

# **ACT Alliance Quality and Accountability Framework**

*“Building a culture of quality and accountability across the ACT Alliance”*

**Version: May 2025, replaces the September 2021 version**

*The ACT QAF was originally approved by the ACT Alliance Governing Board on  
27 September 2011.*

*This is a live document, revisions are made after the approval of new policies by  
the Governing Board.*

**Accountability:** For ACT Alliance, accountability is the acknowledgment, communication and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies including administration, governance, implementation and consequences of the implementation of all activities the member is involved in. It involves the responsible use of power.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ACT Quality and Accountability Framework (QAF) summarises standards of quality towards which ACT and its members can be held to account by its stakeholders and by each other. It also includes the core ongoing commitments that ACT members make on becoming part of ACT Alliance and the additional requirements for ACT members receiving funding through ACT mechanisms for programmes and projects.

The ACT Global Strategy 2019-2026 outlines ACT's longer-term plan for strengthening quality, accountability, learning and impact of the work undertaken by ACT members, both individually and collectively. The annual work plan of the ACT secretariat includes all activities related to improvement and putting the framework into practice. The QAF is monitored and evaluated as part of that process. The QAF seeks to ensure that ACT Alliance maximises the quality and impact of its work in humanitarian disasters, long-term development work and advocacy. It also seeks to ensure that members have mechanisms in place that provide greater accountability to affected populations.

## 2. ALLIANCE ACCOUNTABILITY CHAIN

As a global alliance of over 150 church and church-related organisations present in over 120 countries, ACT has a complex accountability chain with a diverse and independent membership. Some ACT members are churches or departments of churches. Others are ecumenical organisations that have been established by a number of churches to do humanitarian and development work on their behalf. Some member organisations work primarily through partners and some implement programmes themselves. Amongst the ecumenical member organisations some are themselves networks or membership organisations that not only do work on behalf of their members but also play a key coordination role for their members. Within the Alliance, ACT members work individually and as part of national, sub-regional and regional ACT forums; some work together through an ACT Humanitarian Response Mechanism in response to a disaster, others plan and implement joint sustainable development projects together, while still others participate in formal ACT reference groups or communities of practice.

All ACT members are accountable to their own governance structures and are responsible to the ACT Alliance for meeting the obligations of their ACT membership. ACT members who fund or access funds through the ACT Humanitarian Response Mechanism have additional accountability responsibilities.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from “High Quality” section of ACT Founding Document, February 2009, pg. 14 and drawing from the CHS definition of accountability.

All ACT members share the same ethos and values. As an alliance, ACT seeks to ensure that the processes for accountability and varying roles and responsibility work together in a collaborative way and that the ACT accountability system works as a coherent whole. ACT works to ensure that an effective system for accountability instils a culture of accountability at all levels of the Alliance.

### 3. ACT STAKEHOLDERS

The Alliance has a wide range of stakeholders: ACT members and their partners, communities with whom ACT members work and the people ACT aims to support, donors, supporters and the public. It is important to distinguish the specific accountability and responsibilities held by the individual ACT members from those held by the Alliance. Within this context the Alliance understands itself to be fully accountable to i) ACT members; ii) ACT forums, iii) ACT secretariat and iv) ACT governance. At the community level, ACT strongly promotes accountability of its members towards communities with whom ACT members work and the people ACT aims to support.

### 4. VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

United in the common task of all Christians to manifest God's unconditional love for all women, men, girls and boys, ACT works towards a world community where all God's creation lives with dignity, justice, peace and full respect for human rights and the environment. ACT members work together for positive and sustainable change in the lives of people affected by poverty and injustice through coordinated and effective humanitarian, development, and advocacy work. With ACT's global reach, it is well placed to collectively contribute to progress in the main programmatic priorities of the Global Strategy 2019 to 2026.

- i. Climate Justice
- ii. Gender Justice
- iii. Peace and Human Security
- iv. Migration and displacement
- v. Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Response
- vi. Alliance Development
- vii. Effective Secretariat Operations

### 5. GOVERNANCE

The governance of the Alliance consists of a general assembly (all members), a governing board of 22 members, elected from the general assembly, and an executive committee of 7 or 8 members elected from and by the governing board. The governing board has the overall responsibility for the governance of the ACT Alliance between general assemblies and meets at least once a year. The executive committee supervises the implementation of policy and exercises responsibility for membership and financial decisions between meetings of the governing board and meets at least twice a year.

