

ACT Alliance Membership Application Information

Before applying for a membership application form, please carefully review the following sections: **Criteria for Membership, Application Process, Membership Obligations, and Member Funding of the ACT Alliance Secretariat.** Additionally, familiarize yourself with ACT's standards and policies, which are mandatory for all ACT Alliance members. These can be found at: [ACT ALLIANCE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS](#) and [ACT ALLIANCE STANDARDS AND POLICIES](#)

I. Criteria for Membership

A. Voting Members

B. Observer Members

Guidance Notes:

- If a church has a dedicated department or specialized ministry focused on humanitarian assistance, development, or advocacy, it is preferred that this department or ministry represent the church within the ACT Alliance.
- An organization that qualifies for Voting Member status is not eligible to apply as an Observer Member; it must apply for Voting Member status instead.

Criteria for admission as Voting Member

Churches and church-related organizations of all sizes that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for Voting Membership in the ACT Alliance (hereafter referred to as “Voting Membership,” “Voting Member,” or “Members”):

1. Churches and church-related organizations seeking Voting Membership must fulfill at least one of the following conditions:
 - a. Be a member church of the World Council of Churches (WCC) or the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).
 - b. Be a specialized ministry for humanitarian assistance and/or development associated with a Member church, provided it is constituted as a separate legal entity.
 - c. Be an organization affiliated with at least one WCC Member church through governance (defined as having one or more representatives from WCC Member churches on their governing body, rather than individuals serving in a personal capacity).
 - d. Be international or national mission organizations belonging to a Member church or churches of the WCC and/or LWF, engaged in development, advocacy, and/or humanitarian assistance, and operating without a specific religious or political agenda.

Exceptions may be made for the following:

- e. Organizations that were previously part of a Member organization for over five years but have since become independent, provided the application includes endorsement from the Member organization.
 - f. Churches or ecumenical organizations with a long-standing programmatic relationship with the WCC or regional ecumenical organizations, such as the All Africa Conference of Churches, Christian Conference of Asia, Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias, Conference of European Churches, Conference of Caribbean Churches, Middle East Council of Churches, and Pacific Conference of Churches.
 - g. Ecumenical organizations from countries without any Member churches of the WCC and/or LWF.
 - h. Organizations that do not meet the membership criteria but whose activities hold strategic significance for ACT Alliance's operations and strategies, as determined by the ACT Alliance Governing Board. This includes organizations with national Christian engagement and connections to its Member churches or ACT members, particularly in the context of localization and community-led responses.
2. The church or church-related organization must have a demonstrable track record of substantial involvement in humanitarian assistance, development, or advocacy.
 3. The church or church-related organization must demonstrate a commitment to high-quality development advocacy and/or humanitarian assistance activities.
 4. The church or church-related organization should be classified as a national, regional, or international organization.

Criteria for Admission as an Observer Member

The following types of organizations are eligible to apply for Observer status within the ACT Alliance:

1. Regional ecumenical organizations and national councils of churches that do not have their own development, advocacy, or humanitarian assistance programs (and therefore do not qualify as Voting Members) but wish to collaborate closely with the Alliance.
2. Global ecumenical bodies that seek to work closely with the Alliance.

Observer Members will receive regular updates on ACT's work and will have the opportunity to participate as observers in appropriate ACT Alliance national, sub-regional, regional, or global forums. They will be required to pay an annual observer fee to the Secretariat. However, Observer Members may not participate in the governance of the ACT Alliance, nor may they co-brand their organizations with the ACT Alliance's name or use its logo.

II. Application Process

Applications for membership in the ACT Alliance can be submitted to the ACT Secretariat at any time via email to Ms. Jessica Ravard at jessica.ravard@actalliance.org.

All applications will be reviewed by the ACT Alliance Membership and Nominations Committee (MNC), which will evaluate whether the applicant meets the membership criteria and make a recommendation to the Governing Board regarding acceptance into membership. The Governing Board convenes twice a year, typically in May/June and November/December.

Upon approval of the membership application by the ACT Governing Board, the organization must sign the Membership/Observer Agreement to become a full ACT member. This agreement signifies the mutual commitment of the organization and the ACT Alliance to collaborate in furthering the mission of the Alliance, fostering effective partnerships, and enhancing trust within the Alliance. The Membership/Observer Agreement is mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT Alliance member or observer organization.

