

Name of Cooperative

(Logo of Cooperative)



ELECTIONS POLICY

202__

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1. INTRODUCTION

The strength of any organisational system lies in the extent to which it earns and holds the respect of its members, shareholders and citizens through an open election process resulting in the appointment of fit and proper directors to perform inherent fiduciary duties.

Every Cooperative must be managed and controlled by fit and proper persons. Thus, all COOPERATIVE societies are under a duty to elect fit and proper persons as Directors. Members offering themselves as candidates for elected positions should be required to meet the minimum of fit and proper requirements.

Now therefore, in order to ensure compliance with relevant laws in relation to co-operatives,(name of Cooperative) is committed to ensure good governance in the society and commits to provide members with an opportunity to participate freely in choosing leaders through a well organised democratic process.

2. PURPOSE OF THE ELECTIONS POLICY

This elections policy is a guideline to the Cooperative on the manner in which elections will be conducted with clear objectives to:

- a) Ensure that the society will conduct credible elections at all times based on the best practices of good governance.
- b) Ensure that the Cooperative will get leaders who are competent and possess the right values and virtues to move the society forward.
- c) Ensure that members express their democratic rights in the most transparent manner and that the leaders will always represent the aspirations and the dynamics of the members.
- d) Provide guidelines on the elections process of directors.
- e) Provide guidelines on qualification criteria.
- f) Give practical application to the principle of members' democratic control by giving effect to the universal principle of free and fair elections.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR DIRECTORS

The eligibility criteria shall be in compliance with the Co-operative Societies Act 2003, as amended in 2023, COOPERATIVE by-laws, FSRA guidelines and National Co-operative Development Guidelines and Directives. In addition, the candidates standing for elections to the Board and Supervisory Committee must meet the following requirements:

- a) He/She is a citizen or a permanent resident of the Kingdom of Eswatini and is of sound mind.
- b) He/She is 21 years of age and above except for youth and schools Cooperatives.
- c) He/She should have requisite skills, knowledge and experience.
- d) In case the Cooperative has 5 or more years of registration, he/she must have completed five (5) years unbroken membership with the society.
- e) He/Should have a minimum share capital of
- f) He/She does not conduct a business that is in competition with the core business of the Cooperative.
- g) He/She has not served two (2) consecutive terms as a Board member.
- h) He/She has never been expelled as a member and/ or dismissed from the Board.
- i) He/She has not been convicted for any criminal offence in the Kingdom of Eswatini or elsewhere.
- j) He/She has not been found guilty of contravening the provision of any law (including Co-operatives Societies Act, Regulations and Guidelines) the objects of which is the protection of public against financial loss.
- k) He/She must be in good standing as a member with the Cooperative.
- l) He/She is not an employee of the Cooperative.
- m) He/She has not been declared bankrupt or insolvent.
- n) He/She is not over-indebted (disposal income should not be less 1/3 of basic salary) or in default with his/her financial obligations.
- o) He/She is not a member of another Cooperative conducting the same business within Eswatini.

4. THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

- a) The Board shall appoint an Elections Committee (EC) of at least three (3) but not more than five (5) members, one of whom shall be from the society's office and four (4) independent persons either from the Apex, Federation, ECODEC or Cooperative Department. The Electoral Officer conducting the elections shall be guided by this Elections Policy.
- b) The duties of the Elections Committee or person appointed for this purpose shall include the following:
 - i) To oversee the entire elections process and verify if all processes have been conducted in an open, transparent and fair manner.
 - ii) Deal with and resolve reported or identified screening irregularities and discrepancies.
 - iii) Announce, declare and present all candidates with the highest numbers of votes in any category as having been elected to the position for which they were nominated.
 - iv) Ensure that a minimum of three (3) directors nominated and or elected must be women, of whom two (2) must be elected to the Board and at least one (1) in the Supervisory Committee.
 - v) In the event that there is no female who received the highest number of votes, the third elected member shall be substituted with a female.
 - vi) Deal with objections and or complaints or allegations of electoral fraud, irregularities and misrepresentations before, during and after the elections.

For continuity, institutional memory and succession considerations in the governance structures, at the end of each term of office, half of the board members shall step down and be replaced by new members elected at the AGM.

5. REMUNERATION OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The members appointed to the Elections Committee administering and overseeing the elections shall be eligible for remuneration equivalent to Board sitting allowance.

6. RIGHT TO VOTE

- a) Any member of the Cooperative who holds at least one share shall be entitled to vote.
- b) Members shall vote once for all nominated and eligible contesting candidates.

7. METHOD OF VOTING

- a) Elections shall be done on the date of the Annual General Meeting or Elective Conference.
- b) All elections shall be determined by a vote of members present, physically or electronically.
- c) No proxy voting shall be permitted.
- d) Voting shall be by a way of a secret ballot.
- e) The procedure for the elections as prescribed by Elections Committee shall be adhered to unless circumstances dictate that it is practically not feasible to do so for which the General Meeting must pass a resolution to set aside such requirement.
- f) The following materials shall be used in the election process:
 - i) Attendance register
 - ii) Ballot papers (where voting is necessary)
 - iii) Transparent ballot boxes
- g) In a case of a tie, a second round of voting for the position(s) with a tie shall be conducted by a secret ballot.
- h) In the off chance that the tie is not resolved after the second round of voting, the tie shall be decided by a toss of a coin.

8. VOTING AND COUNTING

- a) The polling (voting) centre shall be the same venue where the Annual General Meeting (AGM) or the Elective Conference shall be held.
- b) After all ballot papers have been returned and counted to tally with the number of present members (physically and remotely via an electronic or virtual channel) in the meeting, the Elections Committee shall count the votes.
- c) Only invited guests will act as observers.
- d) The Electoral Officer shall be responsible for announcing the results to those present in the meeting.

9. CO-OPTION

Co-option process to fill any vacancy that arises within the statutory committees shall be as follows:

When a vacancy within the Board arises before the next elections and or General Meeting, the Board in a meeting to fill such vacancy, shall co-opt a candidate who received the highest number of votes for directors during the last elections or from the General Membership, provided that such is in compliance with the provision of the by-laws.

In ensuring compliance with the by-laws, all co-options shall be unlawful and invalid if not done in observance of the following principal criteria:

- a) The next member(s) who obtained the highest nominations or votes during the previous elections or a member from the General Membership, and in the event of filling a vacancy left open by a female, the next female candidate with the highest votes, regardless of how many males come before that member.
- b) Such a member to be co-opted in terms of these provisions must still be willing to serve as a Director within the Cooperative.
- c) Such a member to be co-opted in terms of these provisions must still be fit and proper in terms of the FSRA guidelines.

10. ASSUMPTION OF DUTIES BY THE ELECTED DIRECTORS

The general rule is that outgoing members of the Board cease to be members immediately on the date of the elections at the Annual General Meeting or Elective Conference convened for this purpose where new Directors get elected. However, there are certain regulatory requirements that need to be satisfied, before new members who are not returning can assume their full responsibilities:

- a) Elected members shall not assume their Board responsibilities without express written approval from the FSRA.
- b) As such any new member shall be assumed to be provisionally elected to the Board awaiting confirmation from FSRA.

11. REVIEW OF THE ELECTIONS POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed every after three (3) years or when the need arises.

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12. ADOPTION OF THE ELECTIONS POLICY

We, the undersigned, duly representing the Board give commitment to the implementation of the Elections Policy for Directors of Cooperative by appending our signatures.

Representatives:

Signed at on this day of 202__

	NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
1.			
2.			
3.			