

ACT Alliance

Quality and Accountability Framework

“Building a culture of quality and accountability across the alliance”

Version: September 2015

The ACT QAF was originally approved by the ACT Alliance Governing Board on 27 September 2011. Annual revisions are made after the approval by the Governing Board of new policies.

Accountability: *For the ACT Alliance, accountability is the acknowledgment, communication and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies including administration, governance, implementation and consequences of the implementation of all activities the member is involved in. It involves the responsible use of power.¹*

1. Introduction

The ACT Quality and Accountability Framework (QAF) summarises standards of quality towards which ACT can be held to account by its stakeholders and by each other. It states ACT's primary commitments and the different responsibilities of ACT members, ACT forums, ACT secretariat and ACT governance in relation to ACT's accountability mechanisms.

The ACT Strategic Plan 2015-2018 outlines ACT's longer term plan for strengthening quality, accountability and impact of the work undertaken by ACT members, both individually and collectively. The annual work plan of the ACT secretariat includes all activities related to improvement and putting the framework into practice. The QAF is monitored and evaluated as part of that process. The QAF seeks to ensure that the alliance maximises the quality and impact of its work in humanitarian disasters, long-term development work and advocacy. It also seeks to ensure that members have mechanisms in place that provide greater accountability to beneficiaries.

2. Alliance accountability chain

As a global alliance of over 140 church and church-related organisations working in 140 countries, ACT has a complex accountability chain with a diverse and independent membership. Some ACT members are churches or departments of churches. Others are ecumenical organisations that have been established by a number of churches to do humanitarian and development work on their behalf. Some member organisations work primarily through partners and some implement programmes themselves. Amongst the ecumenical member organisations some are themselves networks or membership organisations that not only do work on behalf of their members but also play a key coordination role for their members. Within the alliance, ACT members work individually and as part of national and regional ACT forums; some work together through an ACT appeal mechanism in response to a disaster, others plan and implement joint development projects together, while still others participate in formal ACT advisory groups or communities of practice.

All ACT members are accountable to their own governance structures and are responsible to the ACT Alliance for meeting the obligations of their ACT membership. ACT members who fund or access funds through the ACT emergency appeal mechanism have additional accountability responsibilities.

All ACT members share the same ethos and values. As an alliance, ACT seek to ensure that the processes for accountability and varying roles and responsibility work together in a collaborative way and that the ACT accountability system works as a coherent whole. ACT works to ensure that an effective system for accountability instils a culture of accountability at all levels of the alliance.

¹ Adapted from "High Quality" section of ACT Founding Document, February 2009, pg. 14 and drawing from the HAP definition of accountability.

3. ACT stakeholders

The Alliance has a wide range of stakeholders: ACT members and their partners, communities with whom ACT members work and the people ACT aims to assist, donors, supporters and the public. It is important to distinguish the specific accountability and responsibilities held by the individual ACT members from those held by the alliance. Within this context the alliance understands itself to be fully accountable to i) ACT members; ii) ACT forums, iii) ACT secretariat and iv) ACT governance. At the community level, ACT strongly promotes accountability of its members towards communities with whom ACT members work and the people ACT aims to assist.

4. Vision, mission and strategy

United in the common task of all Christians to manifest God's unconditional love for all women, men, girls and boys, ACT works towards a world community where all God's creation lives with dignity, justice, peace and full respect for human rights and the environment. ACT members work together for positive and sustainable change in the lives of people affected by poverty and injustice through coordinated and effective humanitarian, development, and advocacy work. With ACT's global reach, it is well placed to collectively achieve its strategic aims for 2015-2018:

- i) Human dignity
- ii) Community resilience
- iii) Environmental sustainability
- iv) A robust alliance

5. Global governance

The governance of the alliance consists of a general assembly (all members), a governing board of 19 members, elected from the general assembly, and an executive committee of 7 members elected from and by the governing board. The governing board has the overall responsibility for the governance of the ACT Alliance between general assemblies and meets at least once a year. The executive committee supervises the implementation of policy and exercises responsibility for membership and financial decisions between meetings of the governing board and meets at least twice a year.

Each ACT member carries full responsibility for its work and is accountable to its governing board. At the global level, the ACT secretariat, facilitates and coordinates the work of ACT members to realise the objectives and functions of the ACT Alliance. The ACT secretariat is accountable to the ACT governing board. ACT Advisory Groups and communities of practice support the alliance in the areas of humanitarian and development policy and practice, advocacy, quality and accountability, communications and fundraising, operating in line with ACT Alliance procedures. ACT forums coordinate work across members at the national and regional level (where such exist) and encourage implementation of good practice.

