

ACT Alliance

Application form for membership or observer status

Application process

Applications for membership or observer status of the ACT Alliance can be submitted to the ACT Secretariat at any time. Applications are reviewed by the ACT Secretariat to ensure that the organization meets all the criteria and is eligible to apply for membership or observer status and that all documentation is complete, prior to submission to the ACT Membership and Nominations Committee (MNC), which consists of ACT members representing different regions. The MNC screens all applications as to whether the applications are accepted, deferred or declined and it makes recommendations to the ACT Governing Board. The Governing Board makes the final decision on the applications and reserves the right to reject any application.

A completed membership application package must include (one copy of each and **in English**):

1. A completed application form– see Section II below.
2. Most recent annual report.
3. Last three years’ external audited statements of accounts, following Internationally Accepted Standards of Accounting.
4. A strategic plan, if available.
5. A description (of no more than 4 pages) of two programmes undertaken in the last two years (or financially supported), as outlined in part ‘D’ of the Section II.
6. The appropriate extract from the Minutes of the governance meeting which decided to make this application, properly signed and including the date, place and names of officers.

Once the above is received, a written ACT forum endorsement will be asked for by the ACT Secretariat from the relevant ACT national, sub-regional or regional forum where the applicant’s main office or headquarters is situated (for members where there is no forum, three members in the applicant’s country will be asked to for endorsements. Observers do not need an endorsement).

The completed application package should be sent **electronically** by email to Ms Penny Blachut at penny.blachut@actalliance.org. Please scan all pages containing signatures. If it cannot be sent by email, send it by post to:

Membership Applications
ACT Alliance Secretariat
150 Route de Ferney
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

Prior to completing this form, applicants should read the following ACT documents:

- Founding Document of the ACT Alliance
- ACT Statutes and By-Laws
- Quality and Accountability Framework
- ACT Membership-Observers Agreements policy
- ACT Voting Member/Observer Agreement and its annex: Code of Good Practice, with appendix on non-proselytism statement
- Code of Conduct Policy for the prevention of misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, including sexual and to ensure child safeguarding
- Membership Engagement Model
- Procedure for funding the ACT Alliance Forums and Secretariat
- Branding policy
- Communications policy
- Social Media policy
- Public information disclosure policy
- Anti-fraud and corruption policy
- Complaints policy
- Membership disciplinary policy
- Child safeguarding policy
- National, sub-regional and regional forums policy
- Humanitarian policy
- Protection policy
- ACT Understanding of development
- Advocacy policy and procedures
- External relations policy
- Gender justice policy

The documents can be found on:

<https://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-founding-documents/>

and

<https://actalliance.org/about/standards-and-policies/>

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SECTION I: Introduction to ACT Alliance

Action by Churches Together Alliance (ACT Alliance) – is an ecumenical membership-based organization created to provide high quality development, humanitarian and advocacy programmes in a transparent and accountable manner. The Alliance provides a platform for members to strategize, coordinate, and collaborate in their work through the national, sub-regional, regional and global forums. The ACT Alliance membership is drawn from churches and church-related organizations that meet the criteria for Voting members and Observer members as stipulated in the Founding Document and formulated in the Alliance Statutes and By-Laws.

Membership criteria

There are two categories of participation in ACT Alliance: “Voting Member” and “Observer Member”.

Voting Members

Churches and church-related organizations that meet ALL of the following four (1-4) criteria are eligible to apply for voting membership in the ACT Alliance.

1. Churches and church-related organizations seeking membership in the ACT Alliance shall be either:
 - a. A member church of the World Council of Churches (WCC) or the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), or
 - b. A specialised ministry for humanitarian assistance, advocacy and/or development of a member church if it is constituted as a separate legal entity, or
 - c. An organization affiliated with at least one member church of the WCC through governance; (“through governance” is understood as having one or more WCC member churches on their governing body, i.e. a person delegated by that member church as their representative and not an individual member of a church who is serving in a personal capacity), or
 - d. International and national mission organizations belonging to a member church or churches of the WCC and/or LWF who are engaged in development, advocacy and/or humanitarian assistance and who do not use these programmes to further a particular religious or political partisan standpoint.

