-generate it to operate better. This can be done in assistance with NGOs that have expertise on the area of system development and management. This will also give enough trial and dissemination period of the system to the users.
- (ii) The Government should conduct capacity training to NGOs and Assistant Registrars on how to use and manage the NGOs Information system. The knowledge of using and accessing NIS needs to be disseminated to the users



with the aim of expanding the capacity of users. The knowledge can be disseminated through field visits and online lessons to reach a wider audience. Additionally, assistance registrars may be made of use to disseminate the knowledge to CBOs.

- (iii) The office of registrar should look upon adapting a 24/7 digitalized robot response tool that allows users to get an immediate assistance whenever needed.
- (iv) From the analysis, the findings show that the delay on the response is partly due to the office of registrar having resources (tools and staff) that are not correspondent with the workload. It was recommended that NGO stakeholders and other developmental stakeholders to support the office of registrar with tools such as laptops and tablets that will allow staffs to respond to all NIS requests on time.
- (v) NIS should allow the use of Swahili and English languages. After going through the data collected from the study, it was of the view that most users intended do not understand well English as it is the only language used by the system. Hence to help the users to easily access the system, the office of the registrar through the responsible Ministry should look a proper way to also include Kiswahili as the language used through the system, which is the national language of Tanzania. The respondents recommended that and we quote; “Low understanding of the users and the language used is not friendly many people understand Swahili as compared to English”, “The NIS system should be in both national languages Swahili and English”, “electronic systems should use national languages”
- (vi) NIS should widen the scope of users and allow all NGOs stakeholders to have accessibility of the system. Currently, NIS has a restricted access to users with accounts only. NGOs stakeholders are more than NGOs themselves, therefore allowing access of preliminary information of an organization to other NGO stakeholder will widen NGO’s transparency and accountability.
- (vii) Regulations should be developed to guide the use and management of NIS. The regulations will outline a proper functioning method and ways of all users including staff to manage the system. For Instance, the challenge of delayed response on submitted contracts may remain unsolved due to the absence of regulation; the regulation may give a timeline of 7 working days response on contract submitted.

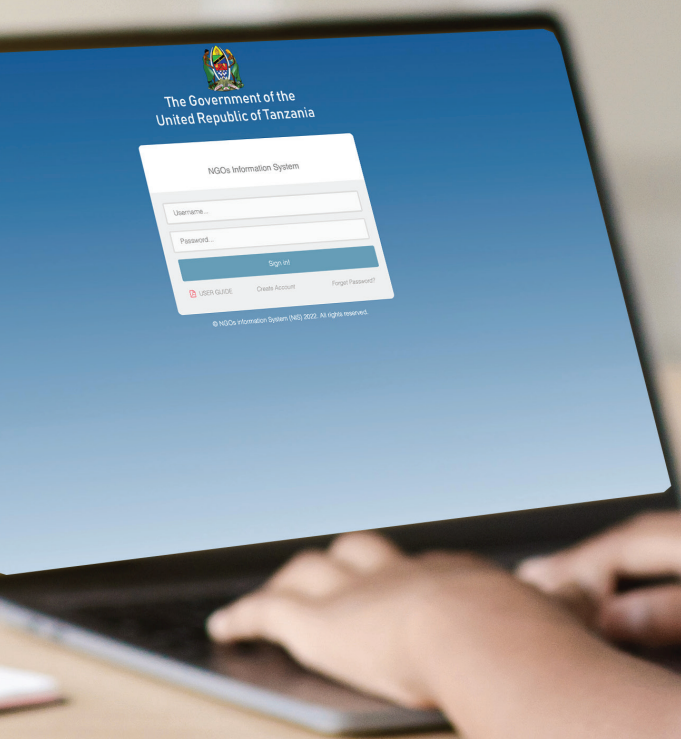
- 
- (viii) The name NGO Information System should be modified to NGOs Management System. The system is more than just an information hub, it is a digitalized system to manage NGOs in Tanzania. Leaving the name as it may alter a limited understanding of the system. Modifying the name to NGO Management System allows it to be understood more by the users and NGO stakeholders that it manages and guides the NGOs in Tanzania from registration stage to reporting stage.
 - (ix) The system should categorize information for CBO, NGOs, and network-based organization instead of generalizing it as member-based information for all NGOs.
 - (x) Assistant registrars are advised to be permanent employed officers by the government, rather than temporary officers. This will assist the NGOs at grassroot level to be confident with their registrars.
 - (xi) We recommend the development of DOWNLOAD CERTIFICATE link to be implemented to the users account after they have completed all the process to full automate the system and this can be well done by adding these changes to the source codes available.
 - (xii) We recommend all the export links to be fixed to facilitate downloads of all important reports and should accept different reports document formats such as Word(.doc), Excel(.xls), and CSV
 - (xiii) We recommend the space of the documents to be uploaded into the system to be increased to at least 10MB which is realistic and do not require a lot of document compression which may lead to upload of defect documents

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This work could not be possible without the close collaboration of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC); the office of Registrar of NGOs, East Africa Human Rights Research Institute (EAHRRI); National Council of NGOs (NaCoNGO) who conducted the study, analysed data, and developed this strong report on the effectiveness of NGOs Information System to the work of NGOs in Tanzania Mainland. Through these organizations, a team of six people immensely contributed to develop this report. They are: Adv. Onesmo Olungurumwa (National Coordinator THRDC), Mr. Revocatus Sono (Secretary NaCoNGO), Ms. Lisa Kagaruki (Head of Members Affairs Department THRDC), Ms. Rehema Mwakyusa from EAHRRI, Dennis Bashaka (Legal Officer - Office of Registrar of NGOs), Musa Kisena (Blue Solutions) and Issa Ramadhani Mtinangi (IT-Officer from the office of Registrar of NGOs).

The survey team would like to express special gratitude to all NGOs stakeholders who volunteered their time and shared their responses, opinions, and recommendations to the study conducted in July and August 2022. Their roles have led to successful development of this report about effectiveness of the NGOs Information System (nis.jamii.go.tz) to the work of NGOs in Tanzania-Mainland. The stakeholders consulted during this study included member organizations of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), Non -member NGOs, International NGOs, assistant registrars of NGOs, legal advisors and academicians.

The team also acknowledges the financial support from DANIDA and the Foundation for Civil Society that facilitated the entire process of this study including publication of this report.



The Government of the
United Republic of Tanzania

NGOs Information System

Sign In

USER GUIDE

Create Account

Forget Password?

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is a report of the study conducted to measure the effectiveness, challenges, and the impact of the NGOs Information System (nis.jamii.go.tz) to the work of NGOs in Tanzania-Mainland. This part of the report presents information about the study, the scope of the study, objectives of the study, methodology of the study and limitations.

1.1 About the Study

As part of addressing common challenges encountered by NGOs, THRDC in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar of NGOs at the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups; the East African Human Rights Research Institute (EAHRRI); and the National Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (NaCoNGO) conducted a joint assessment of the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the NGOs Information System (nis.jamii.go.tz). The NGOs information system was developed by the Ministry and is currently managed by the office of the registrar of NGOs. It is a multiple use system for NGOs management basing on web or online system. It is useful in registration of an NGO, submission of NGOs' contracts for approval, submission of reports and other inquiries related with NGOs.

The findings of the study will be used by the office of the registrar of NGOs and other stakeholders to employ necessary reforms for improvements and review of the NGOs information system (registration and reporting system).

1.2 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the impact, relevance, effectiveness, and challenges of the NGOs Information System. The Study collected and analyzed data from NGOs and other NGOs stakeholders with the objective of developing this report to be used for necessary reforms and improvement of the NGOs information system in Tanzania.

Being a study conducted for the purpose of evaluating the system, its broad objective is to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the NGOs online Information System in enhancing freedom of association and development of the NGOs Sector in Mainland Tanzania. The study assessed the application of the system for the past two years based on international, national and regional standards underlying an effective NGOs management system. In particular, the specific objectives of this study are:

- (i) To examine the relevance of the NGOs Information System in enhancing access to justice through legal aid in Mainland Tanzania.
- (ii) To examine the impact, effectiveness, and efficiency of the application of web-based NGOs Information System in enhancing freedom of association in Mainland Tanzania.
- (iii) To examine how the NGOs information system has enhanced accessibility of the NGOs services provided by the registrar office.
- (iv) To analyse the achievements, challenges, and opportunities presented by the application of the NGOs information system; and
- (v) To make recommendations with the view to improving and sustaining the use of the web-based NGOs Management System.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study caters for only registered NGOs operating in Tanzania Mainland. The study reached users of the NGOs information system including NGOs (both local and International organisations operating in Tanzania); those providing legal advice to NGOs and Assistant Registrars. The study assesses the applicability of the NGOs Information System since it was established in 2020. Therefore this study cover the period between 2020 and 2022.

1.4 BACKGROUND TO NGOS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Since 2005 to April 2020, Non-Governmental Organizations were registered manually. The applicants had appeared physically before the Registrar of Non-Governmental Organizations office and submit all documents required for the registration. This arrangement was also applied whenever the Non-Governmental Organizations wished to file their annual reports or settle their annual fees. Over the last 15 years the business of NGO Management was conducted manually.

1.4.1 Registration of NGOs

The Non-Governmental Organization Act [Cap 56] of the Laws of Tanzania as amended in 2005 and 2019, establish the Office of Registrar of NGOs responsible for coordination and management of NGOs in Tanzania mainland. The said law provides for the procedure for the registration of NGOs and all was required to be conducted manually. The law was required for the person wishes to register NGO must submit the following documents;

- (i) Constitutions (3) copies;
- (ii) Signed minutes of members;
- (iii) Cv's of office bearers; and
- (iv) Recommendation letter.

All these documents were supposed to be submitted manually in the Registrar office situated in Dar es Salaam and later on move to Dodoma. Therefore, for the person wishes to register NGO must move from where the NGO is situated to the Registrar office only for the submission of documents. Pursuant to section 13(1) and (2) of the NGO Act [Cap 56] of the Laws of Tanzania, the process of registration will take three months to be completed.

Because of business practiced manually applicants were facing a lot of challenges such as moving back and forth, incur a lot of expenses for printing documents and accommodation for those travelling from places far away from Registrar office, and this is because there were no communication mechanisms to inform the applicant the status of his/her application; whether it is complete, rejected or need some correction. Generally, this practice leads the Registrar office to register 230-280 NGOs per year and fail to meet its target of registering 500 NGOs per year.

1.4.2 Compliance of NGOs towards NGO Laws

During the period before the introduction of NIS many NGOs failed to comply with the Laws governing NGOs. Many NGOs failed to file their annual report and pay annual fees in due course, and others failed to completely file their annual reports even payment of annual fees. This situation had consequently led the Government to lose revenue and failed to recognize the contribution of NGO towards national development.

It is true that system used before NIS was extremely burdensome to the applicant, it was time consuming, and the applicants incurred huge monetary expenses. This is because, in order to file the annual report, or file change of particulars as well as to pay annual fees, the applicant was supposed to move from where the NGO

is situated up to the Registrar office to access those services in Dar es Salaam and subsequently in Dodoma.

It is true that practice was very burdensome to the applicant and took a lot of time to successfully register an NGO, file annual report, file changes as well as to pay annual fees. The applicant was supposed to move back and forth to the Registrar office to access that service.

Due to that practice many NGOs failed to file their annual reports and pay annual fees on time, and others fail to file completely annual report even payment of annual fees. This led the Government to lose revenue and fail to recognize the contribution of NGO towards national development.

Furthermore, in every financial year the Registrar office set the target of registering 500 NGO but failed to meet that target and the collection of revenue were minimal. The Government of United Republic of Tanzania reckoned a myriad of challenges citizen faced particularly in the NGO Management sector, and thus introduced Non-Governmental Informational System (NIS) to resolve such challenges.

1.5 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This study on the efficiency and efficacy of NGOs Online Information System in Tanzania Mainland is based on the following conventional evaluation criteria: relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility. In view of these criteria, this study explored some hypothesis, under each of the evaluation-cited criteria, guided, *inter alia*, by some key questions asked in the online questionnaire.

1.5.1 Impact

What are the impacts of the use of the application of the NGOs online information system for the last two years since its establishment to the work of NGOs? The study assessed key achievements associated with the use of this online information system. The idea was to assess if there are meaningful impacts on the use of this system to NGOs and the office of registrar on the other hand.

1.5.2 Effectiveness

To what extent is the NGOs online information system effective in enhancing freedom of association for NGOs? This study assessed and analysed to what extent the use this online system has enabled the NGOs sector in Tanzania to meets its key objectives. The study therefore assessed if the system met its main objectives of establishment.

1.5.3 Efficiency

To what extent has the online system managed for past two years to reach its target group (NGOs). The study therefore assessed how the beneficiaries (NGOs) of the system have efficiently used the system to improve their compliance level during registration and reporting time.

1.5.4 Affordability/ Accessibility

To what extent NGOs and those willing to register NGOs have accessed the online system. The study measured the level in which NGOs and those individual wishing to register NGOs have managed to access the online system. This evaluation criterion looked at affordability of the online system. Assessing the capacity of NGOs to access and use the system. The question like whether the system was accessible and affordable to every NGOs was asked to ascertain the accessibility of NGOs online management system.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to reach its intended objectives. The study is mainly based on primary data collected through a questionnaire that was administered through an online mechanism.

1.6.1 Quantitative Methods

In order to have numerical data, quantitative research approach was employed. The aim of using this approach was because this assessment needs numerical data. Therefore, a structured questionnaire was used to collect in-depth and actionable data from NGOs about the use of this online system. Quantitative data collected through quantitative methods are presented in tables, charts, graphs or any other numerical forms.