6. Mandatory standards and commitments

The ACT Alliance “*Founding Document*”, February 2009, is the core document of the ACT Alliance. It outlines ACT’s vision, mission, objectives and member commitments. The document provides details of ACT membership criteria and obligations, the roles and responsibilities of the ACT secretariat, governing board and executive committee, among other issues. It is complemented by the ACT Alliance Statutes and By-Laws. Based on these documents, and the subsequent approval of new policies by the Governing Board, there are a number of overarching ACT standards and commitments to which all ACT members are obliged to adhere irrespective of their areas of work.

In addition, six international standards have been formally adopted, endorsed or committed to by ACT governance.

ACT has further developed policy guidance on a number of sectoral and cross cutting issues which is non-binding, but seeks to provide reliable guidance based on international standards that can be adapted by members to the local context.

The table on the following page summarises the policies and guidance under each of the three categories. The more detailed matrix that follows outlines the varying roles and responsibilities of ACT stakeholders in relation to the mandatory standards (both ACT and international).

All policies noted in this document refer to the most recent approved policy or policy revision and can be found on the ACT website www.actalliance.org.

ACT Mandatory Standards (15)	International Mandatory Standards (6)	Cross cutting and Sectoral Policy Guidance (18 themes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Membership agreement, 2011 • ACT Code of Good Practice, 2011 • ACT Code of Conduct for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and abuse of power, 2011 • Procedure for funding the ACT Alliance, 2012 • ACT Alliance national and regional forums policy and guidelines, 2011 • Co-branding policy, 2010 • ACT Communications policy, 2013 • Public information disclosure policy, 2012 • Anti-fraud and corruption policy, 2009 • Complaints policy, 2011 • Membership disciplinary policy, 2011 • Child Safeguarding Policy, 2015 • ACT Emergency response mechanism policy, 2012 • Our understanding of development, 2008 • Advocacy policy and procedures, 2011 	<p>The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/code-of-conduct/</p> <p>The Sphere Standards http://www.spherehandbook.org/</p> <p>Principles of partnership https://icvnetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20English.pdf</p> <p>Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard</p> <p>Code of good practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS http://www.unhcr.org/405ac7542.pdf</p> <p>Istanbul principles for development effectiveness http://cso-effectiveness.org/istanbul-principles,067</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Advisory Groups and Communities of Practice • Climate Change • Civil military relations • Complaints Handling • Disaster Risk Reduction • Food Security • Gender equality • Health and HIV • Human rights • Material aid • Needs assessment • Capacity development and Learning • PME and Impact assessment • Protection • Psychosocial support • Security • Child Safeguarding • Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse • Sustainable Development • Emergency Response Mechanism templates and guidelines • Emergency Preparedness and Response • Communications

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
ACT Membership Agreement (2011)					
It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the ACT Alliance member and the ACT Alliance, including the relationship between: the ACT member, the ACT Alliance governing bodies and the ACT secretariat.	The agreement represents the expressed commitment of each ACT member and the alliance to work collaboratively to advance the ACT Alliance global mission	<p>The agreement is mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT member organisation.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to regularly review and monitor fulfilment of their commitments as outlined in the agreement.</p>	Forum convenors are aware of the key commitments of ACT members, ACT governance and the ACT secretariat.	<p>Secretariat staff acknowledge and understand the secretariat’s roles and responsibilities. The secretariat staff highlight member commitment to working collaboratively as part of the alliance.</p> <p>The secretariat will regularly review and monitor fulfilment of their commitments as outlined in the agreement.</p>	<p>Revisions to the agreement form or its contents are approved by ACT governance.</p> <p>ACT Governance bodies are encouraged to regularly review and monitor fulfilment of their commitments as outlined in the agreement.</p> <p>Ensure that a complaints handling system is established and functioning to address breaches of the agreement.</p>
ACT Code of Good Practice (2011)					
Outlines the values, principles and commitments that shape the humanitarian, development and advocacy work of ACT members.	To continually improve and move toward best practice principles.	<p>The code is mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT member organisation.</p> <p>Signed codes must be submitted to the ACT secretariat.</p>	Implementation of the code is promoted by national and regional forums in all development, humanitarian and advocacy work.	<p>The code values, principles and commitments are promoted by ACT secretariat staff at all ACT events, and in all ACT work, including ACT appeals.</p> <p>Reports of breaches of the code are actively addressed by ACT management and reported to the ACT governance.</p>	<p>Revisions to the code are approved by ACT governance.</p> <p>Take decisions on breaches of the Code.</p>
ACT Code of Conduct for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and abuse of power (2011)					
Covers the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and	To respect the welfare and rights of the people	The code must be signed by ACT member staff, local, national and international. It	Implementation of the code is promoted by national	The code must be signed by the staff of the ACT Secretariat. It is a	A complaints handling system is established