An exception may be made for:

- e. An organization which was previously part of a member organization but has become independent (such applications must come with the endorsement of the member organization), or
- f. A church or an ecumenical organization that has had a long historical programmatic working relationship with the WCC and/or a regional ecumenical organization, referring to the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI), the Conference of European Churches, the Conference of Caribbean Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Pacific Conference of Churches, or
- g. An ecumenical organization from a country where there are no member churches of either the WCC or LWF.

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2. The church or church-related organization must have a track record of substantial involvement in the area of humanitarian assistance and/or development or advocacy.
3. The church or church-related organization must have a commitment to high quality development advocacy and/or humanitarian assistance activities.
4. The church or church-related organization should be either a national, regional or international organization.

Observer Members

The following types of organizations may also apply for observer status within the ACT Alliance:

1. Regional ecumenical organizations and national council of churches which do not have their own development, advocacy or humanitarian assistance programmes (who therefore do not qualify to be voting members), but who wish to work closely with the Alliance.
2. Global ecumenical bodies who wish to work closely with the Alliance.

Observers will be regularly updated on ACT's work and will be able to participate in the appropriate ACT Alliance national, sub-regional or regional forums as observers. They will pay an annual observer fee to the Secretariat. They may not participate in the governance of the ACT Alliance and cannot co-brand their organizations with ACT Alliance's name or use its logo.

Note for Guidance

1. Where a church has its own department or specialised ministry for humanitarian assistance and/or development and/or advocacy, it is preferred that the department or ministry will represent the Church in the ACT Alliance.
2. If an organization meets the membership criteria, they must apply for membership status and cannot apply for observer status. The observer status is restricted to those organizations outlined above.

Obligations of Membership

The ACT Alliance By-laws stipulate that members¹ of ACT Alliance must commit themselves to:

1. Adhere to the vision, mission and commitments of ACT Alliance, as summarised in the Founding Document.
2. Adhere to the objectives and all mandatory policies of ACT Alliance.
3. Adhere to the Code of Good Practice for the ACT Alliance (including the Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and other codes that may be adopted by the Governing Board in the future). For organizations involved in humanitarian assistance, this includes adherence to The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere Standards).
4. Co-brand with the name ACT Alliance according to the co-branding policy.
5. Actively participate in global, national, sub-regional and regional forums where they exist and work with and strengthen other ACT Alliance members.²
6. Pay the annual fees and any other financial obligation as set by the Governing Board and adhere to the approved procedures for funding the ACT Alliance. See **Annex 1**.
7. Agree to submit annual audited financial and narrative reports on request, demonstrating that there is an annual practice for the organization's books of account to be subjected to an audit. The audit firm must be certified and follow the Internationally Accepted Standards of Accounting. If the audit firm follows the national standards of accounting, this must be declared upfront.
8. Meet the ACT Alliance criteria as set by the Governing Board for accessing ACT funds for humanitarian assistance and related activities.

Upon approval of the membership application by the ACT Governing Board, the organization must sign the Membership/Observer Agreement in order to become a full ACT member.

The Membership/Observer Agreement represents the expressed commitment of the organization and the ACT Alliance to work collaboratively in advancing the mission of the Alliance; a shared member commitment to effective partnerships and to seek ways to broaden and deepen trust within the Alliance. The Membership/Observer Agreement is therefore mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT Alliance member/observer organization.

¹ When referred to, the term “members” in the present form should be understood as referring to the “voting members”, unless it is specified that it refers specifically to the observer members.

