

Quality Standards

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.

Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation & Abuse (PSHEA)

ACT Members are all required to follow a set of standards designed to stop and/or ensure adequate response to sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse. In addition, ACT Members should commit to being proactive in addressing such gross violations of human rights and in cases where members lack the required skills, experience, or resources, they should establish a safe referral and reporting process to competent organisations. Integrating protection and gender are also key aspects to protecting people against sexual misconduct and crimes, as sexual violence is the most immediate and dangerous type of gender-based violence (GBV) happening in emergencies.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an ethical approach and set of practical measures adopted by organisations to promote the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in the delivery and receipt of humanitarian aid and development assistance, whether that is aid delivered as a response to conflict or emergencies, or programmes and activities that are focused on building the capacity of communities e.g. for health or education etc. Safeguarding is about protecting people as far as possible from all forms of harm, including Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), that might result from their involvement in or contact with the organisation. The likelihood of exploitation and/or abuse increases when individuals are in a vulnerable situation and where unequal power dynamics exist.

ACT Alliance's commitment to safeguarding, and expectation of Members, includes protecting staff from harm and inappropriate behaviour, including discrimination, bullying, and/or harassment in any form, and preventing and responding to harm caused by the organization to the people being served including SEAH. This means ACT Alliance is committed to:

- Safeguarding communities and individuals
- Safeguarding staff, volunteers, partners and contractors
- Safeguarding the ACT Alliance Membership
- Safeguarding ACT Alliance programs

All employees within ACT Alliance member organisations have a role to play in safeguarding. Certain employees also have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of a Safeguarding Policy or designing and adapting organizational systems and processes to integrate safeguarding requirements. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities are responsible to help others understand their obligations under a Safeguarding Policy and respond, as necessary, to safeguarding reports and concerns. The expectations for ACT Alliance members regarding Safeguarding are outlined in the ACT Safeguarding Policy, ACT Safeguarding Guidance Documents.

Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)

The ACT Alliance humanitarian operations seek to comply with all of the nine (9) CHS commitments while also incorporating CHS guidance and indicators into humanitarian operations project design and implementation. Specifically, ACT Alliance Members should comply with the Core Humanitarian Standard Guidance Notes & Indicators. These indicators and related guidance notes should be applied to:

- Project design;
- Monitoring at project, sectoral and response-wide levels;
- Capacity-building strategies;
- Internal evaluations;
- Peer and joint reviews and evaluations; and
- Real-time monitoring by affected communities and people.

For assistance verifying CHS compliance and applying these indicators and related guidance, please see the Core Humanitarian Standard Guidance Notes and Indicators.

Sphere standard

The Sphere Handbook was developed to provide minimum standards for the provision of emergency humanitarian aid. ACT Alliance humanitarian operations should adhere to and reflect Sphere Guidance and Standards. The foundations of the Sphere Handbook are the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and the CHS. These lay out the key principles, responsibilities, and duties of humanitarian actors and are to be adhered to at all times. The Handbook also covers specific standards for responses related to Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion, Food Security and Nutrition, Shelter and Settlement, and Health. For detailed information and minimum quality assurance standards for each of these sectors, please reference the full Sphere Handbook.

Inter-agency Standing Committee

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system. It formulates policy, sets strategic priorities and mobilizes resources in response to humanitarian crises.

With members from within and outside the United Nations, the IASC strengthens collective humanitarian action through the implementation of a coherent, unified response. Towards that end, the IASC advocates for common humanitarian principles and makes strategic, policy and operational decisions with a direct bearing on humanitarian operations on the ground.

References and templates

[ACT Alliance Quality and Accountability Framework](#)

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

[SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#)

[Core Humanitarian Standard](#)

[Sphere Handbook](#)

Due Diligence

ACT Alliance will establish a set of processes that provides a level of assurance that humanitarian response funds are used appropriately by the members and do not cause any harm. Members should have suitable policies, procedures, and controls for managing potential risks.

Due diligence tool

ACT Alliance has adapted the due diligence passporting tool developed by Humentum together with the seven international organisations who signed the Charter for Change. This tool will support organisations in strengthening their capacities in humanitarian action. Further guidance will be developed in 2025.

Responsibilities

Requesting Member

Informs ACT secretariat if they have gone through the due diligence process with another member organisation. Coordinate with ACT secretariat staff and Forum Coordinator during the due diligence process.

Implementing Partner

Support and share with Requesting Members the technical resources requested as a part of the Requesting Member(s) capacity assessment.

ACT Forum Coordinator

Coordinate and facilitate with ACT secretariat in the due diligence process. Coordinate with ACT secretariat in facilitating the development of capacity strengthening for members.

ACT Alliance Secretariat

Leads the due diligence process and assessment. Facilitate the development of capacity strengthening channels and resources for members.

References and Templates

Due diligence passporting toolkit