

**ACT Alliance**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

*Approved by the ACT Alliance Governing Board  
June 2017*

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## ACT ALLIANCE<sup>1</sup> SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### Executive Summary

This summary is offered as a quick and practical reference to the Social Media Policy. For more detail, explanations, and examples, please refer to the complete Policy.

1. ACT supports and encourages appropriate social media engagement to further its mission, goals, relationships, global recognition, and reach. Such engagement is framed to ensure consistent messaging, brand identity, and credibility.
2. Social media engagement will comply with ACT's policies and practices on Communications, Child Safeguarding, Information Disclosure, Code of Conduct, Code of Good Practice, copyright, privacy, and confidentiality.
3. The Secretariat manages the ACT social media presence on a number of platforms and may expand or contract its presence as it deems necessary. Groups interested in establishing a new ACT social media presence must apply to the Secretariat.
4. As with the co-branding policy, this policy applies when communicating under the banner of or on behalf of ACT and does not apply to personal or member's own social media. Do note, however, that distinctions between personal and professional (ACT) communications are negligible in social media; therefore, consider all communications as public and global, rather than personal and local.
5. Any individual or group authorized to undertake social media communication under the banner of, or on behalf of, ACT is responsible for their content.
6. Principles and guidelines for good social media engagement:
  - a. Control the message to the best of your ability
  - b. Be security-minded (especially for the safety of vulnerable persons in dangerous conditions).
  - c. Be transparent and truthful. Promptly acknowledge and correct errors.
  - d. Advance tolerance, collaboration, and relationship-building, and do not proselytize.
  - e. Respond to criticism appropriately.
  - f. Respect the rights and dignity of persons whose images you may be using. Ensure that informed consent has been obtained where necessary.
7. The Secretariat Communications department is responsible for ensuring compliance of this policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter will be abbreviated to 'ACT,' and includes, for the purposes of this summary, Secretariat staff, Forums, Community of Practice, Advisory Groups, and members.

## Why ACT Alliance engages in social media

In the last decade, social media has emerged as an important medium of communication globally through its ability to access a vast audience for raising awareness of social issues and to bring communities together. Social media is the online equivalent to offline ‘word-of-mouth’ marketing, awareness and influence. ACT Alliance believes that the personal relationship power of social media can be used to:

- Build and promote relationships with and among ACT Alliance constituents
- Position ACT Alliance as a global agency
- Increase audience reach and engagement in the work of ACT Alliance members
- Support and promote ACT Alliance advocacy activities
- Support and promote ACT Alliance development projects
- Promote the brand and mission of the ACT Alliance
- Increase traffic to the ACT Alliance website
- Build credibility in the work of ACT Alliance members and increase the Alliance’s competitiveness in the global arena

ACT Alliance thus supports engagement through social media that is undertaken in line with ACT Alliance’s communication and information disclosure policies, and in the appropriate social media ‘space’.

## Purpose of this Policy

ACT Alliance recognises the importance of enabling the empowerment of its local, national, regional and global structures to raise the visibility of, and engage people in, humanitarian, development and advocacy issues relevant to their contexts under the ACT Alliance brand. Branding under the ACT Alliance brand enables members to show they are part of an international collaboration.

However, ACT Alliance also recognises that social media, regardless of the localisation of the content, has a global reach that can impact positively or negatively not only on those groups involved in social media communication, but also on the over 140 member organisations that associate with the ACT Alliance brand.

This is because the ACT Alliance brand represents not only individual member organisations or groups, but a global network which must be taken into account in all forms of global communication. **Social media content and messaging in the name of the ACT Alliance brand that is not in line with the ACT Alliance policies and values risks damaging the ACT Alliance brand for all members of the alliance.**

This policy serves to ensure consistent messaging and communication in the name of ACT Alliance across social media channels in line with the ACT Alliance brand. In this way the brand can be managed, protected and preserved. The policy stipulates the requirements and responsibilities with which the ACT Alliance secretariat staff, ACT Alliance structures such as ACT Forums, Communities of Practice and Advisory Groups, and staff of ACT Alliance member organisations must comply when communicating through social media channels under the banner of, on behalf of, or in the name of ACT Alliance.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

*Social media:* refers to interactive online platforms and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking (for example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

*Member(s):* refers to any ACT Alliance member organisation

## Official ACT Alliance social media profiles

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the following official social media accounts were being managed by the ACT Alliance secretariat communications department:

- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/actalliance](http://www.facebook.com/actalliance)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/actalliance](http://www.twitter.com/actalliance)
- Youtube: [www.youtube.com/actalliance](http://www.youtube.com/actalliance)

The ACT Alliance secretariat will utilise additional social media tools if and when deemed relevant, ensuring the maintenance of the ACT Alliance presence when it is useful and discontinuing the ACT Alliance presence when its usefulness comes to an end.