For the purpose of this study, primary quantitative data were collected by using online questionnaires and email survey tools. Selected group of respondents were reached with the same questions through an online survey-monkey tool. The online survey tool (survey monkey) enabled this study to reach a wider community of NGOs in Tanzania - Mainland. Developed questionnaires were circulated and a total of 253 respondents replied through online interactions. The questionnaire reached NGOs, Assistant Registrar of NGOs a legal advisor as provided below;

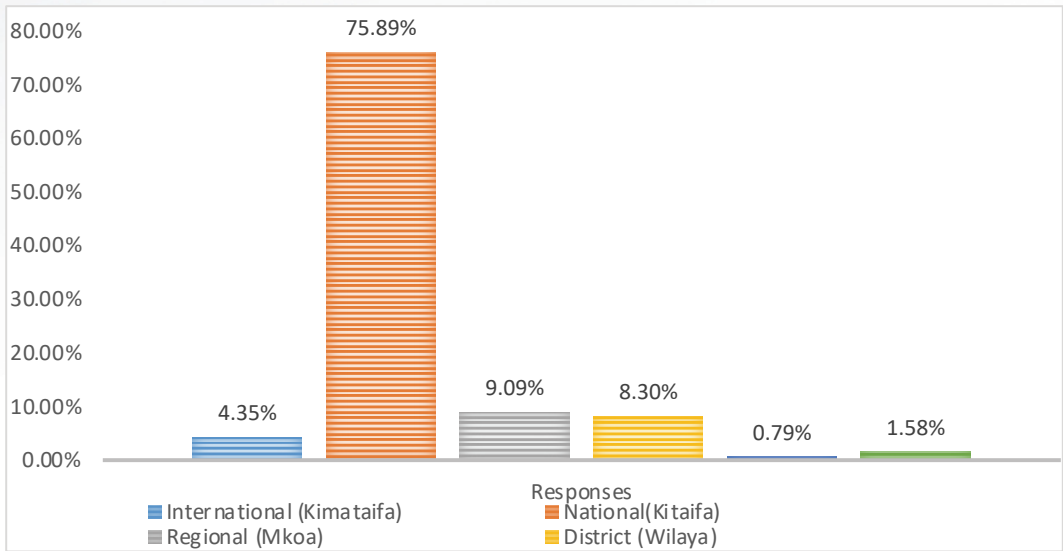


Figure No 1: Respondents Categories

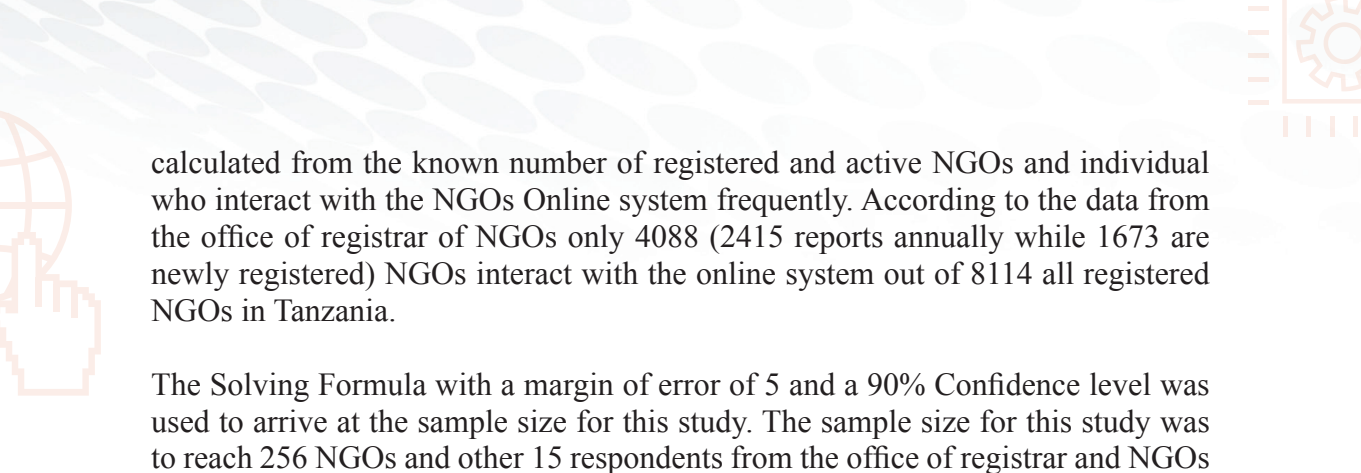
The Figure No. 1 above indicates that all 253 respondents have attempted to answer this question of particulars and status of respondents. Out of 246 respondents; 2 (1%) respondents are assistant registrars; 4 (2%) respondents are legal advisors; 11 (3%) respondents are international NGOs; 21 (9%) respondents are NGOs registered at district level; 23 (9) respondents are registered at regional level, while the majority 192 (77%) of the respondents are NGOs registered and operating nationally.

1.6.2 Qualitative Methods

This study also employed qualitative method which enabled to gather and analysed qualitative data from literature and various reports including interview with the office of registrar of NGOs. This methodology was used to back up the study with qualitative information from the office of registrar of NGOs and from various publications and report related to this study. The study analysed the findings of this study considering the international norms underlying the principle related to freedom of association. Therefore, given the nature of this study, various regulations and guidelines related to the management of NGOs and freedom of association in general were applied.

1.6.3 Sampling

To ensure a meaningful statistical comparison, a desirable sample of the NGOs representatives was selected against the total number of NGOs who actively interact with the NGOs online system. The population study estimate has been



calculated from the known number of registered and active NGOs and individual who interact with the NGOs Online system frequently. According to the data from the office of registrar of NGOs only 4088 (2415 reports annually while 1673 are newly registered) NGOs interact with the online system out of 8114 all registered NGOs in Tanzania.

The Solving Formula with a margin of error of 5 and a 90% Confidence level was used to arrive at the sample size for this study. The sample size for this study was to reach 256 NGOs and other 15 respondents from the office of registrar and NGOs legal advisors.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis and presentation. Verbatim, summarized quotes from respondents have been used as well to support quantitative data obtained during this study. In addition, case studies and comparative analysis have been used where appropriate. The software used for data analysis and presentation include Survey-Monkey tools and Excel Sheet.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

This study was not completed without various challenges and limitations. The study was constrained by lack of allocated resources for this study, shortage of time, poor cooperation from International NGOs, fear of assistant registrar to participate in the process without getting an approval letter from Local Government Ministry (TAMISEMI). Capacity challenges for grassroots NGOs to use the online questionnaires.

CHAPTER TWO

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

2.0 AN OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

This part of the report presents and analyze the findings of the study. The responses of all key questions asked during the study have been analyzed and presented in this chapter in various forms. This chapter therefore covers the following key areas; about the NGOs information System, the level of understanding and usage of the NIS, the effectiveness and efficiency of the NGOs information system, challenges and achievements of the NGOs information system.

2.1 ABOUT THE NGOS INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Non- Governmental Organization Information System (NIS) is a new mechanism for managing NGOs. It was introduced by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, through the Office of Registrar of NGOs.

The system, which allows the applicant(user) to apply and register an NGO electronically, file quarterly and annual reports, submit funding contracts, submit changes of NGO particulars, was officially launched in April 2020. It linked to the GePG payment system which allows electronic payments without the need to go physically to the Registrar Office.

The NIS system has two main parts for registration and for uploading reports. Since its establishment a total of 2221 NGOs have been registered. In 2020/2021, a total of 765 NGOs were registered while in 2021/2022 1456 NGOs were registered. Before the introduction of this system, the Registrar of NGO was only able to register around 230 – 450 NGOs per year, as compared to the annual target of around 500 NGOs. Therefore, the system has allowed the Registrar office to surpassingly exceed its target of registering 500 NGOs every year.

2.1.1 Management of the System

NIS system is managed by the Government of United Republic of Tanzania, under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, through the ICT Unit of the office of Registrar of NGOs. All technical issues related to NIS are handled by ICT Unit staff. Other issues, such as submissions of Contracts, change of particulars, filing of reports and payment of fees are dealt with by Registrar Office. Currently, the Office of Registrar is manned by only 17 staff members whose task is to manage the NGOs information system.

2.1.2 Users of the System

The main users of the NIS System are Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Record shows that as of 2022 a total of 5802 NGOs have used the electronic system. The access to this system has also been granted to 198 Government officers including Registrar of NGOs staff members and some from the office of the Assistant registrar.

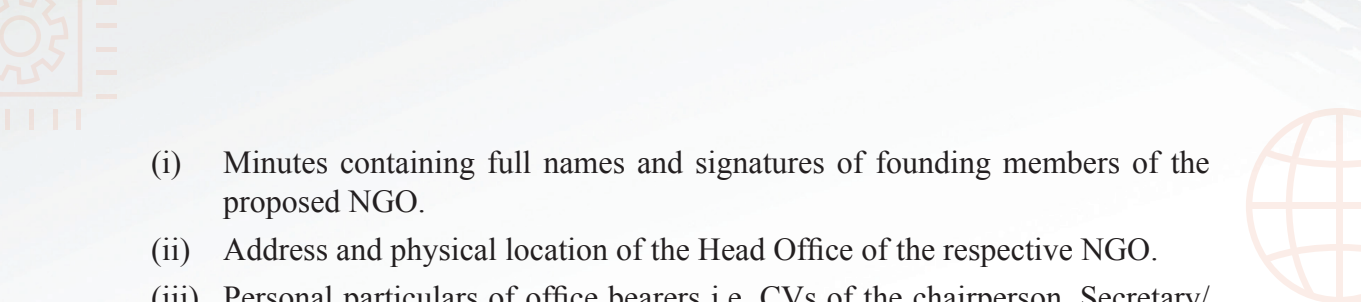
2.1.3 Uses of the System

The NGO Information System is currently being used to manage NGOs under the following key areas of NGOs management.

(a) Registration System

Currently NGOs are registered through Non-Government Information System (NIS). An applicant who wishes to register an NGO must access the NIS through the official web link nis.jamii.go.tz. Prior to the registration, the applicant is supposed to create an account in order to log in and thus proceed with the registration process. The applicant has to choose what type of an NGO he/she wants to register i.e., whether it is a national/local. In order to access this system, the applicant must be registered by NIDA and issued with an identification number. The procedure is different for International NGOs.

In the registration section, the NIS system allows the applicant (New User) to register a fresh NGO. The applicant is given a wide choice to register a new NGO under different categories of International, National, Regional or District. Through this system the user can receive notification if the application is completed, rejected, or needs to be corrected. The application must be submitted by one or more persons, being founding members of the organization through online system by filling in necessary documents which are uploaded on the system and shall be accompanied by the following.

- 
- (i) Minutes containing full names and signatures of founding members of the proposed NGO.
 - (ii) Address and physical location of the Head Office of the respective NGO.
 - (iii) Personal particulars of office bearers i.e. CVs of the chairperson, Secretary/ Director and the treasurer, or others as it may be necessary.
 - (iv) The application fees for the NGO which will operate at District, Regional or National levels are Tanzanian shillings 80,000, 100,000 and 115,000 respectively.
 - (v) Recommendation Letter from either regional or district community development officer

The Procedure for registering an International NGOs requires the application be submitted by three or more persons as founding members, two of whom must be residents of Tanzania. The application shall be made in a prescribed form accompanied by;

- (i) Constitution from the country of origin
- (ii) Certificate of Registration from the country of origin
- (iii) Personal particulars of office bearers i.e. CVs for the Chairperson, secretary and treasurer, or others as the case may be
- (iv) Address and physical location of the head office of such an NGO
- (v) Board Resolution from abroad
- (vi) Minutes
- (vii) A letter of recommendation
- (viii) Foreigners Must attach their travelling passports
- (ix) Application fee is USD 350

The system recognizes International NGOs as those making fresh registration from country other than Tanzania. Currently the system doesn't allow fresh registration of International NGOs here in Tanzania. The system also provides for the bill of registration fees and gives the applicant access to make payment online; issue a notification upon receipt of the payment. When the application is completed, the applicant receives notification regarding collection of certificates of registration. The NIS system doesn't provide certificate of registration. The applicant is thus required to appear physically to the Registrar office in Dodoma for collecting the certificate when the registration process is completed.

b) Reporting System

NGOs reporting procedure in Tanzania as per the current legal regime is divided into three reporting times or clusters i.e. quarterly reporting, bi-annual reporting and annual reporting. In order for the NGO officials to file the triple reports, they must visit the NIS through credentials created when they were registering their NGO and the system will direct them how to fill in such a report.

All registered NGOs are required to do reporting as part of legal compliance as prescribed in the NGOs law and its regulations. Therefore, to ensure this is effectively done, the NGOs information system has categorized reporting systems into the following reporting clusters.

- (i) Quarter report
- (ii) Bi-annual Report
- (iii) Annual report
- (iv) Funding Contracts
- (v) Change of Particulars

In line with the Non-Governmental Organizations laws, every NGO is required to file quarter and annual reports, pay annual fees, submit the funding contract which exceed Tanzanian shillings 20,000,000/= before starting a project and notify Registrar any changes within the organization.

This process is done through a web- based system as elaborated below.

- (i) The designated NGO leader should visit the NIS
- (ii) Create user Account on NIS for registered NGOs
- (iii) Get the control number from the website
- (iv) Pay the annual fees and penalties if any
- (v) Submit all your reports and audited financial reports
- (vi) Documents required for reporting; Minutes of the annual meeting, Audited
- (vii) Financial Report, filling annual returns (paying appropriate fees) and narrative progressive report.

(c) Submission of Contract

As per the current legal regime NGOs are required to submit the funding contracts entered between them and their donors within 14 days. They must also login in their NIS account before attaching/uploading the funding Contracts.

(d) Change of Particulars

The same procedure of login in their NIS system is required when change of NGOs particulars is needed. They have to feed into the system all areas of changes with the following supporting documents; Minutes of member proving their participation in the process as well as any other relevant documents.

2.2 LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING AND USAGE OF THE SYSTEM

In attempt to measure the level of understanding about the NGOs information system, the study used quantitative criteria among others to assess the level of understanding. The number of NGOs using the system is therefore one of the indicative factors used to measure the level of understanding. The findings of this survey indicates that more than 70% of all registered NGOs in Tanzania use the web-based NGOs information system. For instance, according to the data from the office of the registrar since the establishment of the web-based system about 5200 NGOs have used the online system out of all 8184 registered NGOs. This informs this study that the larger part of NGOs sector is aware of the web-based NGOs information system.

2.2.1 Usage of the System

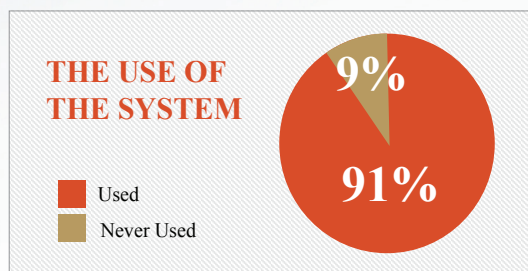
The NGOs information system is a multi-task online based system which allows NGOs to use it for completing all activities related to NGOs management and compliance. According to the findings of this study, NGOs uses the system to do the following major activities.

