

ACT Alliance

Quality and Accountability Framework

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

Version: September 2021, replaces the January 2019 version

The ACT QAF was originally approved by the ACT Alliance Governing Board on 27 September 2011.

It's a live document, revisions are made after the approval of new policies by the Governing Board.

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 ACTs primary commitments and the different responsibilities of ACT members, ACT forums, ACT secretariat and ACT governance in relation to ACTs accountability mechanisms.

The Global ACT Strategy 2019-2026 outlines ACT's longer-term plan for strengthening quality, accountability, learning 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 affected populations.

2. Alliance accountability chain

As a global alliance of over 135 church and church-related organisations present in over 120 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, sub-regional 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 reference 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 humanitarian 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 CHS 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 contribute to progress in the main programmatic priorities of the Global Strategy 2019 to 2026.

- i) Climate Justice
- ii) Gender Justice
- iii) Peace and Human Security
- iv) Migration and Displacement
- v) Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Response
- vi) Alliance Development
- vii) Effective Secretariat Operations

5. Governance

The governance of the Alliance consists of a general assembly (all members), a governing board of 22 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 Reference 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, sub-regional 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 overarching ACT mandatory policies to which all ACT members are obliged to adhere, irrespective of their areas of work.

In addition, seven international standards have been formally adopted or committed to by ACT governance and member organizations are also strongly encouraged to implement these.

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

The table on the following page summarises the policies, standards and guidance. The more detailed matrix that follows outlines the varying roles and responsibilities of ACT stakeholders in relation to the mandatory policies and international standards.

All policies noted in this document refer to the most recent approved policy or policy revision and can be found on the ACT website <https://actalliance.org/about/standards-and-policies/>

ACT Mandatory Policies (15)	International Standards (7)	Cross cutting and Sectoral Policy Guidance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ACT Code of Conduct (2016) 2. ACT Code of Good Practice (2016) 3. National, Sub-Regional and Regional Forums Policy (2018) 4. Branding Policy and Guidelines (2020) 5. Communications Policy (2020) 6. Public Information Disclosure Policy (2012) 7. Social Media Policy (2017) 8. External Relations Policy (2016) 9. Humanitarian Policy (2021) 10. Humanitarian Protection Policy (2010) 11. Child Safeguarding Policy (2015) 12. Gender Justice Policy (2017) 13. Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (2009) 14. Complaints Policy (2021) 15. Membership Disciplinary Policy (2011) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief 2. The Sphere Standards 3. Principles of partnership 4. Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) 5. Code of good practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS 6. Istanbul principles for development effectiveness 7. SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy (Strategy; policy and procedures) • Capacity development and learning • Child safeguarding • Climate change framework position • Civil military relations • Communication with communities across the project cycle management • Complaints and investigation guidelines • Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) • Emergency preparedness and response communications • 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 (PSEA) • Protection • Psychosocial support • Security • Sustainable development