## Individuals and/or groups to which this policy applies

As per the ACT Alliance Branding Policy and guidelines, the ACT Alliance Social Media Policy applies to the following individuals and groups when communicating through social media either in the name of, under the banner of, or on behalf of, ACT Alliance. The policy does not, however, apply to ACT members' own social media channels, except when within their own social media channels they are communicating officially in the name of/on behalf of ACT Alliance:

- Individuals granted administrator rights to official ACT Alliance social media accounts
- ACT Alliance secretariat staff
- ACT Alliance forums
- ACT Alliance advisory groups
- ACT Alliance communities of practice
- Any individuals or groups undertaking social media communication officially in the name of, under the banner of, or on behalf of, ACT Alliance

## Use, and limitations of use, of the ACT Alliance brand in social media

While communication through social media tools is primarily personal, it is important to recognise that this does not mean communication is private. In many cases, written conversations within social media tools can be found through search engines, such as Google. Even in cases where only personal contacts can see specific social media communication, there is always the possibility of these contacts sharing this communication with a broader audience. Therefore, it is wise for individuals to always consider personal communication within social media networks as public rather than private; and as global rather than local or national.

Any individual or group authorised to undertake social media communication under the banner of, or on behalf of, ACT Alliance is held responsible for the content published at all times.

All social media communication undertaken under the banner of, or on behalf of, ACT Alliance must comply with the following principles in addition to the ACT Alliance Policy on Communications, the ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Policy, the ACT Alliance Information Disclosure Policy, the ACT Alliance Code of Conduct and the ACT Alliance Code of Good Practice.

### *Principles*

The following principles must be adhered to when individuals communicate across social media under the banner of, or in the name of, ACT Alliance:

- All official messages from ACT alliance must be on official institutional accounts.
- **Build relationships and advance collaboration:** communication across social media channels shall aim at nurturing and sustaining partnerships to support more effective, fair and satisfying ways of working together, rather than create animosity.
- **Do not proselytise:** social media channels shall not be used to further a particular religious or partisan political standpoint.
- **Advance tolerance:** social media communication shall advance, rather than obstruct, the values of ACT Alliance, with particular regard to being tolerant of differences in belief and protecting those whose human rights are not respected. Social media shall encourage listening to, learning from and sharing experiences with others.
- **Be transparent and truthful:** social media communication shall adhere to a fact-based and truthful approach.
- **Comply with the ACT Alliance Code of Conduct:** communication across social media channels shall adhere to ACT Alliance code of ethics and standards.
- **Respond to criticism appropriately:** exposure to wide and disparate social media audiences puts ACT Alliance at risk of receiving criticism. In the instances that negative comments are received across social media channels, these shall not be removed from social media profiles unless they are offensive, discriminatory, defamatory or violate the legal rights of others. ACT Alliance administrators should respond to negative comments promptly with the support and assistance of the ACT Alliance secretariat communications team.
- **Be mindful of minors:** individuals shall not post across social media channels information about minors that could lead to their identification or the identification of their location (for example, disable geotagging of photographs). Photographs, videos and other media used on social media shall conform to the Child Safeguarding Policy.
- **Keep security in mind:** individuals shall follow the security requirements established by relevant organizations to ensure the safety, dignity and security of ACT Alliance staff, volunteers and member institutions.

- **Respect one another's rights and dignity:** when posting images on social media channels, individuals shall ensure prior authorisation from the people recognisable in the images, particularly if these images have been taken in a vulnerable environment, such as a hospital or a refugee camp. Particularly in emergency situations, the ACT Alliance recognises victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.
- **Do not share confidential information:** individuals should not share, in any circumstances, confidential information relating to the ACT Alliance. Proprietary information or information potentially injurious to ACT Alliance or its member staff around the world should not be shared.
- **Acknowledge errors:** when factual errors have been made in presenting information across social media channels in the name of/on behalf of/under the banner of ACT Alliance, individuals responsible shall acknowledge these errors and correct them.
- **Respect copyright laws:** copyright is a form of protection provided for original works of authorship, including literary, dramatic, musical, graphic and audio-visual creations. Individuals should respect all applicable copyright laws and third party rights when communicating across social media channels. "Sharing" of material on social media is acceptable provided that it is clear the material is being shared from another source, with no implication that it is being posted as original material created by ACT Alliance.