Each ACT member carries full responsibility for its work and is accountable to its governing board. At the global level, the ACT secretariat facilitates and coordinates the work of ACT members to realise the objectives and functions of the ACT Alliance. The ACT secretariat is accountable to the ACT governing board. ACT Reference Groups and communities of practice support the Alliance in the areas of humanitarian and development policy and practice, advocacy, quality and accountability, communications and fundraising, operating in line with ACT Alliance procedures. ACT forums coordinate work across members at the national, sub-regional and regional level (where such exist) and encourage implementation of good practice.

### 6. MANDATORY POLICIES, STANDARDS AND COMMITMENTS

The ACT Alliance “*Founding Document*”, February 2009, is the core document of the ACT Alliance. It outlines ACT’s vision, mission, objectives and member commitments. The document provides details of ACT membership criteria and obligations, the roles and responsibilities of the ACT secretariat, governing board and executive committee, among other issues. It is complemented by the ACT Alliance Statutes and By-Laws. Based on these documents, and the subsequent approval of new policies by the Governing Board, ACT Alliance has categorized its policies into three distinct sets:

The first set comprises **ACT Membership Policies**, which are mandatory for both current ACT Members and organisations seeking membership:

1. Code of Good Practice
2. Code of Conduct
3. Safeguarding Policy Framework
4. Gender Justice Policy
5. Complaints Policy

These policies are mandatory as follows:

- i. The ACT Code of Good Practice is directly mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT member organisation, with every member signing at the organisational level.
- ii. For the other four policies (Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy Framework, Gender Justice Policy, Complaints Policy), it is mandatory for ACT Alliance members to have a board-approved policy or code of conduct that is specifically adapted to their local cultural and programmatic context. These policies and codes of conduct represent the minimum standards that ACT Alliance expects all members to adhere to when developing, implementing, and monitoring them.

The second set of policies include **Programmatic/Operational Policies**, which apply to members receiving funding through ACT mechanisms for programmes and projects, ensuring these are aligned with ACT’s quality and accountability commitments.

The third set consists of **ACT Secretariat Policies related to members**, which guide the Secretariat’s engagement with members and define its role and responsibilities in supporting policy implementation.

In addition, seven international standards have been formally adopted or committed to by ACT governance. ACT Secretariat is certified in regard to the Core Humanitarian Standard. These standards are critical for ACT. Member organizations involved in humanitarian response must comply with the CHS.

The table on the following page provides a summary of these policies and standards, while the more detailed matrix that follows outlines the varying roles and responsibilities of ACT stakeholders in relation to the mandatory policies and international standards.

All policies noted in this document refer to the most recent approved policy or policy revision and can be found on the ACT website

<https://actalliance.org/about/standards-andpolicies/>

### ACT Membership Policies:

1. [ACT Code of Good Practice \(2024\)](#)
2. [ACT Code of Conduct \(2024\)](#)
3. [Safeguarding Policy Framework \(2024\)](#)
4. [Gender Justice Policy \(2025\)](#)
5. [Complaints Policy \(2021\)](#)

### Programmatic/Operational Policies (Members receiving funding through ACT mechanisms for programmes and projects must comply with the CHS):

1. [Humanitarian Policy \(2021\)](#)
2. [Humanitarian Protection Policy \(2010\)](#)
3. [Communities Data Safeguarding Policy \(2021\)](#)
4. [Social Media Policy \(2017\)](#)
5. [Branding Policy and Guidelines \(2020\)](#)
6. [Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy \(2009\)](#)

### ACT Secretariat Policies Related to Members:

1. [National, Sub-Regional and Regional Forums Policy \(2018\)](#)
2. [Communications Policy \(2020\)](#)
3. [Public Information Disclosure Policy \(2012\)](#)
4. [External Relations Policy \(2016\)](#)
5. [Membership Disciplinary Policy \(2011\)](#)

### Standards that ACT Alliance is Committed to:

1. [Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\)](#)
2. [The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#)
3. [The Sphere Standards](#)
4. [Principles of Partnership](#)
5. [Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS](#)
6. [Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness](#)
7. [SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#)