² <http://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-national-and-regional-forums-policy-and-guidelines/>

SECTION II: Organization details

A. We hereby request to be considered as a: (please tick)

Member

Observer

B. Contact information of church, church-related organization, specialised ministry

Name of the church / organization / ministry _____

Year of Incorporation _____

Incorporated under which legal entity _____

Incorporated under which jurisdiction (country) _____

Postal Address _____

Street Address _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

Email address _____

Website address _____

Name of Director/CEO _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Skype _____

Name of primary contact person for ACT Alliance _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Skype _____

Name of Primary Finance Contact person for ACT Alliance _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Skype _____

C. Description of church, church-related organization, specialised ministry

Voting Member

We are (please tick as relevant one of the options below):

- [] A member church of the WCC or LWF
- [] A department or specialised development ministry of a member church of WCC or LWF
- [] An organization affiliated with at least one member church of the WCC through governance (please name the member churches and explain affiliation, listing the name, title and email contact of the current governing board representative): _____
- [] An international or national mission organization belonging to a member church or churches of the WCC and/or LWF who are engaged in development, advocacy and/or humanitarian assistance and who does not use these programmes to further a particular religious or political partisan standpoint.
- [] An exception – meaning one of the three exceptions cited under point 1 of the member criteria listed in section 1 (**please describe**)
- [] An organization which was previously part of a member organization but has become independent (**such applications must come with the endorsement of the member organization**).
- [] A church or an ecumenical organization that has had a long historical programmatic working relationship with the WCC and/or a regional ecumenical organization, referring to the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI), the Conference of European Churches, the Conference of Caribbean Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Pacific Conference of Churches.
- [] An ecumenical organization from a country where there are no member churches of either the WCC or LWF.

Description of exception: _____

Observer Member

We are (please tick as relevant one of the options below):

- [] A regional ecumenical organization or a national council of churches which does not have its own development or humanitarian assistance programmes (and who therefore does not qualify to be a member), but who wishes to work closely with the Alliance.
- [] A global ecumenical body who wishes to work closely with ACT Alliance.

D. What we do

1. Our church/organization/ministry's mission is: (please quote or describe)

2. If a Church, please also state the mission of the department or specialised development ministry of your Church: (please quote or describe)

3. Our organization's work: (please describe for the following areas of work)**a. Humanitarian**

Please name any emergency/conflict situations that you have responded to in the past 3 years and describe your organization's response. Completing this section is essential if your organization wishes to apply for ACT Humanitarian funds.

b. Development

Please describe the type of work being undertaken or supported. If your work is focused in one country, please include the number of development programmes you are undertaking. If you either work in, or support development programmes in a number of countries, please list the countries you are engaged in and the approximate number of partners or programmes you support in each country.

c. Advocacy

Please describe any advocacy work that your organization has been engaged in during the past two years.

Please attach a maximum four-page description of two programmes you have undertaken in the last two years (or financially supported), including the objectives of the programme, activities, outcomes, what lessons your organization learned from this programme, and how these lessons have influenced your ongoing work. If your organization is engaged in humanitarian assistance and you wish to apply for ACT Humanitarian funds, one case study must describe one such response.

4. Staffing

a) State the number of staff directly employed by your church/organization/ministry in the following areas:

Development: _____

Humanitarian assistance: _____

Advocacy: _____

5. Gender equality

ACT Alliance promotes gender equality at organizational and programme level among its membership.

a) State the number of senior staff positions held by women in your church/organization/ministry:

b) Job titles (no names required) of senior staff positions held by women:

c) Number of governing board (or relevant leadership authority) positions held by women:

E. Governance Structure

1. Please describe or provide a diagram of your governance structure:

2. Please list the names of the members on your governing body:

F. Finances

1. (To be completed by Churches only)

The total income of the department/ministry within your Church that deals with development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy work and related income for staffing/ administration, etc., for the past three years is: _____ (state currency)

2. (To be completed by Church-related organizations/ministries only)

The total income of your organization (this includes all sources of income, constituency, back-donor funding, investment income, etc.) for the past three years is: _____ (state currency)

Please note that the three (3) most recent years of audited statements of accounts must be included in applications for either member or observer status in ACT Alliance.

