



Part 1: Policy purpose

NASFUND recognises the serious threat HIV poses to Papua New Guinea's future social and economic security. The HIV epidemic is now among the general population in PNG and is increasing rapidly in some areas. The scale and complex nature of HIV requires a response from all sectors of the community. NASFUND believes the private sector has an important role in, and a responsibility to contribute to national efforts to reduce the spread of HIV, and support those people and communities who have been affected.

Through this policy, NASFUND aims to reduce the impact of HIV on its staff and operations by managing the disease in a manner that is equitable, empathetic, transparent and in accordance with the law and national guidelines.

Part 2: HIV and AIDS

HIV is a challenge for the private sector because the disease mainly affects working age adults between the ages of 15-49. The epidemic has the potential to reduce the size of the working population and a worker's ability to contribute. Businesses should consider how their activity can contribute to increasing the HIV epidemic, and make adjustments to reduce their employee's vulnerability to HIV.

NASFUND is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for all employees. The NASFUND HIV policy and program is intended to assure that all employees can learn how to prevent the spread of HIV, and where to get more information, advice and services. NASFUND employees can be confident that the highest level of occupational health and safety, with regard to HIV, has been provided.

NASFUND also commits to increasing awareness of HIV among employees and the broader community, and to ensuring the right of all employees to work in an environment where discrimination is not tolerated. NASFUND is committed to reducing the stigmatisation of any person infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

To meet this commitment, NASFUND will:

- Employ workplace policy measures to ensure that discrimination is neither practiced nor tolerated;
- Educate employees about the transmission of HIV, the nature of AIDS, the care, treatment and testing options available for employees and behaviour changing measures which can limit the virus' spread;
- Provide a work environment that protects employees from hazards through the application of Universal Precautions and promotes overall health;
- Respect employees right to privacy and confidentiality;

- Ensure conditions of employment are not influenced by HIV status;
- Make accommodations to enable employees to continue their duties where any employee voluntarily discloses their HIV positive status to management. Disclosure of HIV status will not affect an employee's benefits and entitlements such as treatment, care, medical assistance, superannuation, retirement benefit and redundancy. In this regard, the company views HIV in the same way as other chronic illnesses.

Part 3: Implementation

Equal opportunity and non-discrimination

Gender discrimination is an issue in PNG, meaning HIV is more likely to affect women and girls. NASFUND recognises that discriminatory behaviour contributes to the greater HIV burden women and girls carry, and does not tolerate discrimination in any form.

In line with the PNG HIV/AIDS Management and Prevention Act (2004) and the principles set out in NASFUND policy on equal opportunity and non-discrimination, all staff are to act in a manner that supports equity and avoids harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace.

Measures for dealing with discrimination are outlined in NASFUND Policy 102.

HIV testing

- Compulsory HIV testing is not a pre-requisite for recruitment, training, promotion or career development
- NASFUND supports voluntary and confidential counselling and testing (VCT) at quality facilities, with pre and post test counselling, to enable employees to manage their own health and well being and that of their families

Conditions of Employment

- HIV infection is not a cause for termination of employment. Employment will not be terminated on the basis of HIV status
- HIV status will not influence promotion, training, redundancy or retrenchment procedures
- The employee shall remain in the position for as long as s/he fulfils the requirements of that job
- Where disability (AIDS-related illness) affects performance, in consultation with the employee, duties may be reassigned. This can include flexible work arrangements or job restructuring
- An employee that becomes too sick to work may seek redundancy. In such cases, affected employees and their dependants will be assisted during termination procedures with appropriate referrals to access available services through district, provincial or private clinic networks.
- Employees living with HIV will be entitled to the same benefits as other employees
- Any employee found behaving in a discriminatory manner towards any HIV positive employee will be disciplined, and the conduct of such practices will constitute grounds for dismissal

Disclosure, confidentiality and privacy

- Employees disclosing their HIV status are entitled to privacy. Medical information will be treated confidentially and measures will be taken to protect employee records and information during and post-employment in compliance with the law.
- To ensure compliance with privacy and the law, NASFUND ensures that all Human Resource files are properly secured and accessible only by the CEO, COO and the head of human resources or the human resource assistant.