- a) To create online NGOs accounts.
- b) For Registration of NGOs,
- c) For Reporting/Annual Returns,
- d) For Change of Particulars and
- e) For Contracts Submission,

The findings of the information gathered through an online survey which reached a total of 253 respondents indicate that the system has considerable number of users. For instance, more than 91% (229) of those who responded to the question that asked if they have ever used the system, have confirmed to know and to have used the system while only 9% (24 respondents) admitted to have not used the system as elaborated in the pie chart below:



Figure 2: The Number of NGOs using the NGOs information System



Prior to the establishment of the NIS web-based system, all the above activities were done physically and manually. It was not until, 2020 when the new system took effect, according to the information from the Registrar’s office. Further details are presented in this sub-chapter.

2.2.1.1 Creation of Account and Registered Users

According to the data from the office of the registrar, since the introduction of a new system, a total of 8184 NGOs have been registered although only **5192 NGOs** have an active NIS account. About **2987 NGOs/ applicants** have not created a NIS account. The applications of **605 NGOs are still** on process. Moreover, there are 1745 Applicants/accounts whose users have applied but did not complete the process. A total of 98 NGOs had their applications rejected due to incompetence. Also, the NIS system has suspended about 4938 applications for several reasons. The following is a summarized data regarding Registration of NGOs;

No	LEVELS	NUMBER OF REGISTERED NGOs
1.	International Level	517
2.	National Level	6602
3.	Regional Level	435
4.	District Level	630
	TOTAL REGISTERED NGOs 8184	8184

Table 1: The Number of Registered NGOs

2.2.1.2 Reporting through NIS

As explained above, different NGOs activities, including reporting can be done through NIS. This can either be through filling in the quarterly or annual reports or payment of their due annual fees from 2021 financial year to January 2022. According to data from the registrar’s office, the following descriptions show the status of NGOs that are NIS system for filling their annual reports and pay annual fees up to January 2022 and those which have not.

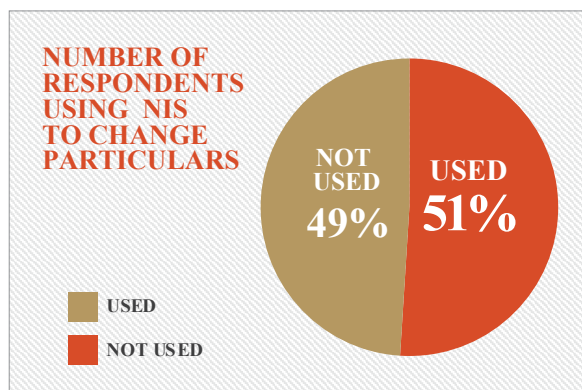
- i) 2415 NGOs have paid their Annual fees through NIS
- ii) 4138 NGOs have not paid their annual fees through NIS
- iii) 935 NGOs have submitted their Annual reports through NIS
- iv) 5251 NGOs have not submitted Annual reports through NIS

The information above suggest that some NGOs have been facing capacity challenges, thus they have not been able to produce their progressive report. It also indicates that some NGOs have only been paying their annual fee without submitting their progressive report through NIS. This situation is partly attributed by the modality of submitting the narrative/progress reports, which is proving a challenge to some organizations thus they are often forced to submit only the annual report.

2.2.1.3 Change of Particulars NIS

Since the Non-Government Organization System (NIS) was introduced almost everything is supposed to be done electronically through an online platform. Hence, even change of particulars, including but not limited to change/omissions of members of the NGOs etc., has to be done through the system. Since 2020 a total of **752 requests** have been submitted to change particulars through NIS. According to the data from the registrar’s office **539 requests** have been approved and **213 requests** are still in process whereas system administrators receive 30 requests each month.

Figure 3: Number of Respondents /NGOs used NIS to change particulars



According to the data from the online survey conducted by THRDC and EAHRRI, out of **244 respondents** who responded to the questions, **123 respondents (50%)** have used the system to change their organization particulars, while **121 respondents (49%)** have not used the system to change their organization particulars as shown in the chart left.

2.2.1.4 Submission of Contracts through NIS

The NGOs are obliged to file their contracts through the NIS so that they can be reviewed to check if they cover all thematic areas as per the NGO’s registration. According to the data from the registrar’s office, a total number of **415 Contracts** have been submitted by the NGOs since 2020 when the NIS system was introduced. The data shows **325 contracts** have been approved and **90 contracts** are still being processed. According to the survey conducted by THRDC and EAHRRI out of **237 respondents** who responded to the question as to whether they have ever used NIS to submit their contracts for approval as required, **60 respondents (25%)** said they have already used *nis.jamii.go.tz* to submit funding contracts/agreements for approval, **177 respondents (75%)** admitted to have never used the system to submit funding contracts/agreements for approval.

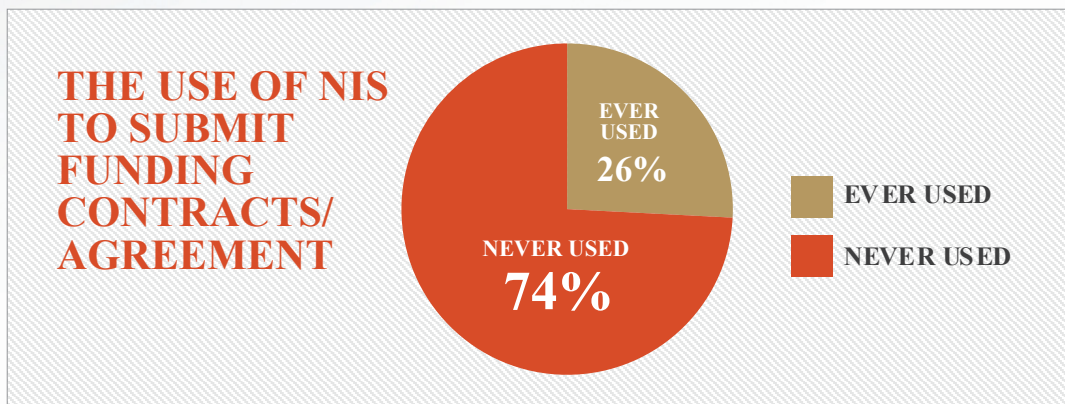


Figure 4: Number of Respondents/NGOs who used NIS to submit financial contracts

The respondents who have submitted their contracts for approval as required, reported that they had faced some challenges while submitting their documents as follows; -

a) Delayed Feedback and Approvals

Some NGOs have complained that, when they submit their contracts, the system takes a lot of time to provide feedbacks. Under such situation it is not easy to know if the contracts have been received and approved or if they need to provide any additional information. This systemic drawback has largely affected project implementations deadlines.

“When we send the documents, we don’t get the feedback whether the documents we have submitted have been accepted and are approved. Sometimes it takes long for the documents to be approved,” says one Respondent

b) Lack of Knowledge

Other respondents argued that they have not submitted the contracts for approval through NIS system because they do not know how to submit, and also because the language used is hard for them to understand.

“I don’t know how to attach the documents, we have never submitted any contracts/agreement for approval, yet I cannot submit any information through the NIS system because I don’t have any experience using it. The language there in is too hard, I don’t understand the content, “says one Respondents

After reviewing the responses from NIS users and those who could not manage to use the system, this study came up with the following recommendations which we think will improve and accelerate the usage of the system.

- a) To improve or add working tools to the registrar's office. The data from the respondents shows that many NGOs do not submit their contracts because of the delayed feedbacks, which affects their plans to attain measurable goals on certain projects. Maybe the responsible authority lacks enough working tools to speed up the approval of the said contracts on time. We suggest improvement and addition of the working tools at the registrar's office, will help to speed up the approvals and this will motivate more NGOs to submit their contracts through the system.
- b) We also thought special training should be given to all intended system users, especially the NGOs, as it has been attested above majority of the respondents do not submit the contracts through NIS system because they do not have requisite knowledge on how to access the system and upload the said contracts. Therefore, the office of the registrar in collaboration with other partners should prepare and conduct a special capacity building training to educate the users, so that they could understand how the system works, and hence they could easily access and operate it.

2.2.2 The Understanding Level of NIS

This study also assessed the level of awareness among the system users. Although more than 70% of all registered NGOs are currently using the NIS web-based system, the findings of this study show majority of people know the system but face many challenges how to use it. The main problem according to the findings is hinged on lack of technical know-how among the users. The effective usage of the system depends on how the users have the capacity and knowledge to use the system. Level of understanding of NIS include but not limited to integrated set of components for collecting, uploading, downloading, storing, and processing data and for providing and getting information concerning different organizations through online platform. Under this area the level of understanding of NIS users will be examined in Registration Level, Submission of the Contracts, and Changing of Particulars.

The study findings suggest 91% of all 253 (229) respondents are aware about the existence of the NIS system. This means that almost all respondents are aware of the existence of the system, and they use it. These survey findings are also supported by statistics from the office of Registrar of NGOs which indicate that out of 8114 registered NGOs 5159 use the online platform. This is a great milestone for the

NGOs sector in Tanzania given the fact that the entire world is now shifting into digitalized operations.

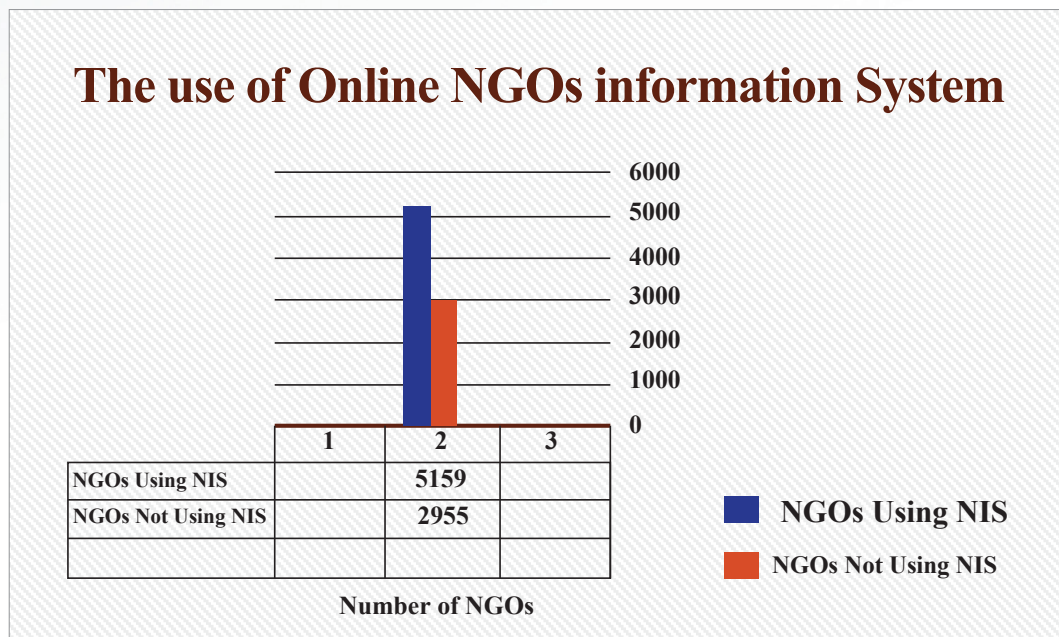


Figure 5: Number of NGOs using NIS

The challenge remains on how to use or operate the system. The study findings indicates that majority of users don't have the capacity to operate the system themselves without seeking help from other firms or knowledgeable individuals. Most users said they were facing difficulties to use the system due to lack of awareness, poor internet connectivity, language barriers and the system itself which makes it hard to complete one stage. On respondent said,

“When using the system, I realised the dashboard does not have the menu tags/ names thus it requires the user to guess and click the icon on the dashboard to know its contents,” says one respondent. Another respondent is quoted, “Lack of training on the best way to use this system. Even the manual is in English which we do not understand”

The NGO Registrar's Office developed a user guide. It is meant to help users to easily understand step by step, from registration to reporting. However, the guide is not user – friendly to all users because it is written only in English language rather than both, English and Swahili. Therefore, the user guide cannot fulfill its aim to simplify the contents and guide the users through the system.

Although the study findings and the data from the registrar's show many organizations have registered and are reporting through NIS, the study's analysis suggest majority of registered NGOs lack basic knowledge on how to use the system. For instance, many NGOs especially those in rural areas consulted people with ICT knowledge such as law firms to guide them how to access and operate the system. This state of affairs has affected such NGOs not only during the registration process, and at the time of reporting but also during submission of contracts

This situation is manifested by the delays of their applications and even submission of incomplete applications. When the system was introduced, there was no formal training or awareness raising sessions for the intended users (current and potential). For instance, some respondents said they have not received any kind of introductory course on how to use and operate the system as per below quotes.

"We were not trained on how to make the registration, nor how to log into the system. It is hard to understand this system, "says one Respondent

"We don't have any experience using this system, it is very complicated, "The system doesn't clearly direct the steps, and some icons are not responsive accordingly" "I don't know how to attach the documents and how to use the system generally" " Some section about presenting the documents are not easily understood" says another respondent

Hence the Registrar's office should develop more strategies i.e. devoting more time, knowledge and power to conduct public awareness raising and capacity building sessions on how to use, operate and access the system. These sessions will benefit the public and users in rural and urban areas.

" The society's lack of knowledge on how to use the guiding system on how to enact the Constitution(Frequent criticism from experts from the office of the Registrar of societies", " Many people do not know ICT method," , " New users need special guidance , it is better for the Registrar at regional level be given the responsibility of imparting public education to NGOs in their respective regions", " Many people have low education" " They don't know how to use the system and often seek help from other people," " Registrars at ward level should be educated on how NGOs operate and how they are registered".

The findings shows the challenges related to capacity and knowledge on how to operate the system affects the NGOs not only during registration process but also during reporting and submission of contracts. For instance, 75% of all respondents

did not submit their contracts through NIS due to lack of knowledge on how to access/ use and upload documents or submit contracts in the system. The respondents said;

“I don’t know how to attach it”, “We have never submitted any contracts/ agreement for approval”, “I could not submit any information through NIS because of lack of experience”, “ I have not yet submitted the documents into the system, the language used is hard to understand,” a respondent said.

Language barriers is linked to lack of knowledge and capacity of the people in using the NIS system. Because the system uses English language, many people notably those in rural areas could not grasp as they don’t commonly use such a language.