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
1. ACT Code of Conduct (2016)					
<p>It outlines the key expectations on staff behaviour, in relation to the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices, and to safeguard children.</p>	<p>To respect the dignity and rights of the people with whom ACT works and to assist staff to better understand the obligations placed upon their conduct by providing detailed code of conduct.</p>	<p>The code must be signed by ACT member staff, local, national and international. It applies to temporary personnel such as consultants, interns observers, volunteers who work in ACT member programmes. It is a mandatory requirement for all staff of 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 of Conduct.</p> <p>Staff breaches of the Code are actively addressed by the management of each ACT member organisation.</p>	<p>Implementation of the code is promoted by national and regional forums in all development, humanitarian and advocacy work, and particularly in the humanitarian responses implemented through the ACT Appeal mechanism.</p>	<p>The code must be signed by the staff of the ACT Secretariat. It is a 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 of Conduct.</p> <p>Breaches of the Code are actively addressed by ACT management.</p> <p>Any breach of the Code of Conduct is a form of misconduct, and if substantiated, will lead to disciplinary measures up to and</p>	<p>A complaints handling system is established and functioning to address breaches of the code.</p> <p>Revisions to the code are approved by ACT governance.</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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				including termination of employment and/or legal action if required	
2. ACT Code of Good Practice (2016)					
Outlines the values, principles and commitments that shape the humanitarian, development and advocacy work of ACT members	It is an organisational level commitment in which members/observers continually improve and move toward best practice principles. It complements the ACT Code of Conduct	The code is mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT member organisation Signed codes must be submitted to the ACT secretariat.	Implementation of the code is promoted by national and regional forums in all development, humanitarian and advocacy work. Compliance can be addressed at the ACT Forum level, if forum members have agreed to a common complaints mechanism.	The code values, principles and commitments are promoted by ACT secretariat staff at all ACT events, and in all ACT work, including ACT appeals. Reports of breaches of the code are actively addressed by ACT's Complaint's Focal Point according to the Complaints Policy, and reported to the ACT governance.	Revisions to the code are approved by ACT governance. Receive the complaints and take necessary disciplinary action (if any) based on the ACT disciplinary procedures outlined in the ACT Complaints Policy and Disciplinary Procedures
3. National, Sub-Regional and Regional Forums Policy (2018)					
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, advocacy and development work being undertaken by members through improved coordination and setting some minimum standards.	This is a mandatory policy for all members and participation in forums is compulsory. Observer members are also able to participate in the appropriate forums. 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. Members are expected to attend forum meetings during the year and respect the guiding principles of the forum in which they are based	Forums are engaged in working together in a particular country, sub-region, or region. ACT Forums must have a Memorandum of Understanding and submit annual reports. ACT Forums must submit their forum emergency preparedness and response planning (EPRP), and organise and coordinate	The secretariat facilitates awareness raising of the policy among members and forums and ensures that all forum MoUs, Annual reports and EPRPs are in line with principles The Secretariat supports and strengthen initiatives towards increasing accountability and relationship between the regions and their representatives in the governance. They give Forums visibility through the ACT website by promoting joint	Approves policy revisions Supports the work of forums and promotes their coordination efforts.

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		<p>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.</p> <p>Members intending to access funding from ACTs humanitarian response mechanism, can only do so if the forum has an updated EPRP</p> <p>Revision of the MoUs should be done on an annual basis by all the members of the forum</p>	<p>the emergency response in their areas of operation</p> <p>A Strategic Plan should be developed by ACT forums aligned to the ACT Global Strategy</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>capacity building initiatives, develop training induction packages on ACT Alliance</p> <p>ACT Secretariat coordinates the Forum endorsement during the membership application process</p>	
4. Branding Policy and Guidelines (2020)					
Outlines ACT brand values and requirements, as well as the 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.
5. Communications Policy (2020)					
Outlines the principles underpinning, and purposes of, ACT communications to both internal and external audiences. It also gives specific guidance on processes for information/	<p>To give visibility to the work of the alliance and global matters of injustice.</p> <p>To help achieve consistency across the</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.	Each forum is encouraged to identify a forum media officer who acts as a central contact point between the forums and the secretariat.	The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to steer communication towards achieving specific results, support members in their communication efforts, and	<p>The General Secretary gives the final sign-off on controversial material.</p> <p>The ACT governing board approves policy revisions.</p>

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material collation, approval and use across different media to ensure and increase its visibility and credibility across its audiences.	alliance in its supportive work towards ACT's strategic vision.	<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>ACT members have a responsibility to gather and share communications materials ethically and in line with safeguarding, privacy and data protection policies and regulations.</p>	Forums that set up their own websites must adhere to the ACT communications, social media, and branding policies.	<p>enhance the ability of the secretariat to fundraise.</p> <p>The secretariat encourages members to co-brand.</p> <p>The ACT secretariat Director of Communications has editorial accountability for all ACT productions such as website content, press releases, leaflets brochures and reports.</p>	
6. Public Information Disclosure Policy (2012)					
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.	To provide an opportunity for the recipients or consumers of ACT information to hold ACT accountable.	<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>	Forums are aware of ACT information disclosure policy and support the secretariat by providing timely and accurate information related to ACT activities.	<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>	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.
7. Social Media Policy (2017)					
Outlines the importance of enabling the empowerment of its local, national, regional	ACT supports and encourages appropriate social media	ACT Members are asked to adopt and comply with the policy (control the message, be security-minded, be	ACT Forums are asked to adopt and comply with the policy (control the	ACT Secretariat is asked to adopt and comply with the policy	ACT Governance approves revisions to policy.