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<p>Abuse (SEA), all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices.</p>	<p>with whom ACT works and to assist staff to better understand the obligations placed upon their conduct.</p>	<p>applies to temporary personnel such as consultants and volunteers who work in ACT member programmes. It is a mandatory requirement for all ACT members.²</p> <p>The management of every ACT member organisation have a responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of this Code of Conduct, that they understand what it means in concrete behavioural terms and how it applies to their programme context.</p> <p>Each staff members has the responsibility to report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of the Code to her/his line manager and/or senior management of the ACT member organisation (or following procedures established by the organisation’s complaints mechanisms), who is expected to take prompt investigative action.</p> <p>Staff breaches of the Code are actively addressed by the management of each ACT member organisation.</p> <p>ACT members have systems in place to prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices.</p>	<p>and regional forums in all development, humanitarian and advocacy work.</p>	<p>mandatory requirement that also applies to temporary personnel such as consultants, interns, volunteers.</p> <p>The management of the ACT Secretariat have a responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of this Code of Conduct, that they understand what it means in concrete behavioural terms and how it applies to their programme context.</p> <p>Each staff members has the responsibility to report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of the Code to her/his line manager and/or senior management of the ACT member organisation (or following procedures established by the organisation’s complaints mechanisms), who is expected to take prompt investigative action.</p> <p>Breaches of the Code are actively addressed by ACT management.</p>	<p>and functioning to address breaches of the code.</p> <p>Revisions to the code are approved by ACT governance.</p>
<p>Procedure for funding the ACT Alliance (2012)</p>					
<p>Outlines the key elements</p>	<p>To reach the alliance</p>	<p>This is a mandatory procedure for all</p>	<p>Forums are aware of ACT</p>	<p>Members are invoiced each year,</p>	<p>The governing board</p>

² Some ACT member organisations have comprehensive codes of conduct that contain the principles of the ACT code and in some cases exceed the ACT commitments. In such cases, ACT members must share their code of conduct with the ACT secretariat and jointly discuss and agree on which document should be signed by its organisation’s staff.

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that comprise the funding base for the ACT secretariat and procedures for payment of fees.	potential of working together the secretariat must be well resourced and has an adequate and stable income	members. All members pay an annual membership fee and an income based fee. Voluntary contributions over and above the income based fee to help with the core costs of the secretariat are welcomed. An international coordination fee applies to all ACT appeals.	funding procedures.	according to their membership status.	sets the level of the membership fee, income-based fee and international coordination fee. Receives reports on compliance with membership fee commitments and decides on non-compliance measures.
ACT Alliance national and regional forums policy and guidelines (2011)					
Defines and directs the work of ACT forums and provides guidance to help strengthen forums. Though forums have different contexts, their structure and systems are expected to be based on the principles detailed in this document.	To increase the effectiveness and impact of the humanitarian assistance and development work being undertaken by members through improved coordination.	This is a mandatory policy for all members and participation in forums is compulsory. On joining ACT, a member commits to actively establish (where needed) and participate in national and regional forums and to work with and strengthen other ACT members. International ACT members who are engaged in activities but have no physical presence in a particular country commit to inform the relevant national forums and keep in virtual contact.	Staff of ACT members are supported by their organisation management to actively participate in ACT forums for the purpose of greater coordination, promoting good practice and shared learning. Implementation of the policy is promoted at national and regional forums level and MoU's reflect forum principles.	The secretariat facilitates awareness raising of the policy among members and forums and ensures that all forum MoUs are in line with principles.	Approves policy revisions Supports the work of forums and promotes their coordination efforts.
Co-branding policy (2010)					
Outlines ACT brand values and functional benefits and provides a practical guide to co-branding.	To seek all opportunities to act and speak as one, especially in advocacy, media and visibility.	This is a mandatory policy for all members. One of the obligations of membership is to agree to co-brand publications and signage according to the co-branding policy and guidelines.	The forum promotes the co-branding policy and complies with its requirements.	The secretariat promotes awareness of the policy, monitors adherence and where possible builds capacity of members to co-brand.	Approves policy revisions.
ACT Communications Policy (2013)					