“Many users do not understand they system because the language used is not friendly to them, they are more used to Kiswahili than English, “The NIS system should be in both national languages, English and Kiswahili,”

The respondents made many recommendations which can help system users to gain basic ICT knowledge and skills when accessing and operating the system. The recommendations are as follows.

- a) The quality and access of the system in general should be further improved,
- b) To provide awareness raising sessions to current and potential users on how the system works.
- c) The language used by the system should be both English and Kiswahili, since many people use Kiswahili for their daily commvnications.

2.3 EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICACY OF THE SYSTEM

The study sought to establish the extent to which the NGOs online information is effective in enhancing freedom of association in Tanzania. To achieve that the following important issues were examined: (i) whether the process of registration of NGOs has been effective to reach the intended outcomes in line with global or regional standards on freedom of association and (ii) whether the Online NGOS information system is effective at the time of reporting as well as during submission of NGO contracts for approval.

A systematic and digitalized approach in managing registration and reporting of NGOs is more welcomed in the modern society where the global NGOs society is online. The main objective of introducing an online mechanism of registering and managing NGOs reporting is to simplify and make the process cost effective.

The contemporary NGOs operate in a very competitive environment that requires robust and digitalized NGOs management system that maximizes transparency and efficiency of NGOs.¹

According to Freedom of Association Guideline developed by the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) the right to freedom of association is guaranteed under Article 10 of the African Charter, Article 8 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and Articles 12(3), 27(2) and 28 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.²

At international level, the right to freedom of association is also guaranteed under Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 15 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 7(c) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Article 26 and 40 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families, Article 15 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 24(7) of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.³

At National Level, Article 20 of the Constitution of Tanzania guarantee the right to freedom of association in a broad manner consistent with regional and international human instruments. In Tanzania, the NGOs Act of 2002 and other national legislations were established to facilitate and encouraging the establishment of associations and promoting their ability to pursue their objectives. Therefore, the process and manner of registration and NGOs reporting is directed by the NGOs Act and its regulations.

This study has therefore assessed whether the online NGOs information system has required features with the quality to meet the intended objectives behind the establishment of Online NGOs Information System. The system was found to be reliable, responsive, and easy to access but with some minor challenges on accuracy and segregation of the data entered by NGOs.

1 Management Information Systems for Non-Governmental Organisations. The Evidence from Poland by Tomasz Dyczkowski : SSRN POLOAND.pdf

2 The African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACPPR) Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa.

3 Ibid

2.3.1 Accessibility of the NGOs Management System

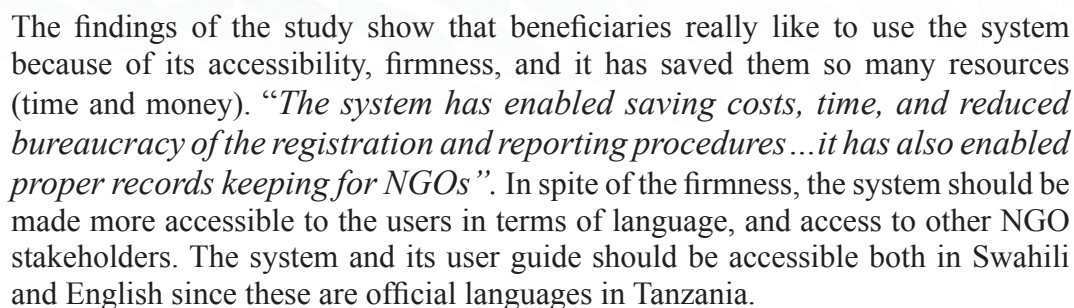
Accessibility is the practice of making information or a system available to the right beneficiaries and to as many people as possible. The system is accessible if its perceivable, operable, understandable, and even robust in nature. The study assessed the level of accessibility of the NGOs Information System to the intended users. The findings show that the system was not accessible to all intended users. For instance, the current number of registered NGOs is 8114 while only 5190 have online accounts with the system. The system cannot be regarded as effective if it has failed to guarantee accessibility of the all the intended users.

The effectiveness of the NGOs Information system depends on how this digitalized system allows NGOs to access it for registration of NGOs, Change of NGOs particulars and for reporting. The assessment showed the accessibility level under each principle as elaborated below;

The NGO Registrar's Office developed a user guide for the users to easily understand step by step, from registration to reporting. However, the guide is not user – friendly because it is written in English rather than both, English and Swahili. Therefore, the user guide cannot fulfill its intention to simplify and guide the users to access the system. Henceforth the system is not operable and accessible to all.

The study's assessment also measured the effectiveness of the system in particular by looking at its robustness. The system has a total of 5159 NGOs that have accounts with the system out of 8114 registered NGOs. The findings of this study found that not all users with NIS online accounts have the capacity or knowledge to access and use the system without seeking legal assistance from lawyers or consult other people for help. The system also sometimes jams or slowdown especially during the reporting periods (March – April) because all active users will be using the system to submit their annual reports and annual fees as required by the regulations. This may be a normal situation for any automated system once in use to all users at the same time.

Having a web-based NGOs management system has been found to be effective as it has managed to expand the number of registered NGOs from 200 NGOs (before NIS) per year to 1400 NGOs (after NIS) per year since 2020. It has also managed to allow about 752 NGOs to change their particulars with an average of 360 per year. The reporting aspect however did not go as it was intended because many of NGOs have little knowledge on how to use it for reporting but also the information system is said to have several limitations and challenges that restrict the accessibility of the system.



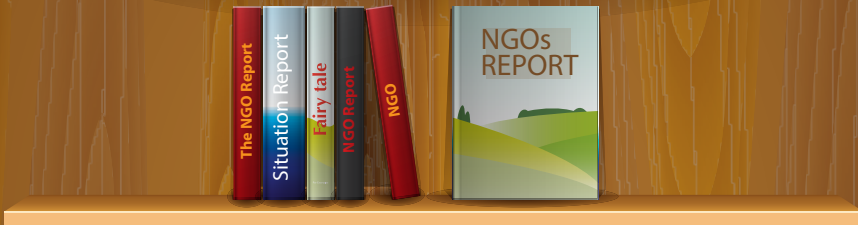
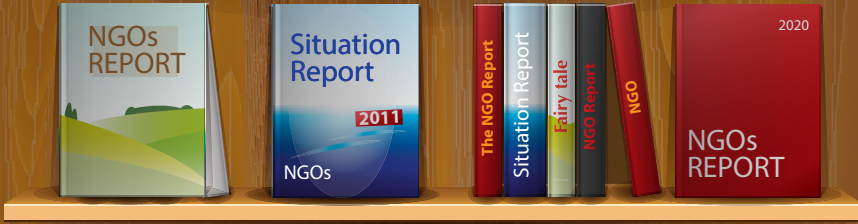
The findings of the study show that beneficiaries really like to use the system because of its accessibility, firmness, and it has saved them so many resources (time and money). *“The system has enabled saving costs, time, and reduced bureaucracy of the registration and reporting procedures...it has also enabled proper records keeping for NGOs”*. In spite of the firmness, the system should be made more accessible to the users in terms of language, and access to other NGO stakeholders. The system and its user guide should be accessible both in Swahili and English since these are official languages in Tanzania.

It is recommended that the system’s accessibility be widened to cater for other NGO stakeholders, who do not have an account in the system, so that they can access all preliminary information (such as registration status, reporting status) of an NGO (s) in Tanzania through the system. The NGO Information System is advised to adapt other independent government systems such as BRELA, RITA etc. This will increase the transparency level of NGOs to its stakeholders.

As it was stated in the above chapter, NGO Information System was introduced in April 2020 as one of the successful tools for managing NGOs in Tanzania. However, no efforts had been made to equip the users with knowledge and skills on how to use the system so that it is more accessible to all the beneficiaries. The office of the registrar should develop mechanism for training and awareness raising on how the NGOs Information System works so that all NGOs from the grassroots level can benefit across Tanzania.

It is recommended that, the system’s accessibility be widened to cater for other NGO stakeholders, who do not have an account in the system. They should get access to all preliminary information (such as registration status, reporting status) of an NGO (s) in Tanzania through the system. It is also suggested that the NGO Information System, be linked to other independent government systems such as BRELA, RITA etc. This will increase the transparency level of NGOs to its stakeholders.

As presented in the above chapter, NGO Information System was introduced in April 2020 as one of the successful tools to manage NGOs in Tanzania. However, there were no efforts in disseminating the knowledge of using the system through the NGOs so that it can be easily accessible to the beneficiaries. The office of the registrar should develop methods of disseminating the knowledge on the use of NGOs Information System to all NGOs in Tanzania from grassroots level.



2.3.2 Effectiveness at Registration Level

Registration of NGOs requires a robust and effective registration mechanism that simplify the need of individuals to form association. Any registration mechanism put in place must be effective to meet the desire of the people who need to exercise their rights to association. Various regional and international guidelines on freedom of association requires registration procedure to be;⁴

- i) Simple, clear, non-discriminatory and non-burdensome.
- ii) Any procedure for registration being offline or online should be in compliance with standards on freedom of association to avoid using the registration procedure to restrict the rights to freedom of association.
- iii) The registration procedure shall not limit the names of associations, unless they are misleading, for instance due to resembling the names of other associations, or where they violate the prohibition of hate speech as defined by the Constitution of Tanzania, regional and international human rights law.
- iv) Organizations shall be provided with official documents confirming their submission of notification upon such submission.
- v) Should the authorities fail to provide such documents, mailing records and copies of the notification form submitted shall suffice as evidence of submission of notification.
- vi) Organization shall not be required to register more than once or to renew their registration.
- vii) The body that registers associations must perform its functions impartially and fairly.
- viii) Only one body should be tasked with registering NGOs
- ix) The administrative authority in charge of registration shall make sure that the procedure and its decisions are accessible and transparent

Previously the registration of NGOs was done through physical presentation of documents at the main registry of NGOs in Dar es Salama and later in Dodoma. This process has affected effectiveness of NGOs registration process as many Tanzanians could not afford to make long travel to Dar es Salaam or Dodoma for registration. This had consequently slowed down the process of NGOs registration and made it, time consuming and expensive. For instance, before the establishment of NGOs online registration system the number of NGOs that were being registered per year was ranging between 100 and 200 NGOs. In a bid to address this systemic bottleneck, the government of Tanzania in 2020 developed a web-based NGOs information system as elaborated previously in this report.

4 The African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACPPR) Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa.

The online registration system for NGOs was assessed to measure its effectiveness in terms of improved quality, accessibility and affordability of NGOs registration services in Tanzania for the past two years. Globally, many organizations use internet technology for compliance and for other operations. In Tanzania the number of organizations which have used the web-based NGOs management system has considerably increased in past two years.

This study found that the system is effective because it has expanded the base of NGOs registration to range between 1000-1400 NGOs per year compared to the situation before the web-based registration system. Previously and before the establishment of this web-based NGOs information system the number fresh registration of NGOs per year ranged between 100 to 200 NGOs.

Despite these progressive developments, majority of NGOs are complaining that the NGOs information system is not effective in responding to some of the key concerns during the process. The system doesn't have a default quick mechanism of notifications and feedbacks during after completion of the process. These challenges are common to all levels starting from registration level, at the time of change of particulars, during contract submission and at the time of reporting.

“Being unfamiliar with the NIS webpage, we were expecting email correspondence per a conversation with an advisor. When we were informed that updates were on the website almost three weeks had passed causing a delay in the application registration process. While corrections can be made online, they are not always saved and/or the “edit” option is not available to add or make changes - further delaying the process,” says one respondent from the questionnaire.

The system doesn't produce certificate online after the registration process is completed, as a result people are compelled to incur unnecessary travel expenses to and from Dodoma to collect the certificate of registration. Likewise, people incur travel expenses when registering an NGO. The need for the administrators of NGOs information system to devise a mechanism for issuing online certificate provoked a heated debate among many respondents.

“It's useful, cost effective and corruption free. One does not have to travel to the Registrar office to complete and submit the forms. However, the office should take into considerations the challenges faced by NGOs in rural areas where the internet and electricity supply is unreliable. Maybe establish mobile registration hubs using solar power in villages (exploiting REA programme). Certificates of registration should be issued online instead of obliging people to travel to Dodoma to collect it,” says one respondent.

2.3.3 Effectiveness at Level of Changing Particulars

An effective web-based NGOs management system has to be prompt and responsive to all NGOs needs including the need to change NGOs particulars such as change of NGOs leadership, change of NGOs name, change of NGOs objectives etc. The current NGOs information system provides an opportunity for NGOs to change their particulars at any time. This mechanism was found to be effective as many NGOs reached by this study confirmed the usefulness of the system for changing particulars.

For instance, the study findings indicate an average of 30 NGOs access the NGOs system each month for change of particulars. For example, for the year 2021/2022 a total of 752 NGOs have accessed the system for change of particulars. This study indicates that 50% of 248 NGOs that have responded to the online questionnaire said they have in the past one year, changed their particulars through NGOs information system.

2.3.4 Effectiveness at Reporting Level

Various regional and international guidelines on freedom of association emphasizes on issues of accountability and transparency in management of NGOs affairs. The current NGO Policy also stresses the values of information sharing, transparency and accountability. For example, Section 7 states that all NGOs will be required to provide reports on their activities and audited annual accounts. Similarly, Articles 29 and 30 of the NGO Act give legal backing to these requirements. Regional and International standards on NGOs reporting requires that: ⁵

- (i) Where reporting is required, reporting requirements shall be simple and shall not be overly burdensome
- (ii) Reporting requirements shall be entirely laid out in a single piece of legislation,
- (iii) Reports shall only be required to a single state body.
- (iv) Any reporting requirements shall not require extensive details but shall rather be aimed at ensuring financial propriety.
- (v) The rights to confidentiality and privacy of associations, their members and those on whose behalf they work shall be respected throughout the reporting process.
- (vi) Reporting requirements shall be proportionate to the size and scope of the organization and shall be facilitated to the extent possible, inter alia, through the provision of templates, information technology tools, and other measures.
- (vii) Reporting requirements shall not be used to limit or target associations, including, inter alia, by utilizing the information therein to publicly condemn

⁵ Ibid.

