

GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATION OF ACT COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (CoPs)

– IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

actalliance

This document provides guidelines for joining our ACT Alliance Communities of Practice (CoPs) in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also includes information about the CoPs' structures and general criteria for their operation.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: 2

1. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE 4

- 1.1 PROFILE OF THOSE INTERESTED IN BECOMING MEMBERS: 4
- 1.2. COMMITMENTS OF CoP MEMBER ORGANISATIONS 5

2. CoPs MEMBERSHIP ACCORDING TO THE APPLICANT 5

- 2.1. OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF ACT 5
- 2.2 NON-MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS 6
- 2.3. INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE PART OF THE ACT ALLIANCE 8

3. COMPOSITION AND LEADERSHIP IN ACT CoPs 8

- 3.1 MODERATOR COMMITTEE 8
- 3.1. A) COMPOSITION OF THE MODERATING COMMITTEE: 8
- 3.2.B) CHOICE OF MODERATION: 9
- 3.2 ADVISORY TEAM 9
- 3.2.A) REQUIREMENTS TO BE AN ADVISOR: 9
- 3.2.B) TERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CoPs AND ADVISORS: 10
- 3.3 WORKING COMMITTEES 10

4. CoPs OPERATIONS IN LAC 11

ANNEX I 12

INTRODUCTION:

ACT Communities of Practice (CoPs) are groups of ACT members who share a common interest in a specific issue. CoPs enable members to exchange experiences, develop competencies, engage in joint advocacy efforts, and facilitate collaboration among members in specific areas of ACT Alliance's work. The primary objective of a CoP is to strengthen and support the alliance's work, its members and forums, in accordance with its policies and strategic plan.

The Communities of Practice in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) place a special emphasis on realizing ACT's vision, which envisions a global community where all of God's creation lives with dignity, justice, peace, and respect for human rights and the environment. As a result, the regional CoPs aim to contribute to ACT's global vision of becoming a *'cohesive, effective, and competent alliance working for justice and peace, promoting local leadership, resilient and sustainable communities.'*¹

The ACT Communities of Practice in Latin America and the Caribbean will closely collaborate with ACT Alliance national and subregional forums. The representatives from the forums within the CoPs will ensure an effective connection between CoP activities and ACT forums.

As of October 2023, there are four CoPs in the LAC region, based on the existing ACT Global CoPs, Reference Groups, and member priorities:

- 1 Disaster risk reduction (DRR)**
- 2 Gender Justice**
- 3 Community-Based Psychosocial Support (CBPS)**
- 4 Youth²**

¹ ACT Global Strategy 2019-2026, p.









In the pursuit of harmonious work in the LAC region, the CoP moderators collaborated with the ACT Regional Office to create this joint document. The primary aim of this document is to establish common rules that enhance regional cohesion, emphasizing the strengthening of our regional CoPs and promoting member participation, all in alignment with ACT Alliance policies. The central idea behind this collaboration is to infuse harmony into the rules and operation of the CoPs.

This document is the result of dialogues and consensus reached between the moderators of the four Communities of Practice in LAC and the Secretariat. It provides clear and fair guidelines while preserving the autonomy and unique characteristics of each CoP. It also outlines common rules for participation, leadership, and composition.

1. ACT COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE MEMBERSHIP

Below are the minimum requirements for individuals wishing to become members of the ACT CoPs in LAC.

1.1 PROFILE OF THOSE INTERESTED IN BECOMING MEMBERS:

-  • Current staff of an ACT Alliance member organization or be in one of the exceptions set forth herein.
-  • Commitment, active participation and/or previous work on the areas of work of the CoP.
-  • Familiarity with ACT Alliance, its strategic plan, policies and guidelines.
-  • Clear interest in supporting or leading the implementation of the CoP plans and projects. For example, exchange information and materials, implementation of advocacy activities, workshops, advise on key topics, participate in workshops and training, lead activities with national forums, etc.
-  • Sufficient time to participate actively in the different activities developed by the CoP, with commitment and proactivity.
-  • Have organizational endorsement and institutional support to integrate the diverse structures of the CoP.
-  • Availability to travel internationally for those who are permanently involved in the CoP process and who have demonstrated their commitment to the CoP.
-  • Commitment to teamwork.