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<p>Outlines the principles underpinning, and purposes of, ACT communications to both internal and external audiences. It also gives specific guidance on processes for information/material collation, approval and use across different mediums to ensure and increase its visibility and credibility across its audiences.</p>	<p>To give visibility to the work of the alliance and global matters of injustice.</p> <p>To help achieve consistency across the alliance in its supportive work towards ACT’s strategic vision.</p>	<p>Members have a responsibility to be sources of information for alliance-wide use, and to use media to gain publicity for ACT and its work nationally and regionally.</p> <p>However no individual should claim to post on ACT’s behalf unless they are within ACT’s agreed secretariat control.</p> <p>ACT members have a responsibility to co-brand, including both the logo and information about the alliance.</p>	<p>Each forum is encouraged to identify a forum media officer who acts as a central contact point between the forums and the secretariat.</p> <p>Forums that set up their own websites must adhere to the ACT communications and co-branding policy.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to steer communication towards achieving specific results, support members in their communication efforts, and enhance the ability of the secretariat to fundraise.</p> <p>The secretariat encourages members to co-brand.</p> <p>The ACT secretariat Head of Communications has editorial accountability for all ACT productions such as website content, press releases, leaflets brochures and reports.</p>	<p>The General Secretary gives the final sign-off on controversial material.</p> <p>The ACT governing board approves policy revisions.</p>
Public Information Disclosure Policy (2012)					
<p>Outlines how and what information concerning ACT’s structures, policies and activities is available to its stakeholders. It is related to all information held by the ACT Alliance secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>To provide an opportunity for the recipients or consumers of ACT information to hold ACT accountable.</p>	<p>Each member has a responsibility to ensure that ACT stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about the organisation and its activities.</p> <p>ACT members are encouraged to make this information available in languages and media accessible to the people with whom they work.</p>	<p>Forums are aware of ACT information disclosure policy and support the secretariat by providing timely and accurate information related to ACT activities.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to make available high quality information and documentation for public consumption, as outlined in the policy.</p> <p>The general secretary is responsible for making decisions on specific information requests from the public in between governance meetings.</p>	<p>The ACT governing board is responsible for making decisions on ACTs open information boundaries and for approving and ratifying any policy decisions in relation to this policy. The ACT executive committee is responsible for supervising the implementation of this policy in cooperation with the ACT general secretary.</p>
Anti-fraud and corruption policy (2009)					
<p>Defines ACT stance against</p>	<p>To ensure that financial</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all ACT</p>	<p>Forums are aware of the</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all</p>	<p>The ACT governing</p>

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<p>fraud and corruption and key commitments</p>	<p>and other resources are used solely for the intended purposes and to promote a culture of honesty, transparency, stewardship and openness among the staff and management of ACT.</p> <p>To ensure that vulnerable populations are not disadvantaged or exploited by staff members or their associates who commit fraudulent and corrupt acts; and</p>	<p>Alliance member organisations which access funds through the ACT funding mechanisms.</p> <p>It applies to all ACT employees (full time, part time, temporary and casual), ACT members, and also to non-ACT implementing partners who access funds from ACT members through the ACT funding mechanisms.</p> <p>The policy covers financial misconduct, including criminal acts such as theft of cash and false accounting thereof; abuse of resources which belong to ACT and those provided by, or purchased using funds raised by the ACT Alliance members and other non-ACT donors in response to an ACT appeal, among others.</p>	<p>policy and promote compliance across its membership.</p>	<p>staff at the ACT Secretariat.</p>	<p>bodies shall not tolerate the fraudulent and corrupt use of funds and resources by ACT staff, members, or by the external implementing partners of ACT members.</p> <p>It shall ensure that mechanisms are in place to minimise the chances of occurrence of fraud and corruption within the ACT secretariat as well as within the ACT Alliance member organisations accessing funds from ACT appeals.</p>
<p>Complaints policy (2011)</p>					
<p>Outlines the complaints handling system that is within the scope of the secretariat in Geneva and ACT governance. It outlines the principles and process of complaints handling.</p>	<p>To recognise, promote and protect ACT stakeholder rights, including the right to raise a concern, give feedback and/or complain;</p> <p>To address the wellbeing and protection of crisis-affected populations and communities in ACT humanitarian, development and advocacy work; and</p>	<p>This policy applies to all ACT members. Each member has a responsibility to handle and respond to the complaints it receives from its stakeholders.</p> <p>Members are expected to adopt the spirit and principles of the ACT Complaints Policy and related guidelines to ensure that all complaints are handled professionally and effectively.</p> <p>ACT members are expected to explore and develop complaints mechanisms that are accessible to all women, men, boys and girls with whom they work. If they do not have the capacity to address</p>	<p>ACT forums promote the spirit of the ACT Complaints Policy and actively share experiences of initiating or improving a safe and functioning complaints mechanism.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to handle and respond to complaints they receive.</p> <p>Any complaints received by the ACT secretariat about the staff or activities of an ACT member organisation are forwarded to the concerned organisation to handle and address while keeping the ACT secretariat informed.</p> <p>If the complaint is about the overall director of the organisation at the headquarters level, the complaint</p>	<p>ACT governance has a responsibility to handle and respond to complaints they receive.</p> <p>Approves policy revisions and makes decisions on recommendations arising from investigations.</p> <p>Receives annual report.</p>