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<p>and local structures in order to give them visibility and engage people in humanitarian, development, advocacy issues relevant to their contexts under the ACT Alliance brand.</p> <p>Details the requirements for safeguarding, security, and the creation and management of ACT social media accounts.</p>	<p>engagement to further its mission, goals, relationships, global recognition and reach</p> <p>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, confidentiality</p>	<p>transparent and truthful, respect the rights and dignity of persons)</p>	<p>message, be security-minded, be transparent and truthful, respect the rights and dignity of persons)</p> <p>ACT Forums must follow the procedure outlined in the policy to open social media accounts on behalf of the forums.</p>	<p>ACT Secretariat manages and facilitates ACT social media presence on several platforms and may expand or contract its presence as it deems necessary</p> <p>ACT Secretariat ensures compliance with the policy</p> <p>ACT Secretariat coordinates and receives application of groups interested in establishing new ACT social media accounts</p>	
<p>8. External Relations Policy (2016)</p>					
<p>This policy guides all ACT external relationships in order to enable the alliance to work closely with other national, regional and international ecumenical, inter-faith and civil society organisations that share similar objectives</p>	<p>To elaborate on the rationale and justification for each relationship that ACT Alliance will pursue with external entities; To determine the requisite external relationships for attaining the vision and mission of the alliance; To outline key external bodies with which ACT Alliance will deliberately seek to relate; To establish principles, and processes that will guide ACT Alliance’s relationships with external entities; To</p>	<p>ACT members are encouraged to engage with a wide spectrum of stakeholders (other faith-based actors, non-governmental organisations and networks, governments and inter-governmental institutions, United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, international finance institutions, private sector entities) while respecting the vision and mission of ACT Alliance including the implementation of a long-term strategic direction</p>	<p>ACT Forums are encouraged to engage with a wide spectrum of stakeholders (other faith-based actors, non-governmental organisations and networks, governments and inter-governmental institutions, United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, international finance institutions, private sector entities) while respecting the vision and mission of ACT Alliance including the implementation of a long-term strategic direction</p>	<p>ACT Secretariat provides guidelines (terms of reference ToR)) and appoint a focal point representative member for any particular external relationship</p> <p>For external relationships, ACT Secretariat developed an explanatory note which explain the objectives of the relationship (terms of reference of the relationship, timeframes, memorandum of understanding (if needed))</p> <p>The ACT Alliance co-branding could be applicable if ACT Alliance engages in activities with external partners</p>	<p>Approves revisions to policy</p>

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
	<p>provide guidelines for governance, members, secretariat staff, and partners who would represent ACT Alliance in external structures ; To anticipate and mitigate risks that may arise from ACT’s members’ and forums’ relationships with external entities.</p>			<p>The ACT Secretariat reviews the explanatory note and make recommendations to the General Secretary for final approval or referral to governance (advisory groups created if necessary)</p>	
<p>9. Humanitarian Policy (2021)</p>					
<p>Details the ACT humanitarian 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>ACT Alliance’s humanitarian response uses the framework of the Core Humanitarian Standard to ensure quality and accountability.</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 effective appeal implementation and reporting.</p> <p>Procedures for issuing Rapid Response Funds (aimed primarily at local and national actors) also included.</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. ACT members support Local/National emergencies and complex emergencies. They facilitate Large-Scale/Global emergencies and coordinate protracted crisis</p> <p>ACT members are asked to co-brand on all emergency communication. They prepare the Alert, Concept Note and Global Appeal. They represent ACT in UN cluster coordination meetings</p>	<p>Forums must develop an emergency preparedness and response plan (EPRP) and regularly review and update it (when needed)</p> <p>Forums coordinate Local/National emergencies and complex emergencies. They support Large-Scale/Global emergencies and facilitate protracted crisis</p> <p>Act Forum convenes Forum meetings and appointment of focal points for communication, advocacy, coordination.</p> <p>They ensure EPRP plans are developed, communicated and implemented.</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>The Head of Humanitarian Affairs ensures consistency in application of the policy and guidelines; and authorises exceptions in agreement with the Director of Programmes.</p> <p>ACT Secretariat facilitates Local/National emergencies and complex emergencies. They coordinate Large-Scale/Global emergencies and support protracted crisis</p>	<p>Approves policy revisions</p>