1.2. COMMITMENTS OF CoP MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Membership in the CoPs is based on membership to ACT and endorsement of the ACT Alliance forums. In this regard, CoP member organizations should be committed to:

- • Support the participation of their representative in the CoP. In this regard, Country Directors and/or Executive Directors and direct supervisors of CoP members are expected to support members' active participation in the CoP.
- • When feasible, CoP activities should be integrated into the organization's annual operational plan.
- • Promote staff participation in CoP activities, including training, advocacy, and events at national, sub-regional, and regional levels. Encourage replication of these activities in churches, FBOs (Faith-Based Organizations), civil society organizations, etc.
- • Promote an integrated approach to the work of the CoPs of which they are members.
- • Member organizations are expected to provide reports on programs, initiatives, events, and actions related to the theme of their respective CoP.


➤ ➤ ➤ 2. CoPs MEMBERSHIP

2.1. OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF ACT ALLIANCE

Every official member of ACT Alliance is entitled and invited to actively participate in the CoPs.

“Official Member” of the ACT Alliance includes:

- ✔ Representatives of an ACT Alliance official member organization, endorsed by the ACT Forum of their country.

 In the event that there is no active forum in any country, the official members may seek endorsement from the subregional forum or, failing that, from the Regional Secretariat.

SCOPE OF MEMBERSHIP







Official members of the Alliance have the right to participate without exceptions or restrictions. They can participate in all decisions, spaces, positions, substructures, opportunities, represent ACT Alliance and the CoP externally, and take on moderation roles.

2.2 NON-MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

2.2.1. Observer Organizations participating in ACT national or sub-regional forums.

While ACT Alliance structures primarily serve its official members, in the Latin American and Caribbean region, we recognize the valuable commitment of invited or observer organizations actively participating in our forums. To strengthen the CoP, we see potential in the participation of these observer members, provided they demonstrate a current commitment to the alliance and its forums.

In cases where organizations invited to the forums wish to participate, they must meet the following requirements:

-  The organization actively engages in its national, sub-regional, or regional forum.
-  Representatives of observer/invited organizations must have the endorsement of their ACT Forum.
-  Representatives of organizations invited to the forums must also have the authorization of the moderation of the respective CoP.
-  Representatives of these organizations will only be considered members of the CoPs after the ACT Regional Secretariat notifies the CoPs of the knowledge of a) delivery of assigned FABO certificates and b) delivery of code of conduct forms and other signed forms.

SCOPE OF MEMBERSHIP



Representatives of non-member organizations, who actively participate in their forum and are endorsed by their national forum, will be able to participate in the various structures of the CoPs, including decision-making (voting rights), benefit from the various opportunities, be able to lead certain internal CoP processes, implement CoP plans, develop activities, participate in external meetings, etc. These organizations may not represent the ACT Alliance or the CoPs externally and are excluded from moderation roles.

2.2.2. Non-member Organizations **which do not participate** in ACT national, subregional, or regional Forums

Organizations outside the ACT Alliance that do not actively participate in national or regional forums and therefore do not have the endorsement of ACT Alliance members **cannot be part of ACT CoPs**. By exception, Churches and FBOs that are not part of ACT or its forums, may request their exceptional admission to any of the CoPs provided that:

- ✓ Make a formal request to the CoP explaining the reasons for its application and specific contributions to the CoP to which they intend to join, and must be accepted by the majority of the members of the CoP.
- ✓ A formal request is made to the ACT Alliance Global Secretariat, attaching three recommendations from official ACT Alliance members.
- ✓ Representatives of these organizations will only be considered members of the CoPs after the ACT Regional Secretariat notifies the CoPs of the knowledge of a) an induction session with the ACT Alliance Regional Secretariat, b) delivery of assigned FABO course certificates, and c) delivery of code of conduct forms and other signed forms.