## ACT Membership Policies

### 1. ACT Code of Good Practice (2024)

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
Outlines the values, principles and commitments members make to shape the humanitarian, development and advocacy work of ACT members.	It is an organisational level commitment in which members/ observers continually improve and move toward best practice principles.  It complements the ACT Code of Conduct.	The code is mandatory and must be signed by the management of each ACT member organisation-  Signed codes must be submitted to the ACT secretariat.  Each ACT member is responsible to adhere and comply the code.	Implementation of the code is promoted by national and regional forums in all development, humanitarian and advocacy work.	The code values, principles and commitments are promoted by ACT secretariat staff at all ACT events, and in all ACT work, including ACT appeals.  ACT Secretariat may request documentation regarding code implementation from any ACT member.  Reports of breaches of the code are actively addressed by ACT's Complaint's Focal Point and the Complaints Handling Committee according to the Complaints Policy and reported to the ACT governance.	Revisions to the code are approved by ACT governance.  Receive the complaints and take necessary disciplinary action (if any) based on the ACT disciplinary procedures outlined in the ACT Complaints Policy and Disciplinary Procedures.

2. ACT Code of Conduct (2024)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
It outlines the key expectations on staff behaviour, in relation to the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices, and to safeguard children.	To respect the dignity and rights of the people with whom ACT works and to assist staff to better understand the obligations placed upon their conduct by providing detailed code of conduct.	<p>The ACT Code of Conduct or the ACT Member's own Code of Conduct, as approved,<sup>2</sup> must be signed by all ACT member staff, local, national, and international. This also applies to temporary personnel such as consultants, interns, observers, volunteers, and any other individuals working for or representing ACT member. It is a mandatory requirement for all staff of ACT members.</p> <p>The management of every ACT member organisation have a responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of this Code of Conduct, that they understand what it means in concrete behavioural terms and how it applies to their programme context.</p> <p>Each staff member has the responsibility to report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Staff breaches of the Code are actively addressed by the management of each ACT member organisation.</p>	Implementation of the code is promoted by national and regional forums in all development, humanitarian and advocacy work, and particularly in the humanitarian responses implemented through the ACT Humanitarian Response mechanism.	<p>The code must be signed by the staff of the ACT Secretariat. It is a mandatory requirement that also applies to temporary personnel such as consultants, interns, observers, volunteers, and any other individuals working for or representing ACT Secretariat.</p> <p>The management of the ACT Secretariat have a responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of this Code of Conduct, that they understand what it means in concrete behavioural terms and how it applies to their programme context.</p> <p>Each staff member has the responsibility to familiarize themselves and their dependents with the code and report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Breaches of the Code are actively addressed by ACT management.</p> <p>Any breach of the Code of Conduct is a form of misconduct, and if substantiated, will lead to disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment and/or legal action if required.</p>	<p>A complaints handling system is established and functioning to address breaches of the code.</p> <p>Revisions to the code are approved by ACT governance.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Some ACT member organisations have comprehensive codes of conduct that contain the principles of the ACT code and in some cases exceed the ACT commitments. In such cases, ACT members must share their code of conduct with the ACT secretariat and jointly discuss and agree on which document should be signed by its organisation's staff.

3. Safeguarding Policy Framework (2024)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
Provides a set of safeguarding commitments to adhere the key areas of prevention, reporting and response.	Provides ACT Alliance members with key safeguarding content and points of reference from which they can develop their own safeguarding policies and procedures.	<p>All ACT members are required to begin taking on Safeguarding responsibilities within their own organisations and have developed a specific Safeguarding Policy/Code of Conduct (or amended their existing Code of Conduct to include Safeguarding components).</p> <p>Members are expected to appoint a Safeguarding Focal Point or a position with designated safeguarding responsibilities within their organizations to ensure essential safeguarding elements are in place and critical requirements are carried out.</p> <p>ACT members with existing Safeguarding policies are encouraged to support other ACT members to develop them in line with guidance provided.</p>	ACT forums promote the spirit of the policy and actively share experience between members within a forum of how to develop and apply safeguarding policies and codes of conduct.	<p>The ACT Secretariat has a responsibility to ensure that the policy is reviewed and updated regularly.</p> <p>The ACT Secretariat promotes the policy and e-Course on Fabo ACT Learn (fabo.org) with members. Provides support for members implementing the policy by referencing the guidance document and linking them with other ACT members who have an existing Safeguarding Policy.</p>	Approves revisions to the policy and promotes the policy requirements with members in their regions.