G. Membership of and affiliations to humanitarian, development and advocacy organizations or networks

List ecumenical collaborative initiatives (e.g., WCC roundtables, Regional Ecumenical Organizations, etc.) your organization is a member of:

List other non-ecumenical alliances or networks your organization is part of:

National:

Regional:

Global:

H. Membership of ACT Alliance

1. Explain your organization's reasons for wanting to become a member or observer of ACT Alliance:

2. Explain what your organization can offer and contribute to ACT Alliance:

(Note: this is not about financial contributions, but rather relates to the particular skills, expertise and experience that your organization brings for the benefit of ACT Alliance.)

3. Explain how your organization expects to benefit from being part of ACT Alliance:

I. Commitment to ACT Alliance

The following sections must be signed by your church/organization/ministry management and governance.

a) We have read, understand and are committed to adhering to the ACT vision, mission and policy commitments outlined in the documents below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ➤ Founding Document of the ACT Alliance | ➤ Branding policy |
| ➤ ACT Statutes and By-Laws | ➤ Communications policy |
| ➤ Quality and Accountability Framework | ➤ Social media policy |
| ➤ ACT Membership-Observers Agreements policy | ➤ Public information disclosure policy |
| ➤ ACT Voting Member/Observer Agreement and its annex: Code of Good Practice, with appendix on non-proselytism statement | ➤ Anti-fraud and corruption policy |
| ➤ Code of Conduct Policy for the prevention of misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, including sexual and to ensure child safeguarding | ➤ Complaints policy |
| ➤ Membership Engagement Model | ➤ Membership disciplinary policy |
| ➤ Procedure for funding the ACT Alliance Forums and Secretariat | ➤ Child safeguarding policy |
| | ➤ National, sub-regional and regional forums policy |
| | ➤ Humanitarian policy |
| | ➤ Protection policy |
| | ➤ ACT understanding of development |
| | ➤ Advocacy policy and procedures |
| | ➤ External relations policy |
| | ➤ Gender justice policy |

b) We have read and understand the ACT Code of Good Practice and are committed to adhering to the common values and overarching, organizational, programmatic and relational principles and commitment outlined in the document.

c) We have read and understand the ACT Code of Conduct for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption and abuse of power and are committed to ensure that all governance, management and staff of our church/organization/ministry sign this code and understand the obligations placed upon their conduct, so as to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices.

d) We have read, understand and are committed to adhering to the following international standards that have been formally adopted, endorsed or committed to by ACT governance, namely:

- The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief
- The Sphere Standards – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response

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- Principles of Partnership
- Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)
- Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS
- Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness

The varying roles and responsibilities of ACT members in relation to all standards noted above are outlined in the ACT Quality and Accountability Framework and the Membership/Observer Agreement.

On behalf of church/organization/ministry

Name _____

Signature _____

Position _____

Date _____

On behalf of governance

Name _____

Signature _____

Position _____

Date _____

J. References

Please provide the contact details of two ACT members or ecumenical organizations that can be contacted for a reference for your church/organization/ministry:

a) **Contact person:** _____

Position: _____

Organization: _____

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Direct phone number: _____ Skype: _____

Email: _____ How does this referee know your organization? _____

b) **Contact person:** _____

Position: _____

Organization: _____

Direct phone number: _____ Skype: _____

Email: _____ How does this referee know your organization? _____

K. Declaration

a) After consideration of the ACT membership application process and being in agreement with the obligations and commitments incurred by membership, I hereby apply for membership of ACT Alliance on behalf of the organization whose particulars and description appears in this application form.

b) We have read and understand **Annex 1: Procedure for Funding the ACT Alliance Forums and Secretariat** (below) and **hereby commit to paying all membership dues** as applicable to our organization and as outlined in Annex 1. We further understand that failure to pay the membership fees will entail the suspension of our organization’s membership, until payment is effectuated.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Telephone No _____ Email address: _____



A signed copy of the minutes/resolution where the decision was made by the applicant's governance body is required for inclusion in applications for either member or observer status in ACT Alliance.