SCOPE OF MEMBERSHIP



If accepted by both the CoP and the ACT Alliance Secretariat, these organizations may participate as observers. That is, they will participate in the various structures, external meetings, development and implementation of activities and projects, etc. Such organisations may attend internal discussions for decision-making but shall not have the right to vote. Nor will they be able to represent the ACT Alliance or the CoP externally or run for the position of moderators.

2.3. INDIVIDUALS

Individuals who are not staff of official or observer members or organizations that have been admitted by exception to the CoPs **cannot participate as members of the CoPs**. Individuals in their personal capacity are not permitted, except for CoP advisors.

Advisors are **not** considered members of ACT Communities of Practice

> > > 3. COMPOSITION AND LEADERSHIP IN ACT CoPs

For the next two years after the publication of this document, each CoP will have flexibility to determine its steering mechanism depending on the decisions of its membership.

By 2026, LAC COPs will have the following components:

3.1 MODERATOR COMMITTEE

The moderating committee is an internal structure of the CoPs that supports the work of the CoPs. Each CoP will decide in greater detail and according to needs the role that its moderation will fulfill. In general terms, the moderators guide the CoPs in making collective decisions, ensure cohesion, and provide oversight on the implementation of the CoP strategies, their sub-strategies, and plans. They also build bridges between the CoPs and the various structures of ACT Alliance. Thus, CoP moderators ensure liaison between the CoP and ACT General Secretariat, the Regional Office for LAC, Reference Groups, Global CoPs, global ACT programmes, etc.

Other CoP leadership responsibilities include facilitating meetings, representing the CoP at ACT internal and external meetings, submitting an annual high-quality report to ACT Alliance Secretariat and respective programs, among others.

3.1. A) COMPOSITION OF THE MODERATING COMMITTEE:



The Moderating Committee will have representatives from the three subregions: Central America, South America and the Caribbean, if there is sufficient membership to do so. That is, the vice-moderators may not be from the same sub-region.



The Committee will be composed of 2 or 3 people: 1 Moderator and 1 or 2 Vice Moderators elected in General Assembly every two years.



At the Biannual General Assembly, at least one of the members of this committee must be renewed, promoting the continuity of the work.



This committee can invite other people to its meetings according to the needs and priorities of the moment (representatives of ACT Forums, the ACT Regional Office, the Advisory Team, etc.)

3.2.B) CHOICE OF MODERATION:



Each participant will share their CV and submit a letter of endorsement from their organization and the national ACT Forum (if active).



If there is no consensus in the election, the election shall require a simple majority vote of the members of the COP.



Gender equality, youth participation and the representation of groups such as people with disabilities, LGTBQ+, historically excluded groups, etc. will be promoted.

3.2 ADVISORY TEAM

The CoP advisors in LAC are specialized professionals responsible for **providing advice to the CoP with the aim of enhancing its performance**. Although advisors guide and assist in the decision-making process and strategic direction, the specific characteristics and roles of these individuals will vary depending on each CoP.

Examples of activities carried out by advisors include assisting with the development of strategic, annual, advocacy, and fundraising plans, identifying opportunities for CoP strengthening, designing training curriculums, delivering workshops, seminars, classes, and more, providing ongoing monitoring and technical advice, and more.

Advisors must be formally invited for a specific period, as established in the invitation letter sent by the CoP to the advisor.

3.2.A) REQUIREMENTS TO BE AN ADVISOR:



1. Have technical specialization and/or proven professional experience related to the work of the respective CoP.
2. Be available to actively participate in the CoP.