#### 4. Gender Justice Policy (2025)

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
The Gender Justice principles cover the minimum standards ACT Alliance expects all members to comply with when developing a Gender Justice Policy.	The ACT Alliance affirms its commitment to advancing gender justice as a core faith-based imperative and strategic priority, promoting transformative change through all areas of work, partnerships, and advocacy.	<p>All ACT members are required to align with the Gender Justice Policy, integrating its principles into their internal policies, programming, and organizational culture, while upholding human rights and inclusive approaches.</p> <p>ACT Implementing members are to have in place a board-approved, gender justice policy) which is specific and relevant to their local cultural and programmatic context within three years of the adoption of the ACT Alliance Gender Justice Policy (applying to their entire staff, volunteers and all those who are given access to projects and communities).</p> <p>ACT Implementing member staff composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities).</p>	<p>ACT forums are encouraged to localize and implement the policy in contextually relevant ways, fostering shared learning, collaboration, and mutual accountability among members.</p> <p>ACT Forums composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities).</p>	<p>ACT Secretariat composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities).</p> <p>ACT Secretariat has an ethical responsibility and duty of care to report any breach of the Gender Justice Policy to Governance.</p> <p>The ACT Secretariat is responsible for facilitating policy implementation and monitoring across the Alliance, supporting members through capacity strengthening, tools, coordination, and monitoring frameworks. Monitoring and reporting tools will be developed to track progress, with annual updates submitted to the Governing Board.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to Policy.</p> <p>ACT governance structures, including the Governing Board, hold ultimate responsibility for policy oversight and strategic alignment, ensuring that gender justice remains integral to ACT's identity and operations.</p> <p>ACT Governance composition will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action (equal participation and opportunities).</p>

5. Complaints Policy (2021)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
Outlines the complaints handling system that is within the scope of the secretariat in Geneva and ACT governance. It outlines the principles and process of complaints handling.	<p>To strive for high quality and continuous improvement in ACT's humanitarian, development, and advocacy work.</p> <p>ACT Alliance aims to ensure that complaints are addressed fairly, appropriately, and in a timely manner.</p>	<p>This policy applies to all ACT members.</p> <p>Each member has a responsibility to handle and respond to the complaints it receives from its stakeholders and ensure that staff are familiar with the policy.</p> <p>ACT members are expected to explore and develop their own complaints mechanisms that are accessible to all women, men, boys, and girls with whom they work. In doing these members are expected to adopt the spirit and principles of the ACT Complaints Policy and related guidelines to ensure that all complaints are handled professionally and effectively.</p> <p>If ACT members do not have the capacity to address complaints related to abuse, exploitation, or gross misconduct they should have a safe referral system in place to address, at a minimum, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and fraud and corruption.</p> <p>ACT members are expected to inform communities of their rights and ACT programme-related entitlements and how to make a complaint.</p>	ACT forums promote the spirit of the ACT Complaints Policy and actively share experiences of initiating or improving a safe and functioning complaints mechanism.	<p>The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to handle and respond to complaints they receive.</p> <p>Any complaints received by the ACT secretariat about the staff or activities of an ACT member organisation are received by the Complaints Focal Point and then forwarded to the concerned organisation to handle and address while keeping the ACT secretariat informed.</p> <p>If the complaint is about the overall director of the organisation at the headquarters level, the complaint is referred to the relevant member organisational authority.</p> <p>Distils and shares learning experiences of the forums in initiating/improving complaints and accountability initiatives.</p>	<p>ACT governance has a responsibility to handle and respond to complaints they receive.</p> <p>Approves policy revisions and makes decisions on recommendations arising from investigations.</p> <p>Receives annual complaints report.</p>

**Programmatic/Operational Policies ACT (ACT members receiving funding through ACT mechanisms for programmes and projects must comply with the CHS):**