### Guidelines

The following guidelines have been laid out to assist individuals in making assessments about the appropriateness of their communication when using social media channels in the name of/under the banner of ACT Alliance:

- **Control the message to the best of your ability:** individuals acting in an official capacity for ACT Alliance should remember that the interpretation and multiplication of what is said or done across social media cannot be completely controlled. As a public space, content can be spread quickly, amplifying dramatically the risk of reputation damage. Individuals should proceed accordingly, being careful about what is said.
- **Recognise that social media does not differentiate between professional and personal views:** social media channels have by their nature resulted in a merging of personal and professional lives, with contacts across these channels now incorporating peers, supervisors, donors, clients, friends, family and so forth. Therefore, individuals should always be aware that the views/types of communication they may express with one group of contacts may not necessarily be the views/types of communication they would express in the same way with other groups of contacts. In addition, different audiences do not differentiate between the professional and personal communication of the people they follow. This means individuals merging their personal and professional worlds should recognise both the opportunities of social media channels and the reputational risks to themselves when communicating across diverse audiences. Similarly, individuals playing a prominent role as ACT Alliance spokespersons who at the same time maintain their own dedicated personal profiles on social media, should be aware that their communication can and does reflect upon the organisation and keep this in mind when using the platforms.

## Creation of social media platforms in the name of/under the banner of ACT Alliance

Any individual or group interested in initiating a social media profile/account (for example, a new Facebook page or Public Group for a specific region), must contact the ACT Alliance secretariat communications team at [actcom@actalliance.org](mailto:actcom@actalliance.org), having filled out the “New Social Media Channel” interactive application form in Annex 1. The secretariat will then assess the brand implications of the request and determine the parameters within which such an account can be initiated and used.

If an assessment concludes that a social media account can be initiated, the ACT secretariat communications team will:

- Assist with selecting proper social media channels to achieve the desired goals
- Advise on setup, administration and suggest analysis tools for social media monitoring
- Address branding questions to ensure consistency across all channels and platforms
- Assist with messaging and strategies
- Assist with managing emergency or crisis management situations
- Determine the parameters within which the account can be used to publicly represent ACT Alliance. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis

Administrators of new social media profiles/accounts will be included in the social media list of sub-team administrators. A member of the ACT Alliance secretariat communications team must be a co-administrator of all social media profiles/accounts under the banner of, or in the name of, the ACT Alliance brand.

### *Broad criteria for establishing new ACT Alliance social media platforms*

Any ACT Alliance secretariat staff, forums, advisory groups, communities of practice and individuals or groups considering creating a new social media platform in the name of, under the banner of, or on behalf of ACT Alliance should consider the following guiding questions before beginning the process:

1. Will this platform/initiative positively build the brand of ACT Alliance?
2. Is the choice of social media platform the best option to achieve the goals of the initiative? (For example, is it a public Facebook page that is needed or a private Facebook group?)
3. Does any other ACT Alliance social media platform exist that already achieves/has the potential to achieve the aims of this initiative through further collaboration/development?
4. Will it be possible to maintain the platform long-term? How?
5. What is the expected lifetime of the platform and how will it be transitioned out when its lifecycle comes to an end?
6. Who will moderate the platform to ensure adherence to the ACT Alliance Social Media Policy?

## Enforcement of the policy

If the ACT Alliance Social Media Policy is violated, the ACT Alliance secretariat, and specifically the secretariat communications department, will engage with the individual(s) involved in the violation to resolve the issue through informal and/or formal means.

The first step will be to have a dialogue with the individuals/groups concerned to agree on appropriate steps to resolve the issue.

Failing resolution through dialogue, the Secretariat, can remove or request the removal of the offensive post.

Further the Secretariat may consider recommending de-authorisation of individuals/groups from communicating under the banner of/ in the name of/on behalf of ACT Alliance on a specific social media channel, in the interests of brand protection for the whole alliance.

**Contact Us:**

For further details contact the ACT Alliance Secretariat Communications Department at [actcom@actalliance.org](mailto:actcom@actalliance.org)