- associations or by attempting to sanction or punish associations merely for altering their activities in relationship to the objectives they originally set out.
- (viii) Neither reporting nor auditing requirements shall be so burdensome as to significantly diminish the substantive activities of a not-for-profit association

For many years now NGOs and other stakeholders have been complaining about the physical submission of annual reports and accounts to the register offices. This was largely seen as time-wasting and inefficiency. Accordingly, the stakeholders recommended the following to be included in the proposed reviewed NGOs policy⁶

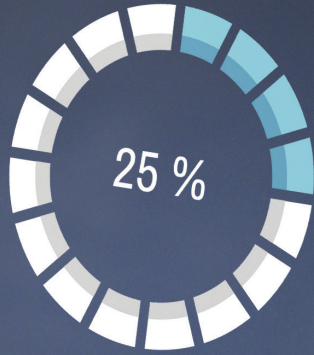
- (i) The use of electronic application process, reporting and annual payments to reflect the current trends. This would reduce time spent to visit register office for things that can be implemented online.
- (ii) To include a section that requires the government to receive reports online and not travelling with hard copies. The same should apply to NGOs to apply through the government central portal systems.

These recommendations were successfully implemented in 2020 when the government introduced to NGOs, an online mechanism for NGOs reporting within the office of registrar of NGOs. The current practice therefore requires registered NGOs to submit annual reports and audited accounts through a web-based NGOs information system. The Government requires maintenance of a public record of registered NGOs, including details of reports and accounts submitted and fees paid, which NGOs and members of the public can access online for free.

The current NGOs information system has accommodated all the intended objectives with few challenges such as the lower increase of the number of NGOs completing online reporting as compared to previous years before establishment of the online NGOs reporting mechanism. Previously more than 2000 NGOs were submitting both narrative and audited reports/payment receipts to the Office of Registrar physically. However, after establishing the online system the situation changed from 2000 NGOs that complete both submission of the narrative and payment receipts to 900 per year (those submitting all required documents) and 1500 who submits only payment receipts per years.

These findings indicate that, majority of NGOs have failed to submit narrative report into the system due to a number of reasons including poor capacity on the use of the online mechanism by NGOs. The requirement of submitting both narrative and payment receipts has been fully complied by few NGOs and the rest have managed to pay only the annual fee and submission of receipts.

6 Kessy A, Nkundi B & Olungurumwa O, (2008) Policy Review Report: The Review of the 2001 Non- Governmental Organization Policy, June 2018



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2.4 EFFICIENCY OF THE NGOS ONLINE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The efficiency of the NGOs Information System can be measured in-terms of how the system responds during registration, at the time of changing particulars, during reporting and during submission of funding contracts. Another yardstick for measuring the system efficiency is its flexibility in allowing external particulars, which might be worthy and related all the items mentioned above. However, the front page of the NIS which provide navigation guide is in English language. Some sections in the online NGOs Information System are incomplete. The survey findings encompass all of the above efficiency cluster which were geared at measuring the Efficiency of the NGOs Information System. Finding from this survey as responded by 253 respondents (Assistant NGOs Registrar, INGOs and Local NGOs) are stipulated below. This part of the report presents how NIS users interact with this web- based system by assessing the efficiency of the system while in use by NGOs.

2.4.1 Challenges that NIS Not Efficient

Large percentage of NIS users who responded to this survey, said the system allows them to register their established NGO, to report, change their particulars and submit contracts with certain level of efficiency as compared to the previous practice. However, this study found that the level of efficiency of this system was engulfed by challenges.

- (i) Submission of particulars to the web-based system was found be slow and technical to some users
- (ii) Majority of respondents reported that delayed registration process made the system rather inefficient for it takes, up to a week, a month, even a year to complete the process.
- (iii) Delayed responses from system managers during registration
- (iv) A proportional number of respondents (75 out of 253) respondents), said the system doesn't allow any form of interaction and or conversation with system managers. This is especially notable during the submission of important particulars of the prospective organisations such as mission, vision, goal, governance structure, and objectives for applying. The system was found to be one-way traffic and with limited interactions with users.
- (v) The system doesn't provide a room for applicants or NGOS personnel to give their opinion regarding the actions they need to make in the system.
- (vi) The system's reporting section has limited uploading capacity of the supporting documents. Sections on reports doesn't allow comprehensive information to be included by users.

- (vii) The traffic command system does not allow direct interaction between system administrators with founder of NGOs when it comes to decision making on key items of the NGOs documents. For instance, the issues related to NGOs name, the structure of the constitution and objectives are sometimes rejected without any room for discussion with managers in the system. *“The biggest challenge of the system itself is that it is not user friendly for first time users”* (Said one Respondent). System is also not efficient in producing or recording segregated data during registration, at the time of reporting and during submission of contracts.
- (viii) Even during change of particulars, the findings suggest the system is not user-friendly. It doesn't have simple instructions and navigation guide that make the process short and less technical. For instance, many respondents said the format of the Constitution available online has many shortfalls which makes it hard to conform with other constitutions of NGO's networks and International NGOs. *“The format created in filling the NGO details is more favourable to local NGOs especially on the part of constitution rather than being inclusive with INGOs”* Says one Respondents from International NGOs.
- (ix) The findings of this survey indicates that about 50% of the respondents' mentioned challenges associated to internet connectivity and capacity made the system rather inefficient to them., *“We normally experience unstable internet connectivity which leads to delayed report submission,”* said One Respondent.
- (x) The system was also found to have limited capacity to accommodate multiple documents. For instance, 46% of the respondents reported low capacity of the NIS system to accommodate multiple attachments

2.4.2 Recommendations

- i) The system needs to be reviewed to include interactive options with users when online. *“We need an interface that would allow direct interaction between users and service providers who should be available all working hours through online chatting,”* Says one Respondent.
- ii) The system should be updated and should contain all information and the data should be segregated. *“The data system must be improved to show women, men, people with special needs,”* Another respondent said.
- iii) The system should be reviewed to include all registration options including NGOs thematic areas of operations or add an option that would allow NGOs to add up a missing NGOs thematic area. *“The system should be improved*

by separating all NGOs operation areas”. “Improve system to accommodate all users at once”, “There is a need to improve the system to widen its scope to cater for different types of NGOs”, “Information system be improved”.

- iv) To improve network system especially in rural areas where they face a lot of network challenges. The following are some of the comments from the respondents regarding network problems.

“They should resolve all connectivity challenges to make the system run fast,” “The system should have strong data that allows users to upload and save data offline “Build the capacity of the system and availability of the network especially during presentation of the information. “The system should be updated every now and then it should not cause problems during presentation of documents”

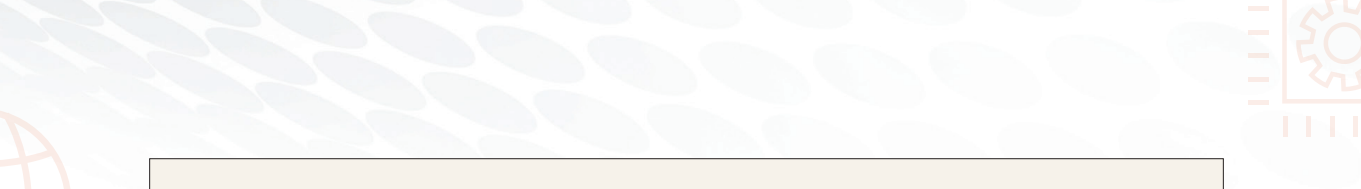
2.5 ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO THE USE OF THE ONLINE SYSTEM

Registration of NGOs officially started in Tanzania in 2005. By then manual system was being used for registration purposes and all the documents had to be submitted physically as hard copies. The registration process using manual application method/system was costly and took a long time to complete. NGOs officials had to travel long distances and spent lots of expenses. The risk of losing documents during registration process was also high. This part of the report, therefore, presents key achievement related to the use of NIS system since its establishment two years ago.

2.5.1. General Achievement

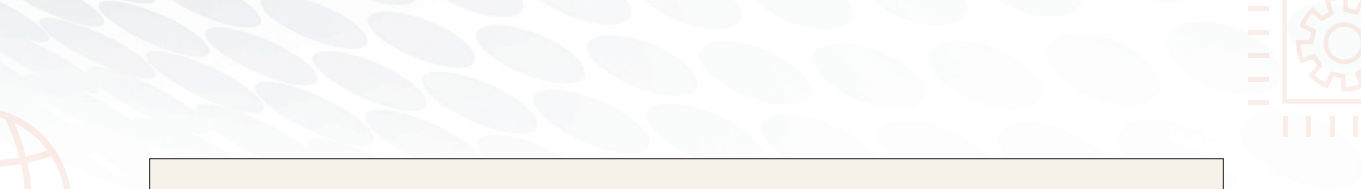
According to the findings of this study, the respondents are largely satisfied by the system. They say it is user-friendly, fast, and efficient and it simplifies transfer of information. It provides auto response when respective fees are paid and issues receipt and the user doesn't have to travel all the way to Dodoma. The system breaks the chain of bureaucracy in sending report. It keeps reference of the report sent at national level. The portal simplifies submission of reports and fee payment. It also simplifies provision of service from the registrar anywhere and access to information about NGOs.

The system has reduced registration, clerical and travel costs, saves time, simplifies submission of documents, and keep correct record. The system is environmentally friendly for it reduces the need for paperwork, unnecessary delays and also curb corruption. It also gives visibility to NGOs which would otherwise not be known nationally. According to some respondents the NIS system has increased transparency and the efficiency of NGOs.



“This is a very good arrangement; it is an impetus for efficiency of many NGO’s if not all. It is more simplified and saves a lot of costs” one respondent said.

The creation of the NGOs Information System has modernized the management of NGOs services in Tanzania as compared to other countries. Tanzania is the only country in Africa that has an effective online NGOs management system. Other African countries still use manually operated NGOs management systems. This system has enabled the office of Registrar to improve NGOs monitoring and evaluation. Online Registration System (nis.jamii.go.tz) has widened the base of NGOs registration and compliance since its establishment as it is presented in subsequent sub-chapters. For instance, Since the establishment of the NGOs registry in 2005 (almost 15 years) the manual registration system registered only 5643 NGOs. Whereas under the NIS system a total of 2541 NGOs had been registered in the past two years from 2020-2022. 702032



“The system has reduced registration costs since the applicants can register from their respective areas so technically the cost go down... The applicants do not incur travel costs there is proper directions from the office of the registrar of NGOs...the system has simplified sending and receiving information as compared to the situation before” one respondent remarked

The trend on figure 6 below presents open evidence how the use of web-based system (NIS) has successfully achieved its objectives of improving the speed of registering NGOs in Tanzania. The online registration system provides high level of accessibility and user-friendly registration process. It is secure with minimized third party interference. The system has simplified the work of data collection as all key data for NGOs management in Tanzania are being provided there.

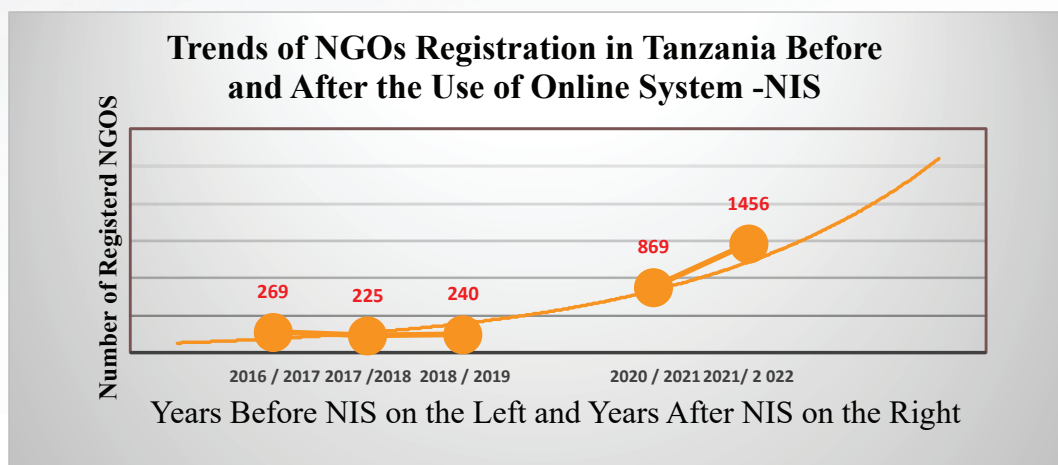


Figure 6: Trends of NGOs Registration in Tanzania from 2016 to 2022

For instance, through this system it is easy to collect data about NGOs compliance and their contribution to development programs. The system can also be integrated with other government systems. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the system proved more effective because NGOs were being registered and managed remotely.

2.5.2 Achievement at Registration Level

Before the introduction of online registration, the trend of NGOs registration was not promising. But in the period of last two years i.e from July 1st, 2022, June 30th, 2022, a total of 1400 NGOs were registered using the web-based registration system. In contrast from July 1st, 2016, to June 30th, 2019, only 245 NGOs were registered

“We thank the government for the online system it has made it easy for NGOs to submit documents. The registration process has been made easy,” Said one Respondent

The findings show the online registration system has increased the number of NGOs registered monthly. By August 2022 the online system registers an average of 121 NGOs per month. For instance, from 1st January 2022 up to 30th July 2022 number of registered NGOs was 833 with an average of 119 per month just within seven (7) months. This dramatic increase is however associated with the ongoing pace of civic space opening in Tanzania. The table below indicates the trends of NGOs registration from 2016 to 2022.



Table 3: Trends of NGOs Registration during and after the introduction of the Online System

NO.	Year	Number of NGOs Registered
NGOS REGISTRATION TRENDS BEFORE THE USE OF WEB BASED SYSTEM		
1	June 2016 to July 2017	269
2.	June 2017 to July 2018	225
3.	June 2018 to July 2019	240
TOTAL		734

NGOS REGISTRATION TRENDS WITH THE USE OF WEB BASED SYSTEM		
4.	May 2020 and June 2021	869
6	July 2021 to June 022	1456
7	Only July 2022	217
TOTAL		2542

The table above validates that the pace of registration NGOs during the last three (3) years of manual NGOs registration system was slow and ineffective as only 734 NGOs were registered with an average number of 245 registered NGOs per year (same as an average of 20 NGOs per month). *“I really like the NIS system, it makes it easy for submission wherever you are in Tanzania you can register without visiting the office,” says one respondent*

The registration trends as indicated in the table above indicates that NIS has improved the pace of registering NGOs from **734 NGO** three years before NIS was introduced to 1,671 NGOs for two years after introduction of NIS in 2020.

