

AfriSwe Strong Knot Cooperative Membership Policy

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SECTION I

Abbreviations in full

- ❖ AFRISWE -----AfriSwe strong knot Cooperative
- ❖ PII-----Personal Identifiable Information
- ❖ GDPR-----General Data Protection Regulations
- ❖ AGM-----Annual General Meeting

Introduction

Great pleasure to welcome you to AfriSwe strong knot cooperative, a multipurpose cooperative dedicated to empowering women, the youth and children through promoting agribusiness and Renewable energy in African countries by uplifting the small-scale farmers by connecting them with other agribusiness participants and associations to attain Knowledge and skills, Financial and equipment support and Market access across the world. AfriSwe through its African Vision "Active, secure and flourishing African" objectively works with purpose to establish and benefit African Communities.

Our cooperative is built on Legal Cooperative Principles as follows:

- ❖ AfriSwe is a voluntary and open membership. It is open to all who are able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.
- ❖ AfriSwe staff member participation. AfriSwe is driven by its staff members, who participate in every stage of leadership. They set the policies and making decisions. The appointed representatives are accountable to the members, who have equal voting rights: one member, one vote.
- ❖ AfriSwe member economic participation. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. They allocate surpluses to develop the co-op, and benefit in proportion to their transactions with the co-op.
- ❖ AfriSwe autonomy and independence. It is a self-help organization controlled by its members. If it enters into agreements with other organizations, it does so on terms that ensure democratic control by its members.
- ❖ Education, training and information. AfriSwe provides education and training for members, appointed representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute to the development of their

cooperative. They inform the public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

- ❖ Cooperation among cooperatives. AfriSwe serves its members by working together locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.
- ❖ Concern for community. While focusing on member needs, AfriSwe work for the sustainable development of their communities.

Social and Ethical Values,

- 1) Self Help and Responsibility
- 2) Democracy, Equality and Equity
- 3) Solidarity
- 4) Openness and Honesty
- 5) Social Responsibility and care for others and hence strong basis of its success.

This Membership policy outlines the terms and conditions of Membership in AfriSwe, including the rights and responsibilities of members, the application and admission processes as well as Procedure for membership maintenance and termination. By joining AfriSwe, Member(s) agree to abide by this policy so as to contribute to cooperative's purpose, mission and values.

Purpose

The purpose of Membership Policy is to establish clear guidelines for membership eligibility, application and participation considering the following:

- Ensure fair and equitable treatment of all members,
- Foster sense of community and shared responsibility among members,
- Support the cooperatives Vision, Mission, Objectives and goals through active member engagement,
- Provide a basic framework for resolving conflicts or disputes among members,
- Ensure awareness and adherence to relevant laws and regulations in compliance with legal requirements,
- Promote accountability and transparency through open communication, trust and worthiness encouragement,
- Harmonize and strengthen membership structure hence supporting AfriSwe overall success.

Scope

This Policy applies to all members of AfriSwe Strong Knot Cooperative and supersedes any previous Membership policies or agreements.

SECTION II

Article 1A: Membership Eligibility

AfriSwe Membership is open to individuals that align with the cooperative's Mission, purpose and values. Prospective members must:

- i. Meet the membership category requirements (See Article 2A)
- ii. Complete a membership application form with help of AFfriSwe Digital System or AfriSwe App
- iii. Agree to abide by membership policy and AfriSwe By-laws
- iv. Meet Obligations to pay the required membership fees and dues

Articles 2A: Membership Categories

AfriSwe offers ONLY ONE (1) membership category and that is;

- i. **Individual Membership:** Open to individuals who support the cooperative's Vision, Mission, Purpose, Objective and Goals. However, this membership is handled in two different ways as follow.
 - a) *Identical or independent Membership.* Refers to a prospect or potential member who is in any way not attached to a group(s) in a process of registration. A member is treated as an individual.
 - b) *Individual(s) in a legit community group, Association or organization.* Refers to a prospect or a potential member attached to a group. A member is treated as an individual but under his or her own group he or she represents. He or she eligibly get self and group benefits.