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
				The ACT Secretariat issues annual RRF Appeals and reports to Membership	
10. Humanitarian Protection Policy (2010)					
<p>Provides the definition, framework and 11 principles for community-based protection work of the ACT members, partners and forums.</p> <p>It highlights the relation of protection with other policy documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Code of Conduct • ACT Code of Good Practice • Complaints • Gender Justice • Anti-Fraud and Corruption 	<p>To strengthen ACT Alliance’s commitment to the protection of affected populations in a humanitarian assistance programmes.</p> <p>Help ACT members meet their responsibility to stop, prevent and mitigate human rights abuses by mainstreaming protection in a gender-sensitive way throughout the project cycle and/or developing ‘specialised’ or ‘stand-alone’ protection activities.</p>	<p>This policy applies to all ACT members implementing humanitarian programmes.</p> <p>Members ensure full and equal respect for the right and freedoms of all individuals without discrimination, including civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights.</p> <p>Effectively ensure the safety, dignity, and empowerment of crisis-affected populations in all the humanitarian programmes. Acknowledge that a key ingredient for good protection work is full and equal participation of women and men in decision making.</p> <p>Carefully consider the implications of their activities on the safety and dignity of communities.</p>	<p>ACT Forums promote the spirit of the policy and share experiences among forum members.</p>	<p>The ACT Secretariat has a shared responsibility with members and forums for protection of affected populations; and corresponding duty to ensure the safety, dignity, and empowerment of crisis-affected populations in humanitarian programmes.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy.</p>
11. 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>	
12. Gender Justice Policy (2017)					
<p>ACT Alliance believes in an end to gender inequality and injustice, gender-based discrimination and violence, and in closing the gender gap and address unequal power relationships for the promotion of human dignity for all.</p> <p>The Gender Justice principles cover the minimum standards ACT Alliance expects all members to comply with when developing a Gender Justice Policy.</p>	<p>To increase inclusivity and gender equality and minimize the risk of gender-based discrimination and violence among rights holders who come into contact with ACT Alliance activities and those working or associated with ACT Alliance members</p>	<p>ACT members are asked to develop a board-approved, gender justice policy (through Webinars and ACT Alliance training manual on Gender – Inclusive Rights-Based Development) which is specific and relevant to their local cultural and programmatic context within three years of the adoption of the ACT Alliance Gender Justice Policy (applying to their entire staff, volunteers and all those who are given access to projects and communities)</p> <p>ACT members composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities)</p>	<p>ACT Forums composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities)</p>	<p>ACT Secretariat composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities)</p> <p>ACT Secretariat monitors gender mainstreaming within the alliance and its members (Integration of a gender analysis and trainings)</p> <p>ACT Secretariat has an ethical responsibility and duty of care to report any breach of the Gender Justice Policy to Governance</p>	<p>Approves revisions to policy</p> <p>ACT Governance composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities)</p>
13. Anti-fraud and corruption policy (2009)					