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
	<p>To encourage members to develop and establish complaints as part of their overall accountability mechanism.</p>	<p>complaints related to abuse, exploitation or gross misconduct they should have a safe referral system in place to address, at a minimum, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and fraud and corruption.</p> <p>ACT members are expected to inform communities of their rights and ACT programme-related entitlements and how to make a complaint.</p>		<p>is referred to the relevant member organisational authority.</p> <p>A Complaints Handling Advisory Group provides expert advice to the secretariat on complaints handling.</p> <p>Distils and shares learning experiences of the forums in initiating/improving complaints and accountability initiatives.</p>	
Membership disciplinary policy (2011)					
<p>Outlines procedures for disciplinary measures against ACT members who have breached an ACT code or policy leading to possible censure, suspension of privileges, restoration and exclusion.</p>	<p>To strive for high quality and continuous improvement in ACT’s humanitarian, development and advocacy work.</p> <p>The policy ensures that any breach of ACT policy is managed in a structured and consistent way and that members are treated fairly, promptly and impartially.</p>	<p>Membership of ACT comes with a commitment to adhere to ACT codes and policies. This policy applies to all members and keeps members informed of the procedures and actions they may face if agreed commitments are not met.</p>	<p>ACT forums promote adherence to ACT codes and policies.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat, in cooperation with the Membership and Nominations Committee has a responsibility to ensure that the policy is updated regularly and that recommended membership disciplinary measures are in line with the approved policy.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy.</p> <p>ACT governance takes membership disciplinary decisions based on the advice and recommendations from the Membership and Nominations committee (MNC) and ensures that these decisions are in line with the approved policy.</p>
ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Policy (2015)					
<p>Outlines the key child safeguarding policy principles for each member to apply when developing their own policies.</p>	<p>To strengthen its mechanisms for protecting and safeguarding the children who come into contact with ACT Alliance activities.</p>	<p>This policy applies to all ACT members.</p> <p>All ACT members are required to apply the key principles outlined in this policy to their own contextualised Child Safeguarding/Protection policy by May 2017.</p>	<p>ACT forums promote the spirit of the policy and actively share experience between members within a forum of how to develop and apply child safeguarding policies and codes of conduct.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to ensure that the policy is reviewed and updated regularly (every three years).</p> <p>The ACT Secretariat promotes the policy with members and provides support for members</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy and promotes the policy requirements with members in their regions.</p>