**1. Humanitarian Policy (2021)**

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
<p>Details the ACT humanitarian response and funding mechanisms supported by related procedures and guidance in the <a href="#">Humanitarian Operations Manual</a>. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of all ACT implementing members, forums and secretariat in relation to ACT appeals and financial obligations and commitments.</p> <p>ACT Alliance's humanitarian response uses the framework of the Core Humanitarian Standard to ensure quality and accountability.</p>	<p>To ensure an effective and efficient ACT emergency preparedness and humanitarian response.</p> <p>To ensure that the full ACT response – both inside and outside the ACT funding appeal - is visible within and outside the Alliance.</p> <p>To ensure responsible internal management and control systems are in place to allow effective appeal implementation and reporting.</p>	<p>This is a policy that applies to all ACT members who fund and/or access funds through the ACT Response Mechanism and those who implement responses to emergencies outside the ACT Response Mechanism. ACT members coordinate and support Local/National emergencies and complex emergencies. They work together to implement a humanitarian response as per standards of Sphere and CHS.</p> <p>It is mandatory for members to prepare the EPRP.</p> <p>They prepare the Alert, and response proposals endorsed by the Forum. They represent ACT in UN cluster coordination meetings.</p> <p>ACT members are required to co-brand on all emergency communication.</p>	<p>Forums must develop an emergency preparedness and response plan (EPRP) showing how members coordinate their responses and regularly review and update it when needed.</p> <p>Forums coordinate Local/National emergencies and complex emergencies. They support large-scale emergencies and facilitate humanitarian response in protracted crisis.</p> <p>ACT Forum convenes Forum meetings and appoints focal persons for communication, advocacy, and coordination including appeal task groups.</p> <p>They ensure member EPRP plans and forum EPRP are developed, communicated and implemented.</p>	<p>The secretariat promotes awareness of the policy, procedures and quality assurance and where possible strengthens capacity of members and forums.</p> <p>The secretariat plays a key role in the implementation of the procedures.</p> <p>The Head of Humanitarian Affairs ensures consistency in application of the policy and guidelines; and authorises exceptions in agreement with the Executive Director.</p> <p>ACT Secretariat facilitates Local/National emergencies and complex emergencies. They coordinate Large-Scale/Global emergencies and support humanitarian response in protracted crisis.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy.</p>

2. Humanitarian Protection Policy (2010)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
<p>Provides the definition, framework and 11 principles for community-based protection work of the ACT members, partners and forums.</p> <p>It highlights the relation of protection with other policy documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT Code of Conduct</li> <li>• ACT Code of Good Practice</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Gender Justice</li> <li>• Anti-Fraud and Corruption</li> </ul>	<p>To strengthen ACT Alliance's commitment to the protection of affected populations in humanitarian programmes.</p> <p>Help ACT members meet their responsibility to stop, prevent and mitigate human rights abuses by mainstreaming protection in a gender sensitive way throughout the project cycle and/or developing 'specialised' or 'standalone' protection activities.</p>	<p>This policy applies to all ACT members implementing humanitarian programmes.</p> <p>Members fully and equally respect the right and freedoms of all individuals without discrimination, including civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights.</p> <p>Effectively ensure the safety, dignity, and empowerment of crisis-affected populations in all the humanitarian programmes. Acknowledge that a key ingredient for good protection work is full and equal participation of women and men in decision making.</p> <p>Carefully consider the implications of their activities on the safety and dignity of communities.</p>	<p>ACT Forums promote the spirit of the policy and share experiences among forum members.</p>	<p>The ACT Secretariat has a shared responsibility with members and forums for protection of affected populations; and corresponding duty to ensure the safety, dignity, and empowerment of crisis-affected populations in humanitarian programmes.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy.</p>

3. Community Data Safeguarding Policy (2021)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
<p>The ACT Alliance believes that no harm should be created to the communities through the storage, use and transmission of their personal data.</p> <p>It is important to build trust and confidence between ACT members and project participants. Participants should know why data relevant to them is collected by the respective member organisation, how their data will be used, shared, stored, archived, and destroyed.</p>	<p>ACT Alliance is committed to being transparent in its work and in upholding the highest professional, ethical and moral standards of accountability.</p> <p>A key dimension is addressing the safeguarding of data drawn from programme participants, especially the 'communities' to whom ACT serves through its members.</p>	<p>This policy applies to all data held by ACT members during a humanitarian response implemented through the ACT Response Mechanism.</p> <p>All personal information collected from the rights holders should be treated as confidential (especially those related to protection, reported violations, complaints of abuse or exploitation and gender-based violence). ACT members are required to comply with this policy at a minimum until they have developed their own policy of a commensurate standard to replace it.</p> <p>Members should put in place systems to mitigate the risk of data loss or other data breach. In case of data loss or data breach, all possible efforts should be made to ensure data recovery and to re-establish data security.</p>	<p>ACT Forums promote the spirit of the policy and share experiences among forum members.</p>	<p>The ACT Secretariat has a shared responsibility with members and forums to ensure all data held by ACT members and the Secretariat is safeguarded.</p> <p>The ACT secretariat will not collect any personal data gathered by members from project participants.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy.</p>