A membership application submitted to the Secretariat must include the following documents (in English):

1. A completed application form (with scanned signatures¹).
2. A recent annual report².
3. The two most recent externally audited financial statements, prepared according to Internationally Accepted Standards of Accounting.
4. A description (no more than 4 pages) of two programs undertaken in the last two years (or financially supported), including the program objectives, activities, outcomes, lessons learned, and how these lessons have influenced ongoing work. If the applicant is engaged in humanitarian assistance and wishes to apply for ACT Humanitarian funds, one case study must describe such a response.
5. An extract from the minutes of the governance meeting where the decision to apply for ACT Alliance membership was made, including the date, location of the meeting, and the names and signatures of the officers who validated the minutes. (If in another language, please provide an English translation.)
6. The Statutes/Constitution of the applicant church/organization
7. A .png image of the organization's logo.
8. A brief description of the organization and its work (maximum 1000 characters).
9. A link to the organization's website.

Once **ALL** the above documents are received by the Secretariat, the Secretariat will seek a written endorsement from the relevant ACT national, sub-regional, regional, or global forum where the applicant's headquarters are located. (Note: If no forum exists, two ACT members in the applicant's country or region will be asked to endorse the application.) Without an endorsement, the application will not be reviewed by the MNC. (Applicants applying for Observer status do not require an endorsement.)

III. Membership Obligations

Voting Member Obligations

The ACT Alliance Statutes require Voting Members to commit to the following:

1. **Adhere to the Vision and Mission:** Members must align with the vision, mission, and commitments of the ACT Alliance as outlined in the Founding Document, dated February 27, 2009.

¹ PDFs are preferred (the application form can also be sent in Word together with JPEG images of the pages containing signatures).

² For an example of what is meant, see ACT's Annual Report; <https://actalliance.org/act-news/see-the-act-alliance-annual-report-2021/>

2. **Compliance with Mandatory Policies:** Members must comply with all mandatory policies of the ACT Alliance that have been or will be adopted by the Governing Board.
3. **Adherence to Codes of Practice:** Members are required to uphold the Code of Good Practice of the ACT Alliance—including the Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse—and any future codes adopted by the Governing Board. Additionally, they must adhere to the Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, as well as the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere Standards) for organizations involved in humanitarian assistance.
4. **Co-branding Policy:** Members must co-brand with the name ACT Alliance in accordance with the co-branding policy established by the Governing Board.
5. **Active Participation:** Members are expected to actively participate in National and Regional Forums where they exist, collaborating and sharing resources with other ACT Alliance Members to strengthen collective efforts.
6. **Financial Responsibilities:** Members must pay the Forum Fee and the Income-Based Fee (IBF) as applicable, comply with any other financial obligations set forth in the By-Laws adopted by the Governing Board, and contribute to the ACT Alliance according to their means and capabilities.
7. **Reporting Obligations:** Members must agree to submit annual audited financial and narrative reports upon request.
8. **Criteria for Appeal Funds:** Members must meet the criteria established by the Governing Board for accessing appeal funds for humanitarian assistance and related activities.

Observer Member Obligations

The ACT Alliance Statutes require Observer Members to commit to the following:

1. **Adhere to the Vision and Mission:** Observer Members must align with the vision, mission, and commitments of the ACT Alliance as summarized in the Founding Document.
2. **Compliance with Codes of Practice:** Observer Members must adhere to the Code of Good Practice for the ACT Alliance, including the ACT Code of Conduct and any other relevant codes applicable to observers that may be adopted by the Governing Board in the future.
3. **Payment of Fees:** Observer Members must pay an annual observer fee as determined by the Governing Board.
4. **Governance Participation:** Observer Members are not permitted to participate in the governance of the ACT Alliance.
5. **Restrictions on Co-branding:** Observer Members cannot co-brand their organizations with the ACT Alliance name nor use its logo.

For the complete ACT Alliance Statutes, please see: [Revised Statutes of ACT Alliance](#)

IV. Member Funding of the ACT Alliance Secretariat

The ACT Alliance is one of the world's largest coalitions of churches and church-related organizations engaged in humanitarian, development, and advocacy work. It consists of 145 members collaborating in over 120 countries, with headquarters in 73 countries. The Alliance aims to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalized individuals, regardless of their religion, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, race, or nationality, while adhering to the highest international codes and standards. To

maximize its collaborative potential, it is crucial that the Secretariat is well-resourced and maintains an adequate and stable income.

According to the membership agreement, members are required to pay annual fees to the ACT Alliance as determined by the ACT Governing Board. The following components comprise the funding base for the ACT Secretariat:

- **Forum Fee:** This fee is paid directly to each national and/or regional forum where the member organization is active. In cases where no active forum exists, the fee is invoiced by and paid directly to the Secretariat.
- **Income-Based Fee (IBF):** This fee is applicable to all organizations whose annual income exceeds USD 5 million. The amount of the income-related fee is set by the Governing Board.
- **Secretariat Monitoring and Coordination Costs (SMC):** This is a direct charge implemented as of 2022, levied on each appeal and Rapid Response Fund (RRF) donation. The SMC is allocated to a special budget to cover the costs of the Humanitarian Mechanism. The percentage of the SMC is determined each year based on projected income and the budget of the Secretariat's humanitarian team. For 2023, a 3% charge will apply. For appeals initiated prior to 2022, an Income Contribution Fee (ICF) is charged as a 3% levy on appeal and RRF funds, which supports ACT Secretariat core funds.
- **Additional Voluntary Contributions:** Contributions that are earmarked for specific projects are encouraged as support to the Secretariat's core activities or individual programs to ensure adequate funding for activities not covered by external donors

1. Fees

Payment of the Forum Fee (mandatory) and the Income-Based Fee (if applicable) is a condition of ACT membership.