Please note that, following ACT policies, once an ACT member has been suspended it cannot:

- Play the role of forum convenor/coordinator in ACT forums, and its voting rights in the forum are suspended;
- Access humanitarian funds channelled through ACT's Secretariat, neither RRFs nor appeals;
- Participate in ACT structures, including governance, advisory groups and communities of practice, and will have to step down from any groups it is participating in for the duration of the suspension;
- Benefit from travel, accommodation or any other expense subsidies paid from ACT's budget;
- Be nominated by the Secretariat or ACT members to represent ACT in external meetings, programmes, consultations, etc.;
- Nominate candidates for governance structures;
- Attend ACT General Assemblies.

Annex 1

Procedure for Funding the ACT Alliance Forums and Secretariat

ACT Alliance brings together 135 churches and church-related organizations, which have a combined income of over USD 3 billion. For the Alliance to reach its potential of working together in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy, it is important that the Secretariat is well resourced and has an adequate and stable income.

As per the membership agreement, members agree to pay annual fees to ACT Alliance as determined by the ACT Governing Board:

ACT governance has agreed that the following elements will comprise the funding base for the ACT Secretariat:

- A **Forum fee** that is paid by all members and observers into the forum where their headquarter is located.
- An **Income-Based Fee (IBF)** that is paid by all organizations whose annual income is over USD 5 million. The income related fee is based on a percentage of the total income of the organization (see definition below) as set by the Governing Board.
- An **International Coordination Fee (ICF)**, which is levied on appeals issued by the ACT Secretariat.
- **Voluntary contributions** over and above the fees will be sought for specific programmes in order to ensure the adequate funding of the core budget.

All contributions are equally important, although the total amount generated from each will be different. Payment of contributions will be a condition of membership.

1. Setting the Fees

The Governing Board will set the level of the forum fee, income-based fee and international coordination fee.

The fees are set for the current strategic period in order to provide stability and assist both members and the Secretariat with their planning.

2. Fees

Forum fee

Members: USD 1,000
Observers: USD 500

Income-based fees

All organizations with a total annual income of USD 5 million or above will also pay an income-based fee. This fee is additional to the forum fee.

The fee uses the member's total income as a base (averaged over the past two years), and is levied as follows:

- a. Members with an annual income between USD 5 million and USD 20 million will pay 0.10% of their total income.
- b. Members with an annual income between USD 20 million and USD 125 million will pay 0.15% of their total income.

Total Income (USD million)	Income Based Fee (USD)
Over 125 million	200,000
100 million - 125 million	168,750
75 million - 100 million	131,250
50 million - 75 million	93,750
25 million - 50 million	56,250
20 million - 25 million	33,750
15 million - 20 million	17,500
10 million - 15 million	12,500
5 million - 10 million	7,500

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This banding system has been introduced to allow for minor fluctuations in a member's income from year to year and to assist with administering the fee.

International Coordination Fee

An international coordination fee will continue to be levied at 3% of income on appeals issued by the Secretariat.

Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contributions over and above the Income-Based Fee to help fund the approved 2019-2026 strategy of the Alliance are welcome and necessary. These will be solicited through the annual budget process, as well as during the course of the year for particular projects or programmes.

3. Procedures for paying the fees

a) Income-based Fee

The income-based fee will be based on a percentage of the total income of the organization, averaged over the previous two years, as set by the Governing Board. The income-based fee is payable annually for all organizations with annual total income of USD 5 million or above.

The due date for payment of the income-based fee will be **the end of the first quarter of the year** (March 30th). Organizations who have difficulty paying annually may agree with the Secretariat to pay by instalments over the course of the year.

Non-payment of Income Based Fee

If a member fails to pay its annual income-based fee, it will be notified that, unless payment is forthcoming, the member risks suspension of its membership from the Alliance. (See section 4).

