ABOUT THE CORPORATE SECRETARIES (COSEC) TOOLKIT

Background

The Corporate Secretaries Toolkit (The Toolkit or CoSec Toolkit) is designed to help train highly experienced professional corporate secretaries to become trainers of new corporate secretaries. It is a tool for training the trainers. Specifically developed for this purpose it will help ensure that a new generation of corporate secretaries are properly trained and have access to the best of breed practices from all 18 members of CSIA. These members pooled their considerable resources so that the Forum's editorial team could pick the most relevant and useful guidance notes, practice manuals, research papers and similar resources so that each section of this cutting edge training aid is relevant and up-to-date.

This toolkit was designed for 'training the trainers' in other words, used to help train those who become the instructors (trainers) for a specific country/area who then conduct training sessions for directors in that country/area.

The key to the success of the toolkit is to have the right information in a usable and easy to understand format that is culturally neutral. That said each kit should include a number of case studies relevant to the specific area/country/culture where it will be deployed.

Collaboration

CSIA had partnered The Global Corporate Governance Forum (GCGF) and proposes to use the Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) methodology and the Forum's existing Corporate Governance Board Leadership Training Resources Kit (Directors Kit) to develop a toolkit for Corporate Secretaries (Cosec Kit)

The purpose of the CoSec Toolkit is to provide trainers with materials for training company secretaries including uncertified individuals who carry out some or all of the roles of a company secretary.

Development

The Cosec ToolKit was developed with a sophisticated corporate secretary role in mind. Relevant modules may be adapted for organizations that aspire to but do not yet have a well-defined corporate secretary role. It was agreed that the Cosec Kit should focus on recognizing the value that a corporate secretary brings to an organization and also agreed that Corporate Governance must be a core competency of the corporate secretary.

The Cosec ToolKit will have a broad audience in terms of organizations' geographical location, types, size and stage in their life cycle. Organizations benefitting from the Cosec Kit may be state-owned, parastatal, non-profit, private, trusts, non-government, faith-based, societies, and listed or unlisted.

The Cosec ToolKit is designed to be used by trainers of Corporate Secretaries. Its purpose is to provide them with up-to-date content materials and strengthen their training skills and expertise. By participating in the Cosec Toolkit's training sessions, new and experienced Corporate Secretaries can better understand their roles and the value of adopting and promoting corporate governance best practices.

The CoSec Toolkit aims at clarifying the duties of company secretaries, developing their skills, and emphasizing their role in developing good corporate governance practices in their organizations whether they are listed or unlisted, or in the public or not-for-profit sectors. It provides institutions with a portfolio of workshops that cover topics of interest and value to those carrying out the role of a Company Secretary. It contains eighteen modules organized in three parts:

PART 1:   OVERVIEW
1.   The Company Secretary: A Catalyst for Governance
2.   The Company Secretary: Foundations of the Job
3.   The Company Secretary: The Board's Communicator

PART 2:   GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE
1.   Delegation
2.   Board Composition and Succession Planning
3.   Board Evaluation
4.   Effective Board Meetings
5.   Board Dynamics at Meetings
6.   Share Registration and Dividends
7.   Directors Duties and Liabilities
8.   Shareholders
9.   Corporate Finance
10.   Financial Oversight and Analysis

PART 3:   ADVISOR AND COMMUNICATOR
1.   Strategy: Development and Evaluation
2.   Risk and Business Continuity Planning
3.   Building Ethical Cultures
4.   Good Citizenship (CSR) and Integrated Reporting
5.   Financial Oversight and Analysis
6.   The Company Secretary: The Board's Communicator
7.   Annual General Meetings
8.   Leading Change and Influencing

Each module includes the following five components:

- An agenda and objective of the training session
- Trainer's Instructions
- Notes with detailed information on the content
- Power Points
- Handouts for participants
- Skills and Action Ideas

The Cosec ToolKit includes a case study which traces the professional development of a Corporate Secretary.

All training modules are "stand-alone," meaning they can be sequenced and adapted to meet the specific needs of company secretaries working in diverse organizations in different countries and stages of growth.

The CoSec Toolkit uses a proven approach that emphasizes the real life experience of adult learners. It accentuates the practical skills and knowledge that individuals carrying out the roles of company secretaries need to ensure that organizations practice good governance and boards provide effective leadership. At the end of each training session, learners set goals for themselves and develop action plans to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired.

The Institute of Certified Secretaries (Kenya)

As member of CSIA, ICS was part of the Cosec Toolkit Working Group that participated in the development of the Toolkit.

In the years 2015 and 2016, the Institute in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) trained a group of twenty one members on the use of the Toolkit during Training of Trainers Course held in Nairobi. Another group of twenty three was trained March 24 - 26, 2021 in collaboration with the Corporate Secretaries International Association (CSIA). The Institute relies on members who have gone through the ToT for support in its high profile training assignments.

The Institute in the year 2016 imported fifteen copies of the Corporate Secretaries (CoSec) Toolkit for general access by its membership. Members interested in enhancing their competence in the areas of training and Corporate Secretarial are invited to study the CoSec Toolkit at the Institute's offices during office hours.

In addition to the ToT, the Institute in the year 2022 has introduced the CoSec toolkit modular webinars. The Webinars are open to members and nonmembers with each taking two hours at a cost of Kshs 2,000. The Webinars will be facilitated by both local and international facilitators who have undergone the ToT.