Article 3A: Membership Benefits

Members enjoy the following benefits:

- i. Fostering a saving discipline
- ii. Accessing starter-up packages
- iii. Business financing
- iv. Subsidized quality services
- v. Good will market for members' products and services
- vi. Collective financial investment
- vii. Secure and lowest interest on credit services
- viii. Access to cooperative services and products such as free training, extension of farm inputs etc
- ix. Opportunities for leadership and participation

Article 4A: Membership Responsibilities

Members are expected to:

- i. *Uphold the cooperative's values and principles* as provided by the Bylaws.
- ii. *Active participation:* Attend Annual General Meetings, training sessions, events, participate in ongoing projects.
- iii. *Volunteering:* Offer skills, expertise and time to contribute to AfriSwe's activities and projects.
- iv. *Financial Commitments:* Make timely payments on membership renewal and other obligations to ensure the financial stability of the cooperative.
- v. *Community involvement:* Promote cooperative values and services in their communities.
- vi. *Education and Training:* Take advantage of opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills relevant to AfriSwe's activities.
- vii. *Support to fellow members:* Offer assistance and resources to fellow members where possible.
- viii. *Contribution to strategic planning:* Provide input and ideas for Cooperative growth and development.
- ix. *Conflict resolution:* engage in constructive conflict resolution by policy to address any issues that may arise at anytime and anywhere.
- x. *Compliance and Adherence to Policies:* Formalize yourself and comply with AfriSwe's Bylaws, policies and procedures.

Article 5A: Membership Requirements

- i. **A valid National ID or Passport:** the most important is the NIN or Passport Number.
- ii. **Accessible Email address:** AfriSwe Digital System shall communicate with a registering member on the email provided by the applicant. The email MUST be accessible because it's important in verification of a new account.
- iii. **Mobile Number / Contact:** Can be used for USSD Text Messages, Receive Verification Code from the system while making a transaction(s) etc.

5B: Membership admission and application Process

- i. **Use (android or apple) Computer, Laptop, Smart Phones.** Using any Online search Engine (Google/Chrome), type "<https://AfriSwe.com/>" Click **REGISTER NOW** <https://coresys.AfriSwe.com/user/register>" and follow the steps. Call the support center for help. After download **AfriSwe App** and enjoy easy transactions.
- ii. **Using Future (Button) Phones.** Get requirements [See Section II. Article.5A. (i)] and call the Support center for help.

- iii. **Approval:** An applicant will be able to use the system after receiving an approval from the Administrator and if there is any hindering to approve the application, the applicant will be contacted within 72hrs.

5C: Membership Subscription Fees

AfriSwe has three (3) major fees that are compulsory to applicants to be fully a registered member with the cooperative. These include:

- i. **Registration Fee: UGX10, 000.00.** This fee is paid once while registering. It's a system support fund from which helps AfriSwe to open and activate member's account.
- ii. **Membership Fees: UGX 50, 000.00.** Applicants/Members shall pay an annual membership with the amount to be determined by members in AGM. The membership fee shall be debated considering the current economic situation and/or depending on a number of factors including currency value, projects investments status of the entire cooperative, etc but shall not be more than UGX 1,000,000.00 at any one time.
- iii. **Shares: UGX 100, 000.00.** The quota/share value is fixed at One Hundred Thousand Ugandan Shillings (100,000UGX). It is constituted by (50) Quotas/Shares maximum and (1) Quota/Share minimum for an active member.

The Cooperative may receive investments, donations, legacy, grants and aid from its active members or outside the membership as indicated in the financial and investment policies.

5D: Active Member

“AfriSwe Active Member(s)” refers to a person who has met the above obligations and participating in one or more projects of the cooperative.

Article 6A: Communication and Notice

AfriSwe will always send official communications to its members through its official online platforms including website www.afriswe.com Email: info@AfriSwe.com , Facebook , WhatsApp Groups and Digital system https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.AfriSwe.app&pcampaignid=web_share

However, AfriSwe typically communicates with its members through various channels to keep them informed, engaged, and involved in the progress of different projects.

Here are some common ways a cooperative communicates with its members:

- i. *Regular Meetings*: Holding annual general meetings, board meetings, or committee meetings to discuss important issues, take decisions, and share information.
- ii. *Email and Online Communication*: Using email, online forums, or social media groups to share information, ask for feedback, and facilitate discussions.
- iii. *Surveys and Feedback Forms*: Conducting surveys or gathering feedback through forms to understand members' needs, opinions, and concerns through their coordinator.
- iv. *Website and Online Platforms*: Utilizing the cooperative's website, member portals, or online platforms to share information, resources, and updates.
- v. *Workshops and Training Sessions*: Organizing workshops, training sessions, or webinars to educate members on relevant topics, skills, or cooperative operations.
- vi. *One-on-One Communication*: Having direct communication between members, staff, or board members to address individual concerns.
- vii. *Annual Reports*: Publishing annual reports to share financial information, achievements, and progress with members.
- viii. *Member Engagement Events*: Hosting events, conferences, or social gatherings to foster connections, build community, and encourage member participation.