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
		<p>By May 2016, all ACT members are required to begin taking on Child Safeguarding responsibilities within their own organisations and minimally will have developed a specific Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct (or amended their existing Code of Conduct to include Child Safeguarding components).</p> <p>ACT members with existing Child Safeguarding policies are encouraged to support other ACT members to develop them in line with guidance provided.</p>		<p>implementing the policy by referencing the guidance document and linking them with other ACT members who have an existing Child Safeguarding Policy.</p>	
<p>ACT emergency response mechanism policy, guidelines and tools (2012)</p>					
<p>Details the ACT emergency response and funding mechanisms with related procedures and guidance. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of all ACT members, forums and secretariat in relation to ACT appeals and financial obligations and commitments.</p>	<p>To ensure an effective and efficient ACT emergency response</p> <p>To ensure that the full ACT response – both inside and outside the ACT funding appeal - is visible within and outside the alliance</p> <p>To ensure responsible internal management and control systems are in place to allow proper emergency appeal implementation and reporting.</p>	<p>This is a policy that applies to all ACT members who fund and/or access funds through the ACT appeal system and those who implement responses to emergencies outside the ACT appeal.</p>	<p>Forums are aware of and understand the policy and related procedures and apply it to all ACT appeals.</p>	<p>The secretariat promotes awareness of the policy and procedures and where possible builds capacity of members and forums.</p> <p>The secretariat plays a key role in the implementation of the procedures.</p>	<p>Approves policy revisions</p>
<p>Our Understanding of Development (2008)</p>					
<p>Articulates the principles and</p>	<p>To sustain</p>	<p>ACT members promote rights based</p>	<p>Provides platform for</p>	<p>Secretariat promotes and supports</p>	<p>Approves revisions to</p>

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<p>practice of development that are central to ACT’s work in development.</p>	<p>transformational development by upholding the empowerment of communities to claim their rights.</p>	<p>approaches in their work, and take action to eradicate poverty/vulnerabilities and promote social and economic justice.</p>	<p>mutual learning through joint analysis, action and reflection.</p>	<p>efforts of members and forums to promote transformational development.</p>	<p>the document</p>
<p>Advocacy policy and procedures (2011)</p>					
<p>Outlines ACT’s approach to advocacy and details the roles and responsibilities of ACT members, ACT forums, the ACT secretariat and ACT governance in advocacy work.</p>	<p>To influence and change the structures and systems which impoverish and marginalise people; To advocate as much as possible “with people” rather than for people using inclusive and participatory approaches.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for members and forums. Members have specific responsibilities in relation to joint advocacy work within the alliance as outlined in the advocacy policy.</p>	<p>As the foundations of much of ACT advocacy work lies in national and regional fora, forums must comply with the standards, principles and procedures outlined in this policy.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for the ACT secretariat. The secretariat primarily engages in facilitating, networking and linking the ACT members, information sharing, facilitation, coordination, leadership, and where possible, capacity development.</p>	<p>Approves global framework advocacy positions as necessary.</p>
<p>International standards formally adopted, endorsed or committed to by ACT governance</p>					
<p>The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief</p>					
<p>Provides principles which all NGOs should adhere to in their disaster response work, and describes the relationships agencies working in disasters should seek with donor governments, host governments and the UN system.</p>	<p>To judge the conduct of ACT programmes on the ground using the principles as a yardstick.</p>	<p>All ACT members are committed to understanding and adhering to this code as it holds principles that apply to both humanitarian and development work. All ACT members sign a section in the ACT membership application form stating that they commit to adhere to the code and thus must comply.</p>	<p>Forums promote the code in ACT’s work and highlight the fact that disaster-affected communities have a right to expect those who seek to assist them to measure up to these standards.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat promotes the code as part of ACTs way of working and ensures that the approach and actions related to ACT Appeals are in line with the principles.</p>	<p>ACT governance formally adopts the code and/or any possible revisions by SCHR, as an ACT code.</p>
<p>The Sphere Standards: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response</p>					