4. Social Media Policy (2017)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
<p>Outlines the importance of enabling the empowerment of its local, national, regional and local structures in order to give them visibility and engage people in humanitarian, development, advocacy issues relevant to their contexts under the ACT Alliance brand.</p> <p>Details the requirements for safeguarding, security, and the creation and management of ACT social media accounts.</p>	<p>ACT supports and encourages appropriate social media engagement to further its mission, goals, relationships, global recognition and reach.</p> <p>Social Media engagement will comply with ACT's policies and practices on Communications, Safeguarding, Information Disclosure, Code of Conduct, Code of Good Practice, copyright, privacy, confidentiality.</p>	<p>ACT Members are asked to adopt and comply with the policy (control the message, be security-minded, be transparent and truthful, respect the rights and dignity of persons).</p>	<p>ACT Forums are asked to adopt and comply with the policy (control the message, be security minded, be transparent and truthful, respect the rights and dignity of persons).</p> <p>ACT Forums must follow the procedure outlined in the policy to open social media accounts on behalf of the forums.</p>	<p>ACT Secretariat is asked to adopt and comply with the policy ACT Secretariat manages and facilitates ACT social media presence on several platforms and may expand or contract its presence as it deems necessary.</p> <p>ACT Secretariat ensures compliance with the policy.</p> <p>ACT Secretariat coordinates and receives application of groups interested in establishing new ACT social media accounts.</p>	<p>ACT Governance approves revisions to the policy.</p>

5. Branding Policy and Guidelines (2020)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
<p>Outlines ACT brand values and requirements, as well as the functional benefits and provides a practical guide to co-branding.</p>	<p>To seek all opportunities to act and speak as one, especially in advocacy, media and visibility.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all ACT implementing members. One of the obligations of membership is to agree to co-brand publications and signage according to the co-branding policy and guidelines.</p>	<p>The forum promotes the co-branding policy and complies with its requirements.</p>	<p>The secretariat promotes awareness of the policy, monitors adherence and where possible builds capacity of members to co-brand.</p>	<p>Approves revisions to the policy.</p>

6. Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (2009)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT secretariat	ACT governance
Defines ACT stance against fraud and corruption and key commitments.	<p>To ensure that financial and other resources are used solely for the intended purposes and to promote a culture of honesty, transparency, stewardship and openness among the staff and management of ACT.</p> <p>To ensure that vulnerable populations are not disadvantaged or exploited by staff members or their associates who commit fraudulent and corrupt acts.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all ACT Alliance member organisations which access funds through ACT funding mechanisms.</p> <p>It applies to all ACT employees (full time, part time, temporary and casual), ACT members, and to non-ACT implementing partners who access funds from ACT members through ACT funding mechanisms.</p> <p>The policy covers financial misconduct, including criminal acts such as theft of cash and false accounting thereof; abuse of resources which belong to ACT and those provided by, or purchased using funds raised by the ACT Alliance members and other non-ACT donors in response to an ACT appeal, among others.</p>	Forums are aware of the policy and promote compliance across its membership.	This is a mandatory policy for all staff at the ACT Secretariat.	<p>The ACT governing bodies shall not tolerate the fraudulent and corrupt use of funds and resources by ACT staff, members, or by the external implementing partners of ACT members.</p> <p>It shall ensure that mechanisms are in place to minimise the chances of occurrence of fraud and corruption within the ACT secretariat as well as within the ACT Alliance member organisations accessing funds from ACT appeals.</p>