3. Must be proposed or endorsed by the national and/or sub-regional ACT forums in their place of residence. If there is no national or sub-regional forum, endorsement by the Regional Secretariat may be granted.
4. To become a CoP advisor, they must receive a formal invitation in the form of a letter and provide a formal response to that invitation.
5. In exceptional cases where a) they are appointed on a permanent basis, b) they have an active role in advising strategic decisions of the CoPs, or c) they have direct involvement in fundraising, advisors must obtain authorization from the Regional Secretariat of the ACT Alliance.
6. Advisors are required to conduct an induction session with the Regional Secretariat of the ACT Alliance, deliver FABO course certificates, sign code of conduct forms, and fulfill other necessary requirements.

Each CoP will determine the composition of the advisory team, the regularity of meetings, roles, etc. There will be a maximum of **1/5 of the total number of CoP members** available to advisors for each CoP.

3.2.B) TERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COPs AND ADVISORS:

The relationship between advisors and the CoPs may be terminated under the following circumstances:

-  The expiration of the deadline stipulated in the formal invitation.
-  The CoP's moderation decides to terminate the relationship with the advisor for justified reasons, such as a lack of commitment, non-compliance with ACT Alliance policies and codes, or a lack of relevance in the appointment, among others.

3.3 WORKING COMMITTEES

Each CoP shall determine the various commissions or working groups and their respective functioning.

> > > 4. CoP OPERATIONS IN LAC

Each CoP will have its own terms of reference; however, general guidelines are outlined below:

- ☒ The CoP will have an annual plan of activities aligned with ACT Alliance's Strategic Plan. The plan is approved by consensus or by majority.
- ☒ Status updates should be carried out between CoP leaders and Regional Secretariat focal points, to ensure that the CoP is following its goals, objectives, and activities and to assist with any issues the CoP may face.
- ☒ CoPs should ensure that their actions are linked to the life and aspirations of ACT forums. Efforts are expected from all CoPs to inspire their actions in the forums and ensure that there is no disengagement from them. Thus, each member will seek input from its organization and forum and will share the results of the meetings with its national or subregional forum.
- ☒ The CoPs shall manage resources based on their plan or on specific activities of the annual plan.
- ☒ Members of the CoPs may participate in regional or international ACT activities, bringing the regional perspective to them.
- ☒ A focal point from the CoP will participate in the meetings of the respective ACT Reference Group and Global CoPs, if operational.
- ☒ CoP activities will foster a community and friendly environment, based on timely and appropriate consultations.
- ☒ The CoP will meet online as often as it deems appropriate to coordinate its work and will try to meet in person (circumstances and budget permitting) once every year or every two years.

ACT Alliance CoPs are not decision-making bodies. Thus, in the decisions involving their work, consensus will be prioritized and if it is not possible or pertinent, each CoP may decide to vote on the different issues, according to the need.

ANNEX I

CoP MEMBERSHIP IN LAC



OFFICIAL MEMBERS

FULL RIGHTS

REQUIREMENTS

FORUM ENDORSEMENT. If there is no active forum in your country, endorsement will be sought from the sub-regional forum or REGIONAL SECRETARIAT



NON MEMBERS BUT ACTIVE IN FORUMS

RIGHT TO VOTE

REQUIREMENTS

- 1.- **FORUM ENDORSEMENT**
- 2.- **COP APPROVAL**



OTHERS

ONLY BY EXCEPTION

OBSERVERS

REQUIREMENTS

- 1.- **LETTER OF APPLICATION WITH ENDORSEMENT OF 3 MEMBERS**
- 2.- **APPROVAL FROM THE GLOBAL SECRETARIAT**
- 3.- **CoP APPROVAL**



**INDIVIDUALS
ARE **NOT**
ALLOWED**

ADVISORS

**ADVISORS
ARE NOT MEMBERS**

REQUIREMENTS

**LIST OF REQUIREMENTS
IN PAGE 9 & 10**