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<p>Provides minimum standards in key lifesaving sectors such as: water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion; food security and nutrition; shelter, settlement and non-food items; and health action.</p>	<p>To improve the quality of humanitarian response in situations of disaster and conflict, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system to disaster-affected people.</p>	<p>All ACT members sign a section in the ACT membership application form stating that they commit to the Sphere Standards. Though it is a voluntary standard, all members should aspire to these internationally accepted standards and/or justify why they cannot meet the standards.</p>	<p>Forums promote the standards, provide or identify opportunities for training, and ensure that ACT appeals meet these minimum standards where possible.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat promotes the standards as part of ACT's way of working and ensures that the approach and actions related to ACT appeals are in line with the standards.</p>	<p>ACT governance formally adopts the standards as ACT standards</p>
Principles of Partnership					
<p>Provides five principles on which NGOs and the UN should base their partnership approaches.</p>	<p>To build and nurture an effective partnership. To acknowledge diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognising the interdependence among humanitarian organisations</p>	<p>All ACT members have a responsibility to base their partnership approaches on the five principles of equality, transparency, results-orientated approach, responsibility and complementarity.</p>	<p>Forums adopt the principles of good partnerships in their work approaches.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat promotes and adopts the principles of partnership in its work with members and promotes their adoption as a way of working across ACT member partnerships.</p>	<p>Principles endorsed by the governing board and put into practice in their ways of working.</p>
The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)					
<p>Defines an international standard on accountability and quality of humanitarian action to communities and people affected by crises and provides nine commitments and quality criteria to assess, improve and recognise achievement of such standards</p>	<p>To promote improved quality and accountability to communities and people affected by humanitarian crises</p>	<p>Each ACT member has a responsibility to address quality and accountability in their work. Some ACT members are also CHS Alliance members and are at different stages in the process of self assessment, external verification and certification.</p> <p>All ACT members are encouraged to adopt and implement the Core Humanitarian Standard in their humanitarian, development and advocacy work and to support other ACT members to improve their own implementation of the nine</p>	<p>The forum promotes the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability to help ACT member organisations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises to design, implement, assess and improve their programmes in the areas of quality and accountability.</p>	<p>As a member of the CHS Alliance, the ACT secretariat is committed to meeting the highest standards of quality, Accountability and people management and promoting it across the alliance.</p> <p>The CHS commitments are mandatory for the ACT Secretariat and must be addressed in all its work in relation to the alliance.</p>	<p>Approves ACT membership of CHS Alliance and ACT's engagement in any external verification or certification process.</p>

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
		commitments.			
Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS					
<p>Outlines guiding principles which apply a human rights approach to the range of HIV-specific health, development and humanitarian work undertaken by NGOs responding to HIV.</p>	<p>To involve people living with HIV and affected communities in responding to HIV and acknowledge that the experience of individuals and communities is an essential ingredient in effective community response to the challenges of HIV.</p>	<p>ACT members who work on HIV-related initiatives have a responsibility to adopt and implement the principles outlined in the code. The code provides a common framework and good practice principles applicable to all NGOs engaged in responding to HIV.</p> <p>The code includes key resources such as tool kits and manuals that can assist in putting the principles into practice that can be used and/or adapted by ACT members.</p>	<p>The forum promotes the code and its related principles in relation to ACT’s HIV work.</p>	<p>The secretariat signs the code on behalf of the alliance and promotes the code and its related principles in relation to ACT’s HIV work.</p>	<p>ACT governance endorses the code and any revisions thereof.</p>
Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness					
<p>The eight (8) Istanbul principles for CSO Development Effectiveness are a set of mutually shared values guiding the development work of civil society organizations worldwide. ACT was part of the processes that led to the creation of these principles.</p>	<p>Commits to: Respect and promotion of human rights and social justice; Gender equality and women empowerment; people’s empowerment, ownership and participation; environmental sustainability; transparency and accountability; equitable partnership etc.</p>	<p>Each member has a responsibility to ensure these principles are reflected in their development work.</p>	<p>The forum promotes and supports members in their efforts to implement the eight principles in their work and provides a platform for their reflection at national level for continuous improvement.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat actively promotes the principles in the development work of members and forums.</p>	<p>Adopts the principles and reflects on any revisions thereof.</p>

ACT sectoral and cross cutting policy guidance

ACT has developed policy guidance on a number of sectoral and cross cutting issues. Though they are not mandatory, the policy guidance seeks to provide reliable and understandable guidance on policy direction based on international standards that can be adapted by members to the local context. It also seeks to create greater accountability towards the people with whom ACT works by adopting good or promising practice on the ground. Much of the policy guidance was developed in cooperation with former global ACT working groups and/or current advisory groups/communities of practice. These resources can be found on:

<http://www.actalliance.org>

- **ACT Advisory Groups and Communities of Practice**
- **Capacity development and Learning**
- **Child Safeguarding**
- **Climate Change**
- **Civil military relations**
- **Complaints Handling**
- **Communications**
- **Disaster Risk Reduction**
- **Emergency Preparedness and Response**
- **Emergency Response Mechanism templates and guidelines**
- **Food Security**
- **Gender equality**
- **Health and HIV**
- **Human rights**
- **Material aid**
- **Needs assessment**
- **PME and Impact assessment**
- **Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse**
- **Protection**
- **Psychosocial support**
- **Security**
- **Sustainable Development**