

ACT Alliance Membership Engagement Model

Approved at ACT Alliance General Assembly in October 2018

1. Introduction

The Engagement Membership Model was approved at the 2018 General Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden. The rationale for the model is based both on a need to contribute to a future vision of an alliance membership that is inclusive and enables engagement of members according to their interest and capacity and adds more meaning to the ecumenical cooperation and work of national and regional forums, as well as to address some existing barriers to membership for smaller local members and to active engagement of members.

2. Objective of Engagement model

The objective of the model is to implement a new model of inclusive ACT membership that fosters active engagement by ACT members in the life of the alliance and contributes to increasingly dynamic forums.

To achieve this objective, the model is set up to:

- Foster a culture of active member engagement in the life of the alliance.
- Offer an inclusive model of membership for organisations of all sizes.
- Value non-financial contributions to the life of the alliance, as well as financial contributions.
- Offer opportunities for participation in decision-making for all members.
- Stimulate dynamic forums as a national, sub-regional and regional hub of ACT membership.
- Concretely address the fee structure to enable participation of members with lower income.
- Ease the burden of the secretariat in monitoring and debating the membership fee with members not able or willing to pay the membership fee.

3. Description of the model

The following principles are foundational to the nature of ACT Alliance and therefore are integral to the engagement model of membership:

- Churches and church-based organisations of all sizes can become members and contribute to the alliance according to their potential.
- The alliance model is responsive to members' needs and capacities and expressed motivations of engagement.
- ACT membership remains committed to working together and sharing resources.
- The alliance builds on members' active engagement.
- ACT members comply with all mandatory policies.
- ACT members engage in decision-making processes.

The Engagement model builds on two main pillars: incentivising a culture of engagement and stimulating dynamic, active forums. The model requires all members to:

- Demonstrate engagement in the alliance.
- Pay a forum fee in each forum it belongs to.

3.1. Incentivising a culture of engagement

The engagement model places a strong emphasis on incentivising a culture of engagement amongst the members. Members are requested to demonstrate active engagement in the life of the alliance prior to accessing certain privileges, events or positions of responsibility within the alliance.

The requirement is to state previous engagement in the life of the alliance at organisational member level, or at individual level, or both.

At a *member level*, engagement in the life of the alliance includes examples such as active participation in a relevant ACT forum, implementing or funding an ACT appeal, staff representation in communities of practice, reference groups, governance bodies or advisory committees, hosting of events, providing secondments, being part of an advocacy campaign, etc.

At an *individual level*, engagement in the life of the alliance includes examples such as personal engagement in communities of practice, reference groups, governance bodies, forum coordination, etc.

It applies minimally to the following situations, but can be extended to others as required:

- Attending the General Assembly and voting in the Assembly.
- Serving on the Governing Board, or on a Committee (MNC, Finance Committee, etc.).
- Serving as member of strategic advisory bodies (advisory groups, etc.).

3.2. General Assembly

The Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the alliance. Decision-making power at the General Assembly is through a “one member one vote” system.

All members need to demonstrate member level engagement in the life of the alliance, in addition to being up to date with fees to enable registration for participation at the General Assembly.

Members allowed to attend the assembly and empowered to make decisions at the assembly are those that have been engaged in the life of the alliance, in some way, in the intervening years.

3.2.2 ACT Governing Bodies (includes Governing Board, Executive Committee and Membership and Nominations Committee)

Membership to any of the governing bodies of the ACT Alliance prioritises principles of *engagement and capacity* over regional representation. Regional balance will be assured through the preparation of the slate and in line with the current regional seat allocation, provided that nominations in the relevant regions fulfil the agreed criteria of engagement.

3.2.3 Decision-making processes through consultation

In the engagement model, the decision-making model of the alliance remains bottom up; where the local realities heavily inform and initiate approaches and engagements at the regional and global levels. Therefore, the national level engagement in decision-making processes is a high priority.

The issues to be actively consulted with all the membership (including an intentional consultation in the context of the ACT national forums), include constitutional changes, the global strategic framework and mandatory standards. The consultation process includes informing the membership on the process and its timeline; requesting input from members either directly, through a consultative body (reference group or other) or the governance structure; sharing the proposal and gathering input from the members; sharing the input with the governing bodies prior to decision-making and finally sharing the outcomes with the ACT membership and forums.

The final decisions on constitutional changes and the global strategic framework are made only by the General Assembly and all other items by the Governing Board, either directly or through adopting the ACT secretariat workplan.

3.3. Stimulate dynamic forums through the forum fee

One objective of the engagement model is to stimulate dynamic forums as a national, sub-regional and regional hub of ACT membership. The 'Forum Fee' of USD 1,000.- has replaced the membership fee, seeking to increase the sense of ownership and responsibility of all members towards the ACT forums as one key structure of the alliance.

The impact of the forum fee on the life of the alliance will be more transparent to members than the former membership fee. The mode of operationalising the forum fee seeks to transfer power, responsibility and resources directly to the members at the forum level and should stimulate more dynamic forums with resources to work together.

Payment by all members in all forums the member belongs to

The forum fee is required by all members and is to be paid to the national forum where the organisation has its headquarters. Where there is no national forum, then it is paid to the sub-regional or regional forum that the member is a part of at its Headquarters level.

For members with an income over USD 1 million and who are part of more than one national, sub-regional or regional forum, the member is required to pay the forum fee in cash to the relevant forum at its Headquarters location. Global members pay their fee to the Global Forum.

For all other forums that the member is a part of, the forum fee will be paid in either cash or in kind contributing to the forum costs foreseen as per forum workplan¹.

If no forum exists payment is due to the secretariat

Members who are not part of any forum, due to no forums existing in that country or region, pay the USD 1,000.- to the ACT secretariat. This is to be exceptional cases only, as the strategy is to ensure that all members are actively engaged in an ACT forum and that new forums are established to enable this to happen.

Members with an income below USD 1 million

For members with an income below USD 1 million, the member can choose to pay its forum fee in cash or in kind contributing to the forum costs foreseen as per forum workplan.

Use and management of forums fees

As indicated in the ACT National, Sub-Regional and Regional Forums Policy, the forums will exercise a more proactive role and responsibility in monitoring their own resourcing and implementation of their annual workplan.

The decisions on how to use the forum fees to further the work of the alliance are made at the forum level. The forum convenor is responsible on an annual basis to ensure that all members of the forum have contributed their forum fees.

If a forum considers that a member has not contributed their fair share in either cash or in kind contribution (depending on level of income) of at least USD 1,000.-, and any reasons given by the member are not

¹ E.g., contribute meeting space, time of staff, facilitate a training event, host an ACT event, facilitate a joint monitoring visit, invest in capacity building of other ACT members, translate ACT materials to local languages, etc.

accepted by the forum, then the convenor of the forum can lodge a formal complaint to the ACT secretariat for non-payment of fees which will be followed up and could lead to the suspension of the member.

The ACT forums are required to provide an annual report to the global secretariat.