“The process of registering NGOs is very good because it is done online, and it has significantly reduced travel costs,” Said one respondent

Table 4: Categorization of registered NGOs from 1st May 2020 up to date

FRESH REGISTRATION TREND THROUGH NIS.JAMIL.GO.TZ		
LEVEL	May 2020 to June 2021	Registration Trends
National		786
International		36
Regional		21
District		25
TOTAL		853
LEVEL	May 2021 to June 2022	Registration Trends
National		1289
International		79
Regional		52
District		36
TOTAL		1456
LEVEL	July 2022 to August 2022	Registration Trends
National		195
International		11
Regional		7
District		4
TOTAL		217
GRANT TOTAL		2524

2.5.3 Compliance Achievements

This part of the report analyzed the trend of NGOs reporting and compliance including submission of contracts. According to the study, the introduction and subsequent application of the NIS system was a significant milestone in the history of NGOs registration in Tanzania. Below are some of the achievements attained after the application of the online NGOs system in relation to reporting, change of particulars and submission of contracts;

- i) The number of NGOs submitting annual reports and audited reports through the web-based system has increased from 789 in 2019 to 947 in 2022.
- ii) This trend also indicates that after the use of the NIS system the number of NGOs submitting contracts increased from 32 NGOs in 2020 to 240 in 2021/2022.
- iii) The system helps people to access information and complete the registration process remotely and at any time. It takes a short time to get feedback. Some respondents called for more transparency on the structure of the constitution as required by the ministry.

- iv) Reduces bureaucracy and corruption. The system has eliminated the need to travel to Dodoma for registration purposes, it has reduced unnecessary bureaucracy and forgery. *“I advise the office of the registrar to improve communications infrastructures in order to simplify the use of information technology” one respondent said.*

2.6 CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE USE OF NIS

Although the web-based NGOs information system has attained remarkable progress in just two years since its introduction there were also several challenges that the users of the system encountered that have necessitated the review of the system. This sub-chapter therefore analyses and present major challenges affecting effective and efficient use of the NGOs information system for NGOs management in Tanzania. The sub-sequent sub-chapters present analysis of the challenges starting from registration level, at reporting level, during submission of contract as well as challenges related to change of particulars.

2.6.1 General Challenges

During this study, there were few questions that researchers sought to know the challenges related to the use of the NIS system. Majority of the respondents pointed out several challenges in the NIS system that need to be addressed to make it more effective. The general responses related to challenges were grouped into the following clusters of responses.

a) Inadequate knowledge on usage of the NIS system

- i) The respondents pointed out lack of training on how to use the system. They demand public education be given on how to use it. Moreover, the system is not known to many stakeholders. They recommend a familiarization seminar be conducted to educate people on how the system works.
- ii) The respondents suggested creation of a simple user manual both in Swahili and English to shed some light on how the system works.
- iii) The available user guide is not sufficient since it is written in English. It should also be in Swahili so that many people can understand it.
- iv) During the survey, many respondents stated that they have insufficient knowledge on how to use the NGOs information system. A few NGOs use the system in submitting reports. Capacity building trainings are needed to both the NGOs and Assistant Registrars at district level to raise knowledge on how to use the system.

b) Other concerns are about the instability of the internet connectivity

- i) Many people have complained about inaccessibility of the network whenever they log into the system thus causing unnecessary inconvenience. However, others said the connectivity problems is caused by lack of modern equipment such as laptops or smartphones with high capacity.
- ii) Low awareness on ICT in rural areas is a challenge to many people.

c) Difficulties in uploading and editing the constitution

- i) The respondents have pointed out several issues that need to be solved. The constitution uploaded in the system has some important sections missing.
- ii) The Format of the Constitution online was developed with inadequate knowledge on the structure and modus operandi of the modern NGOs in particular the format is not compatible to many constitutions of NGOs networks and those of INGOs.
- iii) Also, they say it is not friendly enough since there is no option for reviewing and editing the information.
- iv) There is an issue of discrepancy of language used on the constitution and others said the system does not fulfil the need of NGOs.

d) Delayed feedback from NIS System Operators

- i) Many respondents complained about the delay in getting the feedback, and the system does not have automatic feedback mechanism to notify users if their documents have been received.
- ii) Others say the changes made in the system are not always quickly verified. “The process is good the problem lies on the operators and the system itself. It is not working efficiently as expected thus forcing some people to visit the office physically,” says a respondent

e) Difficulties in using NIS System

- i) The system is not very transparent to the information seeker; it also has many ICT challenges especially when one is requesting a control number to log into the system.
- ii) The system doesn't have a user-friendly dashboard to read the content.

- iii) The application process is also cumbersome since the correction made on the website are not always saved in time, and edit option is not available to add or make changes.
- iv) Sending large attachment i.e. PDF files is not always easy due to internet connectivity challenges also the capacity limit of the system to upload document not above 2 GB. Some respondents say the system shouldn't have the maximum size of file to be uploaded because that is creating inconvenience to modify documents. *"It is not possible to upload large files with their quality, if the file is big it has to be reduced in size thus reducing its quality"* a respondent said
- v) The system contains many repetitive and missing sections such as WCF payment on the financial template.
- vi) Many respondents also say accessing the system is problematic especially when many people go online. This situation happens between March and April when many NGOs are struggling to meet annual returns deadlines.
- vii) The respondents want a certificate to be issued online upon completion of registration process to avoid inconvenience of travelling to collect it physically. The respondents want a user-friendly system for issuing control number.

f) Communication Barrier

- i) No good telephone feedback is obtained; this is because the designated phone number go unanswered.
- ii) The system operators not always respond to phone enquiries.
- iii) Some questions asked by NGOs are not getting responses quickly.
- iv) The respondents call for harmonization of the system and link it to other government institutions.
- v) There is no alternative system for people with disabilities to access the website such as large font for visually impaired people and braille for the blind.
- vi) The system is in English language only while majority of users use Swahili. Many respondents recommend the system to be bilingual
- vii) The system has no segregated data of NGOs
- viii) Other thematic areas of NGOs are not mentioned on the system
- ix) The system doesn't have its own website hence can't easily be accessible by users of NGOs's information.

- x) Ordinarily communication is a two-way traffic, that is there must be a sender and the receiver of the information. With the introduction of NGOs information system, information is channelled through online system.
- xi) But also the respondents said that sometimes the network becomes unresponsive thus taking long to uploading documents.
- xii) Furthermore, communication between the NGOs and office of the Registrar of NGOs/Assistant Registrars needs to be improved. The respondents claimed that there is a communication gap between NGOs and the registrar or assistant registrars at district or regional level. *“Some of the questions for NGO’s are not provided on time. They delay a lot. It reaches a time you make a call to the respective department to remind them but they keep promise you without implementing,” a respondent said.*

g) Legal Challenges

The NGOs information system was established in 2020. The system is not legally established though its objective is very relevant in this 21st century. A specific regulation should be established legalizing the NGOs information system. The regulation should provide the timeline for submitting reports, time limit for the registrar to approve contracts / agreements in the system. Further, the system should have an option for the user to download and print the certificate of registration and any other related documents.

h) Multiplicity of Reporting

- (i) The NGOs Act under section 29 requires every organization to submit a report of its activities and financial audited report in every calendar year to the registrar of NGOs. Therefore, according to the NGOs Act an NGO is supposed to submit a report only to the registrar. NGOs have encountered challenges because in some areas, the local government officers have been claiming for reports from the NGOs. This is backed up by the NGOs guidelines which was issued in 2021 requiring NGOs to submit reports to the district council or at municipal offices.
- (ii) Moreover, NGOs submit quarterly reports and annual reports. NGOs have been using much of their time in preparing reports. It could be sufficient only if the NGOs could submit only the annual activity report and financial audited report. This will also minimize the backlog of reports at the office of the registrar of NGOs. The registrar should

only be the custodian of NGOs reports and any government office that intends to get a report of a certain organization should seek it from the office of the registrar.

- (iii) Prolonged Process of Obtaining a Permission Letter
- (iv) NGOs implementing projects on areas of agriculture, health, education are mostly required to obtain a permission letter from the respective ministry or government department before implementing the project. The purpose of seeking permission letter is for the government to issue proper guidance. However, NGOs applying for the permission have encountered the problem of prolonged process of obtaining the permission letter. This leads to the delay in implementing the project. The responsible government officers dealing with issuance of permission letters should be given directives to ensure that the process is not prolonged, a time limit of five working days be set for the letter to be issued.

2.6.2 Challenges at Registration Level

i) Change of NGO's Registration Name

The NGOs Information System does not have a space for name search prior to registering an organization. Name search through the system helps to know whether the name that an NGO intends to register has already been registered by another organization or not. If the system could have an option for name search before registering, there could be no challenge of changing name for an organization. The best practice from the Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA) can be used even in the NGOs information system. Because before registering a name at BRELA, the applicant has to conduct name search in the system in order to verify whether the name is registered under another business entity or not. Currently, the system can recommend the user to change the name of the organization without stating reasons unlike to the system of BRELA that usually gives reasons for rejecting the name of the business entity intended to be registered.

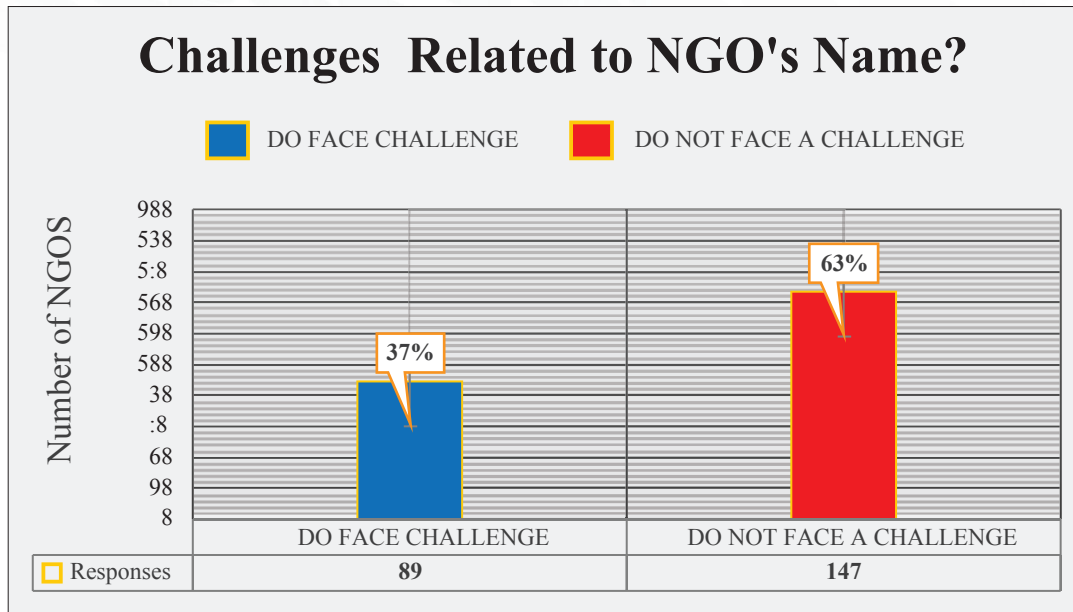


Figure 7: Changes Related to NGOs Name

As stated in the pie chart above, a total number of 236 respondents answered the question relating with challenges encountered at registration level. For instance, 89 respondents (38%) stated that they face a challenge related to organization name at the registration stage; 147 respondents (62%) do not face any challenge related to organization name at the registration stage.

iii) Delayed Registration Process and Feedback from the Registrar

Registration of NGOs in Tanzania is both manually and through the web-based NGOs information system. Manual registration starts at the local government office that is at street level, ward level, district level and regional level. This depends on which level the organization intends to operate. If an organization intends to operate at national level, its registration process starts from the street level to the national level.

- a) Both at street, ward, district and regional level, the registration process is manually, and the applicant must obtain letters from each office authorizing the process. Before obtaining the letter from the local government office be it at the street or ward level, the responsible local government officer conducts physical visit to the office of that organization to verify if such an office exists.

- b) According to the respondents, local government officers delay to visit such offices and sometimes solicit bribes in order to visit and issue the recommendation letter stating that such an organization has a situated office. Therefore, the manual registration process consumes a lot of time and sometimes the responsible officers do not stay in offices and there is a lot of bureaucracy at ward, district, and regional levels. “Completion of the needed documents. For example, in some area the process is very long to get recommendation letter from the assistant registrar—officials often delay to give their opinion and to make some corrections”
 - c) The recommendation letter is an attachment necessary for registering an NGO through nis.jamii.go.tz at national level, therefore after the applicant has obtained the recommendation letter from the district or regional level, he or she must submit it through nis.jamii.go.tz including other attachments like the Constitution of the organization. At this stage, there is no feedback notification on whether the attachments have been successfully received or approved by the registrar.
 - d) Furthermore, the applicant cannot view the progress or level of the registration process hence even the approval of the registration takes a long period of time. *“We are on process of requesting new certificate, we submitted documents last year, but we are told to submit documents using nis.jamii.go.tz. We are failing to get accurate information on time”*.
 - e) Thus, registration certificates are also delayed being issued and once issued the applicant must travel to Dodoma to collect the same. Therefore, the system needs to be improved to enable the applicant to have an option of downloading the certificate online and print it for himself or herself after it has been issued by the Registrar.
- iv) Delayed verification and approval of documents and other information

The registration process of an NGO at national level is conducted electronically through nis.jamii.go.tz. The applicant must create an online account at nis.jamii.go.tz to register an NGO. But also, organizations that existed before the introduction of the NGOs information system are mandated to create and maintain an online account.

- (i) The account created must be verified for the applicant to proceed uploading documents for registration. There is a delay in issuance of the verification codes and the approval of documents submitted for registration. “System administrators delay verifying the registration. The registrar is not working on the application on time even if all the criteria have been met” *comment from the Respondent*

- (ii) The template of the Constitution available at nis.jamii.go.tz is not friendly. It does not accommodate international NGOs but also network organisations. During the registration of an NGO, attachment of its constitution is mandatory. The system has a specific format of NGOs Constitution to be used that can be accepted by the system itself. The format accommodates only certain types of NGOs' Constitution and ignores membership-based NGOs structure whose Constitutions are structured differently. The Constitutional format must be designed to accommodate coalitions or networks and international NGOs. *“ The required information is not friendly, for instance, resolution of the NGO, signatures of board members, general meeting of the board. For international NGO the system does not follow this arrangement”*.