Definition of Total Income

All organizations are different, undertake different activities and have different ways of presenting their income. For all ecumenical organizations and specialized ministries/agencies, the income-based fee is based on the **'total income'** of the organization according to their audited accounts. This includes income from 'back donors' (i.e. government and other restricted funding) but not gifts in kind.

Churches would calculate the total income of the department(s) which deal with humanitarian assistance and development and therefore would exclude income for other matters such as the salary of clergy. In order to mitigate against fluctuations in income, an average of the previous two years will be used as a basis for calculating the income-based fees.

c) International Coordination Fee

The international coordination fee will be set as a percentage of income received for each appeal.

The international coordination fee will apply to all appeals issued by the ACT Secretariat with the following exceptions:

- ACT evaluation components in an appeal
- ACT special initiatives including the current Rapid Response Fund and Revolving Fund

The international coordination fee will apply to the following:

- All cash contributions to the appeal sent through the ACT Secretariat
- All cash contributions to the appeal sent directly to the requesting member
- All back donor contributions to the appeal
- All cash contributions to the appeal sent by non-ACT members, including locally raised funds

The international coordination fee will not be applied to:

- In kind contributions (material aid and personnel seconded to assist a member in implementing the planned programmes in an appeal)

Payment of the international coordination fee

The international coordination fee will be an expense line in the appeal proposal. It will be included when the appeal is being prepared for approval. Where several members implement one appeal, each member component will have its own international coordination fee.

As contributions are received, the ACT Secretariat will deduct the agreed percentage for the international coordination fee and forward the balance to the requesting member.

Where contributions are sent directly and not via the ACT Secretariat, the international coordination fee should be paid in one of two ways:

- a. The contributing member deducts the international coordination fee and sends it to the ACT Secretariat.
- b. The requesting member informs the ACT Secretariat that they have received funds and send the international coordination fee to the Secretariat or requests the Secretariat to deduct the amount from future contributions passing via Geneva for the appeal.

When funds are sent direct, the requesting member should establish upfront who is responsible for paying the ICF and make a financial provision to meet its financial obligation to the Secretariat. The requesting member cannot assume that the contributing member will send the percentage to the ACT Secretariat, unless the contributing member has specifically stated that it will be responsible for paying the ICF directly to the Secretariat.

When the appeal is closed, the Secretariat will review contributions made and reconcile international coordination fee contributions to ensure the correct amount has been contributed.

Non-payment of International Coordination Fee

Should a requesting member fail to pay the international coordination fee the ACT Secretariat will not issue any future appeal proposals from that member until the outstanding fee is settled.

4. Non-Payment of Fees

If the forum fees or income-based fees are not received, members will be sent reminder letters stating that non-payment of fees risks suspension of membership and thus exclusion of participation of life in the Alliance. The Membership and Nominations Committee will make recommendations to the ACT Governing Board on suspension of members failing to comply with financial obligations to the Alliance.

Following ACT policies, once an ACT member has been suspended it cannot:

- Participate in ACT forums, play the role of forum convenor/chair/coordinator, and its voting rights in the forum are suspended;
- Access humanitarian funds channelled through the ACT Secretariat, including RRFs or appeals;
- Participate in ACT structures, including governance, advisory groups and communities of practice, and it will also have to step down from the groups while suspended;
- Benefit from travel, accommodation or other expense subsidies paid from ACT's budget;
- Be nominated by the Secretariat or ACT members to represent ACT in external meetings, programmes, consultations, etc.

Failure to pay the international coordination fee contribution will result in exclusion from appeals.

Members are encouraged to engage with the Secretariat in order to reach an agreement related to the settlement of non-payment of fees. Full membership rights for suspended members will be restored as soon as payment or agreement on payment is made.

Exceptions

It is recognised that there may be very good reasons why members cannot pay their contributions on time. Should any member not be able to pay their membership fee or income-based fee they should agree on a payment plan with the ACT Secretariat. Their membership will then not be suspended and they would retain full membership rights as long as the payment plan is implemented. In cases where the Secretariat needs guidance in processing exceptions it may consult the Membership and Nominations Committee.