Prevention, care and support

Prevention

NASFUND commits to provide information about HIV and encourage employees to practice behaviours known to reduce the risk of HIV transmission. NASFUND will offer a regular HIV education program and employees will receive formal prevention training sessions and have access to informal peer educators. NASFUND's prevention training will address stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

Prevention Programs

Awareness

NASFUND engages the following people to discuss HIV/AIDS issues with the staff on a biannual basis

- Recognised trainers who are living with HIV (PWA) to give presentations on HIV/AIDS and lead staff discussion groups
- An annual visit by recognised HIV & AIDS groups such as Anglicare to inform staff on HIV and discuss general HIV awareness
- Educational discussions on reducing HIV by highlighting the importance of respect for women, reducing domestic violence, moderation of alcohol

NASFUND will coordinate such training through PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS

Encouraging male and female condom usage

Staff will be encouraged that if abstinence or faithfulness is not workable for them, that safe sex practices and condom usage is an essential tool in reducing the risk of HIV infection. Male and female condoms will be placed in male and female restrooms at NASFUND.

Training

Each year, four staff members will be selected to undergo intensive HIV/AIDS training. Staff members will be selected to

- (i) Build internally a sophisticated HIV/AIDS NASFUND workforce; and
- (ii) Where possible selection of a staff member for training will be based on the wider consideration of what impact that staff member can make to his or her own village or community through HIV awareness.

Transport

Recognising that the time taken to and from work can create an extra burden for those employees living with HIV, where possible, the company will use the bus to transport HIV affected employees who have disclosed their status.

Community Obligation

As part of its social awareness program, the marketing team will disseminate HIV-related information, while making employee and employer visits.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing

NASFUND encourages employees and their families to make use of the voluntary counselling and testing facility (e.g. see website for a list of services). Knowing your HIV status is an important factor in preventing risk to others, and adopting lifestyle changes to maintain good health.

Care and support

NASFUND encourages overall health and wellbeing and where possible, will assist employees to seek appropriate medical treatment and support services. PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS has links with quality support facilities that can give you advice and support. Information about these services can be found on the company website and also on the intranet.

Treatment

Health and family

NASFUND recognises that there is more to HIV/AIDS treatment than a consistently applied drug program. NASFUND will ensure that employees who are infected with HIV are aware of nutritional issues that can assist in their personal well-being. Family members and carers will also be offered educational advice on how to support an employee with HIV in a loving and non-discriminatory manner.

Access to drugs and medical assistance

NASFUND will assist eligible employees and their dependants' access treatment for HIV. With assistance from PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS, employees will be supported to access quality medical care to assist employees manage their health and that of their family.

Cost of treatment while employed at NASFUND

NASFUND recognises that the cost of treatment for employees with HIV can be prohibitive. NASFUND will endeavour to meet a substantial cost of the treatment within PNG on the following formula while an employee is working at NASFUND.

- NASFUND 75%
- Employee 25%

Cost of treatments when an employee leaves NASFUND due to ill health or incapacity

If an employee leaves NASFUND because of ill health or incapacity associated with HIV infection, NASFUND will meet the treatment bill for HIV drugs for a further 12 months. In that twelve-month period, NASFUND with assistance from PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS will facilitate access to public provided treatment beyond the 12-month period.

Part 4: Policy implementation

Communication strategy

NASFUND will ensure this policy is clearly understood by all staff, partners and clients. In the business community, NASFUND will endeavour to implement, and be a leading example of best practice HIV/AIDS workplace management in Papua New Guinea.

Partnerships

NASFUND will work with qualified organisations in the field of HIV/AIDS such as PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS and the National AIDS Commission, to ensure our messages and programs compliment those of the national government and other key stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation

The company will monitor progress of the epidemic in PNG, and stay up to date with key messages developed by the National AIDS Council. The company's policy and programs will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly, to ensure they are effective and in line with best practice. NASFUND staff will be consulted within the review process.

Administration responsibilities

Establishment of an internal HIV Management Committee

To ensure that this policy remains workable, a standing HIV Management Committee is charged with

- the annual review of the policy and bringing reviewed policies to the Board for approval
- to act as a co coordinating body between staff and access to HIV/AIDS services.
- To liaise between the PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS and staff members.

The Committee will be headed by the CEO and will include two Team leaders – Accounting & Finance and Human Resources.

Use of HIV Management Committee by an employee with HIV

NASFUND will ensure that internal company processes will protect the confidentiality and security of employee information. However NASFUND respects the right of employees not to disclose their HIV status to the company if they choose not to. In these cases, the company can still provide assistance. Employees who choose not to disclose their status with one of the three-person committee can access PNG Business Against HIV/AIDS or the employee's doctor, who will act as a confidential liaison point between the employee and the HIV Management Committee.

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure strict administration with this policy in liaison with Human Resources. All questions about this policy will be treated in strict confidence.

Further information

For more information about this policy, www.baha.com.pg or www.nasfund.com.pg

CEO NASFUND
December 2006