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
<p>Defines ACT stance against fraud and corruption and key commitments</p>	<p>To ensure that financial 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.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all ACT 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 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>Forums are aware of the policy and promote compliance across its membership.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all staff at the ACT Secretariat.</p>	<p>The ACT governing 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>14. Complaints Policy (2021)</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 strive for high quality and continuous improvement in ACT’s humanitarian, development, and advocacy work.</p> <p>ACT Alliance aims to ensure that complaints are addressed fairly, appropriately, and in a timely manner</p>	<p>This policy applies to all ACT members.</p> <p>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 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 received by the Complaints Focal Point and then forwarded to the concerned organisation to handle and address while</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 complaints report.</p>

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
		<p>ACT members are expected to explore and develop their own 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 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>keeping the ACT secretariat informed.</p> <p>If the complaint is about the overall director of the organisation at the headquarters level, the complaint is referred to the relevant member organisational authority.</p> <p>Distils and shares learning experiences of the forums in initiating/improving complaints and accountability initiatives.</p>	
15. 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>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>

International standards formally adopted or committed to by ACT governance



Accountability Mechanism	ACT Policy Commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT governance
1. The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief					
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.	To judge the conduct of ACT programmes on the ground using the principles as a yardstick.	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.	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.	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.	ACT governance formally adopts the code and/or any possible revisions by SCHR, as an ACT code.
2. The Sphere Standards: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response					
Reflects the commitment to a principled and rights-based response. Provides minimum standards in key lifesaving sectors such as: Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (WASH); Food Security and Nutrition; Shelter and Settlement; and Health.	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.	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.	Forums promote the standards, provide or identify opportunities for training, and ensure that ACT appeals meet these minimum standards where possible.	The ACT secretariat promotes the standards as part of ACTs way of working and ensures that the approach and actions related to ACT appeals are in line with the standards.	ACT governance formally adopts the standards as ACT standards
3. Principles of Partnership					
Provides five principles on which NGOs and the UN should base their partnership approaches.	To build and nurture an effective partnership. To acknowledge diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognising the interdependence	All ACT members have a responsibility to base their partnership approaches on the five principles of equality, transparency, results-orientated approach, responsibility and complementarity.	Forums adopt the principles of good partnerships in their work approaches.	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.	Principles endorsed by the governing board and put into practice in their ways of working.

	among humanitarian organisations				
4. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)					
Defines an international standard on quality and accountability of humanitarian action to communities and people affected by crises and provides nine commitments and quality criteria to assess, improve and recognise achievement of requirements	To promote improved quality and accountability to communities and people affected by humanitarian crises	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. All ACT members are required to apply and implement the Core Humanitarian Standard in their humanitarian work, to adhere to the CHS in their development and advocacy work and to support other ACT members to improve their own implementation of the nine commitments.	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.	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. The CHS commitments are mandatory for the ACT Secretariat and must be addressed in all its work in relation to the alliance.	Approves ACT membership of CHS Alliance and ACT's engagement in any external verification or certification process.
5. Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS					
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.	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.	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. 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.	The forum promotes the code and its related principles in relation to ACT's HIV work.	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.	ACT governance endorses the code and any revisions thereof.
6. 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>
<p>7. SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme</p>					
<p>The purpose of this scheme is to establish a minimum standard for humanitarian, development, and other civil society organizations to share information as part of their recruitment process about people who have been found to have committed “Misconduct” meaning sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, during employment.</p> <p>The Scheme is intended to be consistent with and support implementation of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS).</p>	<p>To ensure the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) within the aid sector.</p>	<p>Members build their understanding about the SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme and are encouraged to sign-up.</p>	<p>The forums support the discussion among members to understand the SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.</p> <p>Communicate the questions/possible challenges foreseen in implementation of scheme to the ACT Secretariat.</p>	<p>Implement the SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme at ACT Secretariat-level as part of recruitment for staff & long-term consultants.</p> <p>HR ask for misconduct statement from former employers of the candidates seeking employment with ACT Secretariat.</p> <p>Secretariat facilitate discussions with ACT Quality & Accountability Reference Group and Safeguarding Communities of Practice to plan the roll-out of Scheme at membership level.</p>	<p>ACT governance endorses the subscription to SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.</p>