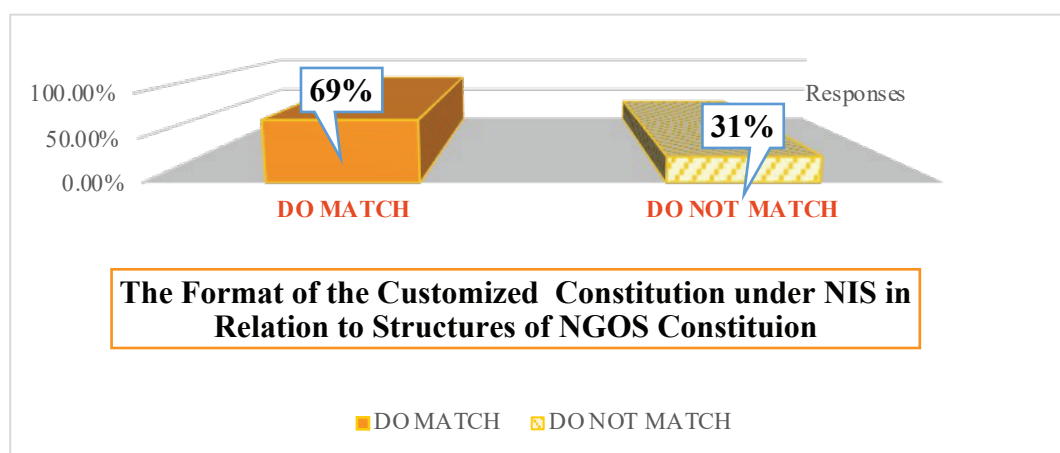


Figure 8: Challenges with the Customized Format of the Constitution Under NIS

2.6.3 Challenges at the Level of Changing Particulars

The change of particulars to an organization such as board members, chairperson, directors, addresses, members, thematic areas, and names of office bearers may happen from time to time. Any change of particulars must be communicated to the relevant authorities. This process is simplified due to the presence of NGOs information system whereby an organization may change its particulars through an online system.

The findings of this study indicates that 50% of all respondents have confirmed to use the system for changing NGOs particulars. However, 50% of the respondents who agreed to have ever used the system to change their organization particulars, faced challenges when inputting those changes to the system,

- i) NGOs names change rejection without reasons.
- ii) There is no feedback notification on whether the change of particulars have been successfully received by the office of the Registrar or not.
- iii) The process is delayed, and feedback is not being provided on time through the system for the organisation to see whether the changes have been accepted or not.

2.6.4 Challenges at Reporting Level

a) Limited space of megabytes for uploading attachments

The NGOs Act under section 29 requires every organization to prepare a report of its activities and financial audited report in every calendar year. Previously, all the reports were physically submitted to the office of the Registrar of NGOs. With the introduction of the NGOs information system, all the reports (both activities and financial audited reports) are currently being submitted through the online system.

- i) The system has a limit of two (2) megabytes for the document to be uploaded and accepted by the system. Therefore, attachments with more than two megabytes are rejected by the system and hence many organisations do not upload attachments as a result they tend to submit the reports or contracts physically to the office of the registrar. For instance, in 2021/2022, about 400 reports were submitted physically in Dodoma because of this problem among others. This resulted into additional costs which could simply be avoided by enlarging the size of megabytes through the system.
- ii) Due to limited space for uploading reports and attachments, NGOs have to re-type the report in the system by indicating the implemented activities. This consumes a lot of time.

b) Time Consuming and Delayed Responses

- i) Also, the system has many repetitive segments to fill in when submitting reports which obliges users of the system to spend a long time just filling in information during submission of reports.
- ii) There is no feedback notification acknowledging receipt of the report and other documents
- iii) That upon submission of the report through the online system, there is no feedback notification to the user that the report has been received successfully. The best practice for any online system in submitting and

receiving reports is that after submission, the system has to generate a message acknowledging receipt of the document submitted. The automatic generated message can be sent through email or on the account of the system user. The message can either be “you have successfully submitted your report” or “the office of the registrar acknowledges receipt of your report, thank you”.

A total of 241 respondents admitted having encountered several challenges during submission of report through the system as provided below;

Table 5; Number of Respondents Admitted to have encountered challenges

Outlined Challenges	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Challenges with payment system	96	40
No options for uploading larger attachments such as annual reports	126	52
Manual entry of every activity done by an NGO consumes time	142	59

2.6.5 Challenges During Submission of Funding Contracts / Agreements

On 12th day of October 2018, the Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children in exercising the powers under Section 38 of the NGOs Act of 2002 enacted the Non-Governmental Organizations (Amendments) Regulations, 2018 (GN No. 609 of 2018). Regulation 13 (b) of GN No 609 requires an NGO that obtains funds exceeding Tanzanian shillings twenty million to submit the contracts or agreements entered with the donor or person who grant the said fund to the treasury and the Registrar not later than ten days from the date of entering the said contract or agreement for approval. The following are challenges related to submission of contracts.

- i) The treasury and the Registrar are not given time limit within which to approve the contract submitted.
- ii) But also, there is a problem of double submission of contracts and may lead to chaos because what if the treasury approves the said contract and the registrar does not approve or the opposite way.
- iii) The registrar is responsible with registration and supervision of NGOs in the country but not the treasury, therefore, submitting contracts to the two different government offices with different mandates is contrary to the international principles of NGOs reporting.

- iv) Further, absence of the time limit for the Registrar to approve the contracts has led to unnecessary delays hence NGOs fail or delay also to implement their projects under which the contracts have been signed.
- v) According to 188 total respondents of the study on the question of how long it takes to get the approval of the contracts responded that it may take 1 day to 4 weeks, between 2 to 3 months, 3 to 6 months and sometimes more than a year. But also, a total of 79 respondents said that they encountered delays in obtaining approval and receiving feedback from the operators of the NGOs information system. But also, the system may only indicate “processing” for a long period of time. A total of 63 respondents responded to a question on how long it takes to obtain the approval and they stated as follows:

Table No 6: Number of days it takes to get Approval

Duration of Approval	Number of Respondents
1 day to 4 Weeks	29
2 to 3 Months	14
3 to 6 Months	4
6 Months +	16

CHAPTER THREE

TECHNICAL SYSTEM AUDIT

3.0 ABOUT THE SYSTEM

According to the study findings, The NGOs Information System was developed using the following languages: PHP, HTML, CSS, Java Script hosted on APACHE Server and the database used is MYSQL Database. This chapter presents findings based on technical system audit conducted during this study. The main objective of this audit was to assess the capacity, best practices of the system. This part of the study also provides technical recommendations on how to improve the system. The system was found to be useful as it has the highest availability rate at the time when was tested. It was also found to be strong as it doesn't accept SQL injections hence not easy to invade the database.

3.1 OBSERVED CHALLENGES

3.1.1 System Slowness/Delay in Response

One of the most observed challenges that have been noted is system slowness in most of the pages when clicked, it takes a longer time than normal to load a normal page, this makes the system very slow and not user-friendly. The slowness of the system leads to delays in transmitting or processing data which may be caused by a wide variety of reasons. This delay forces the user to wait for a long time before seeing anything meaningful on a page or being able to interact with the system.

Example on admin panel when contracts link is clicked it loads for a very long time up to 11.83 seconds whereby the required time should not exceed 3 second in one page this is because all contracts are loaded at once, this scenario appear in most of the pages, best practice should be loading only the contracts available on that page (this is referred to as Lazy loading and when well implemented the system speed is optimized). Below are some of the root causes of this problem.

3.1.2 Resources Blocking

These are portions of system files, usually CSS and JavaScript, that prevent pages from loading quickly. These resources take a relatively long time for the browser to process but may not be necessary for the immediate user experience. This restricts the system to perform other functions because it must wait for these files to be processed first.

3.1.3 Text-based Resources

These are other files uploaded within the system such as document and images. These types of files are heavy hence require longer time to be downloaded and viewed by the user. The findings of this study have shown that among others text-based resources takes longer time to complete hence making the system inefficient.

3.1.4 Page-Redirects

This occurs when data is being passed through multiple pages for various processing mechanism. Multiple page redirects will trigger multiple request-response cycles, which may significantly delay the start of your page load. To address this challenge, this study recommends the following.

- (i) Text compression to essentially reduce the file size/payload of text-based resources, decreasing the amount of data transferred.
- (ii) Implement Lazy Loading i.e., loading only the required files on a page even if the page has more data, E.g., on contracts link the total contracts are more than 300, but when clicked it should only load the available 10 contracts that appears on that page.
- (iii) Limit maximum loading time on a page to at least 3 Seconds now it goes up to 14 Seconds in some pages.
- (iv) Implement strategic cache policy i.e., Caching improves performance by keeping recent or often-used data items in memory locations that are faster or computationally cheaper to access than normal so if this is implemented the system will be fast enough

3.1.5 Duplicate Menus

The backend system consists of duplicated menus, there are multiple menus which are repetitive thus NGOs App, Contract App and Report App (3 duplications each). Having multiple menu headings creates confusion to end users and distorts the menu's look. Duplicate codes are caused by Code bugs which are sequence of source code that occurs more than once in a system. In order to solve this challenge, there

is a need to conduct code review and optimization which is a process of finding and detecting duplications in source codes in each area.

3.1.6 Important System Functionalities are Missing

This audit found that important functionalities like certificate downloading, download and export button not working, document upload should be increased from 2mb to at least 10 mb. Currently the capacity of the system to upload documents is only 2mb. Certificate Downloads-When designing such a system the main aim is to automate most of the tasks and make the process easier, Getting the certificate through the system after all the procedures have been completed will make the system more meaningful hence fulfil the automation purpose to the maximum.

Most of the download and Export button are not working- The export buttons in important system makes it easier to provide important reports to be used for decision making, we observed most of such links do not work and they need to be fixed. The documents that are supposed to be uploaded on the system have been set to not exceed 2MB this is very minimal and not realistic; we could not establish any technical reasons as to why the capacity is very minimal to 2MB. This study therefore recommends the following as part of addressing these challenges.

- (i) We recommend the development of DOWNLOAD CERTIFICATE link to be implemented to the users account after they have completed all the process so as to full automate the system and this can be well done by adding these changes to the source codes available.
- (ii) We recommend all the export links to be fixed to facilitate downloads of all important reports and should accept different reports document formats such as Word(.doc), Excel(.xls), and CSV
- (iii) We recommend the space of the documents to be uploaded into the system to be increased to at least 10MB which is realistic and do not require a lot of document compression which may lead to upload of defect documents

3.1.7 Server-Side Security Vulnerabilities & Performance

The observation has shown that there is a possibility of server-side attack, and it is vulnerably exposed to unsafe environment which can be caused by using outdated applications, broken authentication, and poor session management, these vulnerabilities expose the affected applications to the risk of unauthorized access to confidential data and possibly to denial-of-service attacks. An attacker could search for an appropriate exploit (or create one himself) for any of these vulnerabilities and use it to attack the system.

ON the side of performance of the **server, it** was observed that the server capacity to handle maximum request at one time is medium and for public system like NIS it has to be on high performance. The study therefore recommends the following key interventions.

- We recommend you upgrade the affected software to the latest version to eliminate the risk of these vulnerabilities.
- The most effective solution to resist an attempted SQL-injection is to make use of a safe API that employs a parameterized interface. SQL parameters are values that are added to an SQL query in a controlled manner at the time of execution. APIs can be designed carefully to avoid special characters and expressions that can be used to inject malicious commands.
- Strengthening firewall protection
- On Performance the server should be allowed to allow parallel processing by updating the configurations available

3.2 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the observations made, the NIS system need to be well optimized and developed to solve the available problems that are associated with performance, security and User-interface interactions. There is no need for overhauling of the entire system but rather solving the available challenges by involving software development experts who can make the system serve the purpose by adding important features as can be observed in this report and solving all challenges related to performance and user interactions.



NGO A – Form No. 3



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Made Under section 12(1) of Act No.24 of 2002

To the Director of Non Governmental Organizations:

I/We

of P.O. Box

Physical Location of Head Office

Hereby make an application to be registered as a Non Governmental Organisation pursuant to section 11 of the Act. I/We apply to be by the name of

and shall operate within the area of

The Mission of the Organization is

Attached herewith is a copy of-

- a) Certificate of incorporation
- b) Founder members
- c) constitution/memorandum
- d) personal particulars of office bearers (CV)
- e) Others (specify if any)

I/We humbly so submit

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous recommendations have been made to improve the system. A video guide to direct users can be useful to improve the capacity of users. Some say registration should be decentralized at district level. Delayed response should also be worked on. The ministry should routinely educate the public on changes of the constitution. NGOs should be prioritized to get registration earlier. Certificates should be issued in time and through an online system. Government officials, NaCONGO and NGOs networks should visit the regions where NGOs operate to educate them about the use of this new system.

“Members of the NGOs should be educated how to use the system. The office of the registrar should routinely meet with civic organizations to introduce the new system,” a respondent said.

One respondent suggested the establishment of a data base for registered NGOs which would help the government to get correct statistics, and it will help purging shady NGOs. Others have suggested improvement of internet connectivity, establishment of public education department, use of one control number for payment. Certificates should be sent directly to the applicants; an official be stationed at district level to assist those who fail to register online.

More capacity building initiatives are needed to raise community awareness to understand this new technology of online application. There should be an equal footing between registration requirements in Tanzania. Feedback mechanism should be expanded to allow many stakeholders to air their views about the system. There should be a mechanism where individuals can directly chat with an official

in case they have any questions. Public employees should be trained to expediently process the applications. There should be an avenue in the system that allows open debate on pertinent issues regarding the constitution.

“Education should be given to users and if possible, the user guides should be provided even in English and Swahili,” a respondent said.