6B: Confidentiality and data protection

AFRISWE protected Members' data in several ways, and these include:

- i. *Encryption*: Store data in encrypted form, making it unreadable to unauthorized users.
- ii. *Access controls*: Implement secure login and authentication processes to ensure only authorized personnel can access data.
- iii. *Data anonymization*: Remove personal identifiable information (PII) to prevent individual identification.
- iv. *Secure storage*: Store data in a secure environment, such as a reputable cloud storage service or on-premises servers with robust security measures.
- v. *Data backups*: Regularly backup data to prevent loss in case of a security breach or system failure.
- vi. *Two-factor authentication*: Require additional verification steps beyond just a password to access data.
- vii. *Regular security audits*: Perform routine security checks to identify and address vulnerabilities.
- viii. *Data minimization*: Only collect and store necessary data, reducing the amount of sensitive information at risk.

- ix. *User education*: Educate members on data protection best practices and the importance of security.
- x. *Compliance with regulations*: Adhere to relevant data protection laws and regulations, such as GDPR.

SECTION III

Article 7A: Termination of Membership

In AfriSwe the termination of a membership can typically be initiated by either the member or the cooperative governing body. Here are some possible scenarios:

Scn1: Member-initiated termination;

- i. *Voluntary withdrawal* _A member may choose to leave the cooperative by submitting a written resignation letter notifying the governing body.
- ii. *Failure to meet membership obligations* _If a member deliberately fails to meet their obligations, such as paying dues or fees, dormant member the cooperative may terminate their membership following a written warning letter from the governing body to the member in question.

Scn2: Cooperative-initiated termination;

- i. *Board Members and Directors' decision*; _The cooperative's Board Members and directors may vote to terminate a membership due to: -
 - Violation of the cooperative's bylaws, rules, or policies.
 - Failure to meet membership requirements or obligations.
 - Detrimental conduct to the cooperative's interests.
- ii. *Membership committee recommendation*: _It may recommend termination of a membership to the Board Members.

Scn3: Demise of a Member;

- i. *Death or incapacity*: _A member's family due to death or incapacity of the deceased member MAY write termination request letter with proof of justifications as to WHY a member needs to be terminated and submit it to the governing body of the cooperative. Standard Policy Measures and procedures (HR, Financial and Investment policies etc... must be followed in the process of Member termination of such case. The legal team shall ever study and confirm the Validity of the Requests.

- ii. *Bankruptcy or insolvency*: _If a member becomes bankrupt or insolvent, the cooperative may terminate their membership on his/her will or kind request in a written form.

7B: Appeals Process

- i. Members may appeal a suspension or expulsion decision to the Board Members. Terms and conditions according to code of conducts apply
- ii. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 30 days from letter of suspension or expulsion.
- iii. The Board Members reviews the appeal and makes a final decision.

7C: Dispute Resolution

Any disputes arising from this membership policy or related to the cooperative's activities shall be resolved through mediation and arbitration in accordance with relevant laws or regulations.

Article 8A: Effective Date

This membership policy takes effect on **1st of August 2024** and supersedes all previous policies.

8B: Amendments to this Policy

- i. This membership policy may be amended by the Board Members together with the members' representatives, in this case the coordinators.
- ii. Members are notified of any changes to the policy immediately.

8C: Governing Law

This membership policy is governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Republic Uganda and worlds cooperative principles as reviewed in 1995.

8D: Governing Documents

- i. This membership policy is subordinate to the cooperative's bylaws, articles of incorporation, and other governing documents.
- ii. In the event of a conflict, the governing documents shall prevail.

Article 9A: Indemnification

- i. Members agree to indemnify and hold harmless to the cooperative officers, directors, employees, and agents from any claims, demands, or liabilities arising from their membership or participation in cooperative activities.
- ii. This membership policy constitutes the entire agreement between the member and the cooperative regarding membership

9B: Waiver

The cooperative's failure to enforce any provision of this policy shall not be deemed a waiver of that provision.

9C: Severability

If any provision of this policy is held invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

Article 10A: Acknowledgement and Acceptance

By applying for or maintaining membership, members acknowledge and accept that they have read, understood, and agreed to abide by this membership policy

Conclusion

This membership policy outlines the terms and conditions of membership in AfriSwe Strong Knot Cooperative. By joining and maintaining membership, individuals and organizations demonstrate their commitment to cooperative purposes, values, and principles. The cooperative is dedicated to serving its members and fostering a collaborative community. This policy may be amended as necessary to ensure the cooperative's continued growth and success.

Approved by: (AFRISWE) Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Name: NAMUDDU Janet MAGATO

Signature:



Date: 31st July 2024