Forum Fee per Year:

- **Members:** USD 1,000
- **Observers:** USD 500

Income-Based Fee per Year: Organizations with a total annual income of USD 5 million or above will be required to pay an Income-Based Fee in addition to the Forum Fee.

The member's total income, averaged over the past two years, will be used to determine the appropriate income bracket. According to the Governing Board's decision, there is a 17% increase in the Income-Based Fee at each income level effective 2023. However, income brackets are capped at their 2022 levels to ensure that no member faces an increase greater than 17% in their Income-Based Fee for 2023.

Income-based Fee		17% Increase*
Total Annual Income (USD)	Current IBF	Revised IBF
Over 125 million	200,000	234,000
100 – 125 million	168,750	197,500
75 – 100 million	131,250	154,000
50 – 75 million	93,750	110,000
25 – 50 million	56,250	66,000
20 – 25 million	33,750	39,500
15 – 20 million	17,500	20,500
10 – 15 million	12,500	15,000
5 – 10 million	7,500	9,000

* rounded up to closest USD500

2. Procedures for paying the fees

a) Forum Fees

The Forum Fees will be paid directly to each national and/or regional forum where the member organization is present and active. In cases where there is no active forum, the fee will be invoiced by and paid directly to the Secretariat.

b) Income-Based Fee

The ACT Secretariat will invoice member organizations that are liable to pay the Income-Based Fee (IBF) based on the specified income and fee categories outlined above.

In a typical year, annual member survey data on the total annual income of each organization will be verified. Additionally, the Secretariat will conduct random spot-checks of some member organization audit reports to verify the declared annual operating volume. The ACT Secretariat reserves the right to adjust IBF invoices based on verified data from the annual member survey and/or financial audits. Each member organization is also encouraged to ensure that it is invoiced according to the correct income bracket.

The due date for the payment of the Income-Based Fee will be March 31 of the invoiced year. Organizations facing difficulties in making payment by this date may arrange with the Secretariat to pay by instalments throughout the year.

Definition of Total Annual Income

All organizations vary in their activities and methods of presenting their income. For all ecumenical organizations and specialized ministries/agencies, the Income-Based Fee is determined based on the "total annual income" of the organization as reflected in their audited accounts. This includes income from "back donors" (i.e., government and other restricted funding) but excludes gifts "in kind."

Churches should calculate the total income of the departments responsible for humanitarian assistance and development, excluding income related to other functions, such as clergy salaries. To mitigate fluctuations in income, the average of the previous two years will be used as the basis for calculating the Income-Based Fees.

3. Non-Payment of Fees

If Income-Based Fees and Forum Fees invoiced by the Secretariat are not paid on time, members will receive reminder letters indicating that non-payment risks suspension of membership and exclusion from participation in the Alliance. After two reminders, the Membership and Nominations Committee (MNC) will be informed and will make recommendations to the ACT Governing Board regarding the suspension of members who fail to fulfill their financial obligations to the Alliance. Non-payment of Forum Fees will also be reported back to the Secretariat for follow-up and potential suspension.

According to ACT policies, once an ACT member is suspended, they are prohibited from:

- Participating in ACT forums, assuming the role of forum convenor/chair/coordinator, and exercising voting rights in the forum.
- Accessing humanitarian funds channeled through the ACT Secretariat, including Rapid Response Funds (RRFs) or appeals.
- Engaging in ACT structures, including governance, reference groups, and communities of practice, and must step down from these groups while suspended.
- Benefiting from travel, accommodation, or other expense subsidies covered by ACT's budget.
- Being nominated by the Secretariat or ACT members to represent ACT in external meetings, programs, consultations, etc.

Members are encouraged to communicate with the Secretariat to reach an agreement regarding the settlement of unpaid fees. Full membership rights for suspended members will be restored upon receipt of payment.

Exceptions

It is acknowledged that there may be valid reasons why members are unable to pay their contributions on time. If a member cannot pay their Forum Fee or Income-Based Fee, they should establish a payment plan with the ACT Secretariat. As long as the agreed payment plan is implemented, their membership will not be suspended, and they will retain full membership rights.

In cases where the Secretariat requires guidance in processing exceptions, it will consult with the Membership and Nominations Committee.