Assisting in identifying the NGOs that exist in the country. The system is good, it gives NGOs visibility and allows officials to identify professional NGOs and those ones which are inactive. *“It is very nice but it also needs to be updated to allow rural area beneficiaries to use it,” Says one respondent*

4.1.1 General Recommendations about Management of NGOS

- (i) NIS should be renovated and modified by a competent expert team. The office of Registrar should revamp the whole system and re-generate it to operate better. This can be done in assistance with NGOs that have expertise on the area of system development and management. This will also give enough trial and dissemination period of the system to the users.
- (ii) The Government should conduct capacity training to NGOs and Assistant Registrars on how to use and manage the NGOs Information system. The knowledge of using and accessing NIS needs to be disseminated to the users with the aim of expanding the capacity of users. The knowledge can be disseminated through field visits and online lessons to reach a wider audience. Additionally, assistance registrars may be made of use to disseminate the knowledge to CBOs.
- (iii) The office of registrar should look upon adapting a 24/7 digitalized robot *response tool* that allows users to get an immediate assistance whenever needed.
- (iv) From the analysis, the findings show that the delay on the response is partly due to the office of registrar having resources (tools and staff) that are not correspondent with the workload. It was recommended that NGO stakeholders and other developmental stakeholders to support the office of registrar with tools such as laptops and tablets that will allow staffs to respond to all NIS requests on time.
- (v) NIS should allow the use of Swahili and English languages. After going through the data collected from the study, it was of the view that most users intended do not understand well English as it is the only language used by

the system. Hence to help the users to easily access the system, the office of the registrar through the responsible Ministry should look a proper way to also include Kiswahili as the language used through the system, which is the national language of Tanzania. The respondents recommended that and we quote; “ *Low understanding of the users and the language used is not friendly many people understand Swahili as compared to English*”, “ *The NIS system should be in both national languages Swahili and English*”, “ *electronic systems should use national languages*”

- (vi) The Office of Registrar is recommended to be made an independent body with the aim of allowing it to make independent decisions for the benefit of the sector. Currently, the office of registrar of NGO is under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Group whereas its decision is restricted to the interest/priorities of the ministry. This makes it hard for the office of the registrar to prioritize issues of the interest of the NGO sector.
- (vii) NIS should widen the scope of users and allow all NGOs stakeholders to have accessibility of the system. Currently, NIS has a restricted access to users with accounts only. NGOs stakeholders are more than NGOs themselves, therefore allowing access of preliminary information of an organization to other NGO stakeholder will widen NGO’s transparency and accountability.
- (viii) Regulations should be developed to guide the use and management of NIS. The regulations will outline a proper functioning method and ways of all users including staff to manage the system. For Instance, the challenge of delayed response on submitted contracts may remain unsolved due to the absence of regulation; the regulation may give a timeline of 7 working days response on contract submitted.
- (ix) The name NGO Information System should be modified to NGOs Management System. The system is more than just an information hub, it is a digitalized system to manage NGOs in Tanzania. Leaving the name as it may cause a limited understanding of the system. Modifying the name to NGO Management System allows it to be understood more by the users and NGO stakeholders that it manages and guides the NGOs in Tanzania from registration to reporting stages.
- (x) The system should categorize information for CBO, NGOs, and network-based organization instead of generalizing it as member-based information for all NGOs.
- (xi) Assistant registrars are advised to be permanent employed officers by the government, rather than temporary officers. This will assist the NGOs at grassroot level to be confident with their registrars.

4.1.2 Recommendations on Registration

- (i) NIS constitutional format should be improved to accommodate all NGO's objective rather than leaving aside membership organization structure.
- (ii) NIS is recommended to have a response mechanism for all applicants through email, messages, or the accounts in the system. Once a new applicant registers an NGO, the system should have a method of responding to an applicant upon the accept/denial of the registration, with reasons.
- (iii) The office of registrar is recommended to shorten the period of review process for application documents at registration level. The review of an applicant who has completed all requirements should be not more than seven (7) working days.
- (iv) NIS is advised to add an ability of issuing online registration certificate through the users' accounts (softcopy registration certificate) which will ease the whole registration process and it won't necessitate an applicant to go to the offices in Dodoma to take their registration certificate.
- (v) Digital registration through NIS is recommended to start at district level in order to register CBOs as well.
- (vi) It is recommended that the office of registrar to create proper administration at all levels, ward, district, regional and at the office of registrar itself in registering NGOs through the system. Registration at ward, district, and regional levels are done physically, and national level is done digitally. This should be rectified and all to be done digitally, and properly administered.
- (vii) NIS is recommended to digitalize name selection at a registration level. The step of name selection during registration can be modified to enable an applicant to select and get approval of the name on the spot during registering.
- (viii) It is recommended that in registering CBOs, the process needs to be completed at ward level by ward officials as they are the ones who know grass root organizations. Districts should just endorse.
- (ix) Through NIS, there should be a system/ direct line for guiding applicants on how to correct the rejected documents on what was not needed to avoid the back-and-forth system where in some cases, it may facilitate corruption.
- (x) From the study, respondents advised that registration process to be cost-free. NIS has helped to save costs and time for applicants to go to the ministry offices and apply, therefore all costs should be removed, and it should be free. "The registration related fees should be reduced"

- (xi) During registration, NIS is recommended to allow more options for thematic areas for the applicants to select. Additionally, the system may put the thematic area as a filling blank area rather than selecting options that the office of registrar has kept. Some applicants do not underlay on any of the options kept. “Allow as many thematic areas as possible of choice by NGOs”.
- (xii) NIS is recommended that there should allow authorization of a user in using same account to register and more than one NGO under one person. This will reduce the number of accounts in the system and will be able to ease the management process.

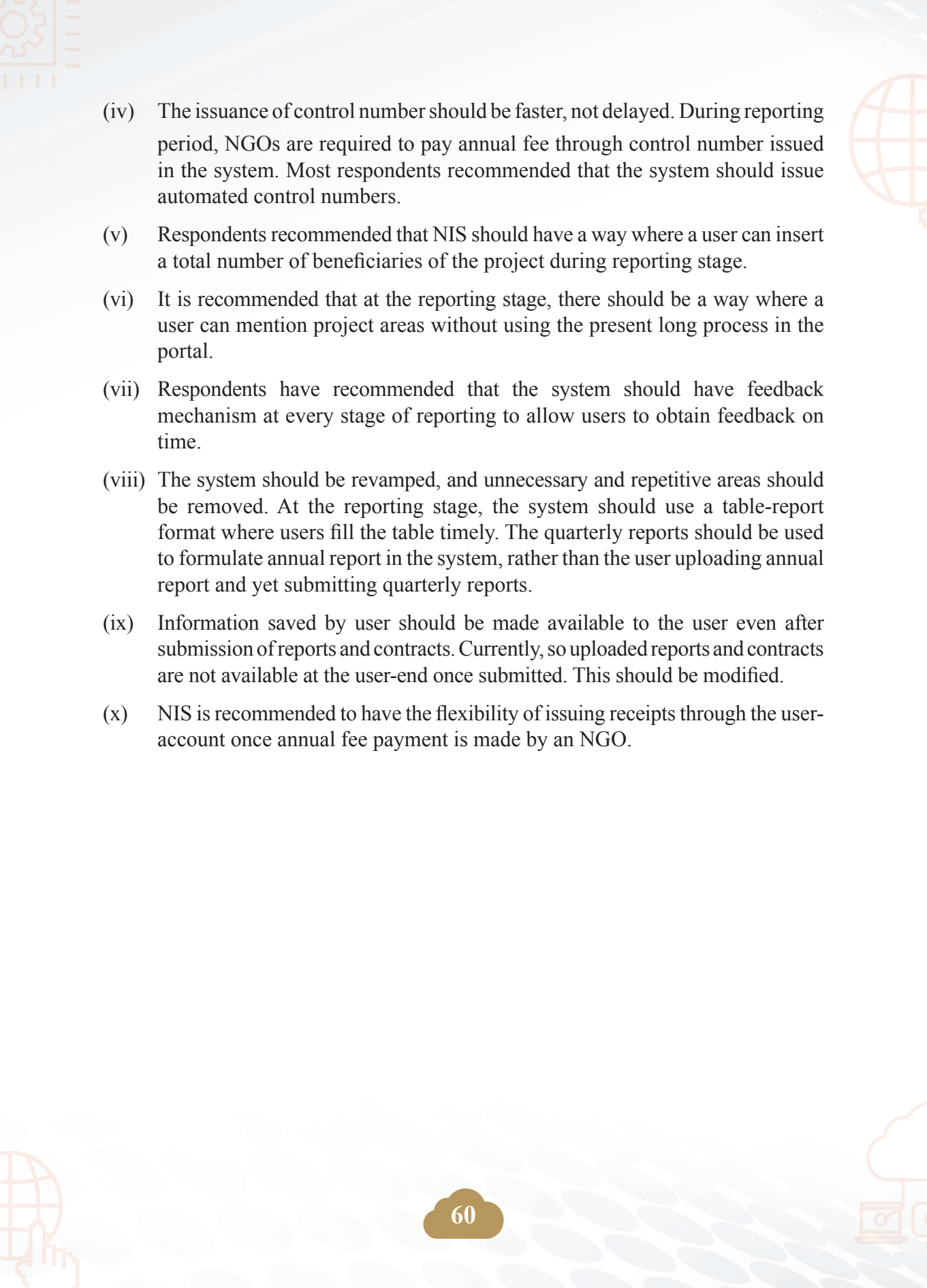
4.1.3 Recommendation on Submission of Contract

- (i) Timely response and feedback from the office of registrar is highly recommended, utmost seven (7) working days. The study has shown that most users face a challenge of delay in receiving feedbacks from the office of registrar through the NIS on areas like contract submission. There are users who receive no feedback at all. Therefore, a timely response and feedback is very important, utmost seven (7) working days. It is recommended that the registrar’s office should speed up the process of realizing projects permits and approvals to timely implementation. The respondents recommended that and are quoted; “*Permit for contracts should be issued within one or two days to avoid unnecessary delay of the implementation of projects*”, “*take not more than 5 days to provide approval*”.
- (ii) NIS should be made more flexible to users in terms of space of uploading contracts/agreement. Through the study, it was assessed that NIS is a rigid and limited system. It is recommended that the capacity of NIS should be improved to increase the space of uploading contracts to at least 10MegaBytes. The current capacity is 2 megabytes.
- (iii) NIS is recommended to include an option of physically submitting the contracts/agreements to the office of registrar.
- (iv) From the study, respondents recommend that submission of contract should be done at the level of implementing the project. For Instance, if the project is to be implemented at district level, then the contract should be submitted to the assistant registrars at district level.
- (v) Submission of contracts/agreement should be for the purpose of informing the authority on the project rather than seeking for approval of the contract. The office of registrar already has all information concerning the NGO, including its constitution, requesting for approval on implementing of every project should not be important.

- (vi) Concerning local donor who have already submitted their contracts on the funds received and where and to what organizations the funds will be disseminated, there is no need for the organizations receiving the funds to submit their contracts again. “Local donors should present the contract of those they supported to the registrar –To NGOs which are donors they should directly submit the contract that show every single NGO they financially supported, by how much in order to avoid the possibility of duplicating the amount paid by the said donor for instance (Foundation for Civil Society FCS)”
- (vii) Capacity building to NGOs on how to properly submit contracts/agreements through NIS, and its importance. This will give the NGOs knowledge on this part, “NGOs should be trained on how to present contracts”.
- (viii) NIS should have an automated approval letter for NGOs that have submitted the contracts/agreement. This letter should be allowed to be used in cases where the approval from the office is delayed.
- (ix) Through the study, it was assessed that the step of submitting a contract/ agreement for approval is unnecessary and should be removed. “NGOs should continue with their project activities once they receive funds (as donors have their timeline and deadlines) while the approval process in underway” as quoted.

4.1.4 Recommendation on Reporting

- (i) NIS should allow uploading of activity report document rather than developing the report through the system. The current procedure of submitting activity report takes a lot of time for the system to complete it; the system should allow submission of activity report documents.
- (ii) NIS is recommended to increase the space for uploading report. Through the study, it was assessed that NIS is a rigid and limited system in terms of spacing of reports that has only 2 megabytes. It is recommended that the capacity of NIS should be improved by increasing the space of uploading reports to at least 10MegaBytes.
- (iii) The office of registrar should modify their server for NIS to reduce jamming during the reporting period. The system is believed to jam during reporting period March – April every year. Increasing capacity of the server will reduce jamming of the system.

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- (iv) The issuance of control number should be faster, not delayed. During reporting period, NGOs are required to pay annual fee through control number issued in the system. Most respondents recommended that the system should issue automated control numbers.
 - (v) Respondents recommended that NIS should have a way where a user can insert a total number of beneficiaries of the project during reporting stage.
 - (vi) It is recommended that at the reporting stage, there should be a way where a user can mention project areas without using the present long process in the portal.
 - (vii) Respondents have recommended that the system should have feedback mechanism at every stage of reporting to allow users to obtain feedback on time.
 - (viii) The system should be revamped, and unnecessary and repetitive areas should be removed. At the reporting stage, the system should use a table-report format where users fill the table timely. The quarterly reports should be used to formulate annual report in the system, rather than the user uploading annual report and yet submitting quarterly reports.
 - (ix) Information saved by user should be made available to the user even after submission of reports and contracts. Currently, so uploaded reports and contracts are not available at the user-end once submitted. This should be modified.
 - (x) NIS is recommended to have the flexibility of issuing receipts through the user-account once annual fee payment is made by an NGO.

4.2 CONCLUSION

This study has examined the effectiveness and efficiency of the NGOs Information System in enhancing freedom of association and development of NGOs Sector in Tanzania Mainland. The findings of this study suggest the system is effective and relevant to the modern society. Tanzania is the only country in Africa to introduce a web-based NGOs management system. This conclusion has been reached by this study after collecting, collating analysing, and presenting the views of NIS users. Currently 5159 NGOs out of 8114 registered NGOs use nis.jamii.go.tz.

This study found the system has largely achieved in increasing the number of NGOs registered monthly. By August 2022 the online system registers an average number of 121 NGOs per month. For instance, from 1st January 2022 up to 30th July 2022 number of NGOs registered were 833 with an average of 119 per month just within seven (7) months. This dramatic increase is however associated with the ongoing pace of civic space opening in Tanzania. The system helps people to easily access information and complete the registration process remotely and at any time. It takes a short time to get feedback. Some respondents called for more transparency on the structure of the constitution as required by the ministry. However, there are challenges associated with the use and management of the system like delayed registration process, insufficient timely feedback at registration level or at the level of changing particulars of an existing NGO, limited space for uploading attachments during reporting or submission of funding contracts or agreements for approval. It is recommended that NIS should be renovated and modified by competent experts for it to operate better. This can be done in collaboration with NGOs that have expertise on the area of system development and management. This will ensure more relevancy and efficiency of the NGOs information system and the NGOs sector in general.

NGOs



 Mikocheni B, Eyasi Road, Po.box 105926,
Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

 +255 769 642208

 info@thrdc.or.tz

 www.thrdc.or.tz

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