**ACT Secretariat Policies Related to Members:**

**1. National, Sub-Regional and Regional Forums Policy (2018)**

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
<p>Defines and directs the work of ACT forums and provides guidance to help strengthen forums.</p> <p>Though forums have different contexts, their structure and systems are expected to be based on the principles detailed in this document</p>	<p>To increase the effectiveness and impact of the humanitarian response, advocacy and sustainable development cooperation work being undertaken by members through improved coordination and setting some minimum standards.</p>	<p>This is a mandatory policy for all members and participation in forums is compulsory. Observer members are also able to participate in the appropriate forums.</p> <p>On joining ACT, a member commits to actively establish (where needed) and participate in national and regional forums and to work with and strengthen other ACT members.</p> <p>Members are expected to attend forum meetings during the year and respect the guiding principles of the forum in which they are based</p>	<p>Forums are engaged in working together in a particular country, subregion, or region.</p> <p>ACT Forums must have a Memorandum of Understanding and submit annual reports.</p> <p>ACT Forums must submit their forum emergency preparedness and response planning (EPRP), and organise and coordinate</p>	<p>The secretariat facilitates awareness raising of the policy among members and forums and ensures that all forum MoUs, annual reports and EPRPs are in line with principles.</p> <p>The Secretariat supports and strengthens initiatives towards increasing accountability and relationship between the regions and their representatives in the governance. They give Forums visibility through the ACT website by promoting joint work.</p>	<p>Approves policy revisions.</p> <p>Supports the work of forums and promotes their coordination efforts.</p>



## 2. Communications Policy (2020)

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
<p>Outlines the principles underpinning, and purposes of, ACT communications to both internal and external audiences. It also gives specific guidance on processes for information/material collation, approval and use across different media to ensure and increase its visibility and credibility across its audiences.</p>	<p>To give visibility to the work of the alliance and global matters of injustice.</p> <p>To help achieve consistency across the Alliance in its supportive work towards ACT's strategic vision.</p>	<p>Members have a responsibility to be sources of information for alliance-wide use, and to use media to gain publicity for ACT and its work nationally and regionally.</p> <p>However, no individual should claim to post on ACT's behalf unless they are within ACT's agreed secretariat control.</p> <p>ACT members have a responsibility to cobrand, including both the logo and information about the Alliance.</p> <p>ACT members have a responsibility to gather and share communications materials ethically and in line with safeguarding, privacy and data protection policies and regulations.</p>	<p>Each forum is encouraged to identify a forum media officer who acts as a central contact point between the forums and the secretariat.</p> <p>Forums that set up their own websites must adhere to the ACT communications, social media, and branding policies.</p>	<p>The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to steer communication towards achieving specific results, support members in their communication efforts, and enhance the ability of the secretariat to fundraise.</p> <p>The secretariat encourages members to co-brand.</p> <p>The ACT secretariat Director of Communications has editorial accountability for all ACT productions such as website content, press releases, leaflets brochures and reports.</p>	<p>The General Secretary gives the final sign-off on controversial material.</p> <p>The ACT governing board approves policy revisions.</p>

### 3. Public Information Disclosure Policy (2012)

Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
Outlines how and what information concerning ACT's structures, policies and activities is available to its stakeholders. It is related to all information held by the ACT Alliance secretariat.	To provide an opportunity for the recipients or consumers of ACT information to hold ACT accountable.	Each member has a responsibility to ensure that ACT stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about the organisation and its activities.  ACT members are encouraged to make this information available in languages and media accessible to the people with whom they work.	Forums are aware of ACT information disclosure policy and support the secretariat by providing timely and accurate information related to ACT activities.	The ACT secretariat has a responsibility to make available high-quality information and documentation for public consumption, as outlined in the policy.  The general secretary is responsible for making decisions on specific information requests from the public in between governance meetings.	The ACT governing board is responsible for making decisions on ACT's open information boundaries and for approving and ratifying any policy decisions in relation to this policy. The ACT executive committee is responsible for supervising the implementation of this policy in cooperation with the ACT general secretary.

4. External Relations Policy (2016)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
This policy guides all ACT external relationships in order to enable the alliance to work closely with other national, regional and international ecumenical, inter-faith and civil society organisations that share similar objectives.	To elaborate on the rationale and justification for each relationship that ACT Alliance will pursue with external entities; To determine the requisite external relationships for attaining the vision and mission of the Alliance; To outline key external bodies with which ACT Alliance will deliberately seek to relate; To establish principles, and processes that will guide ACT Alliance's relationships with external entities; To provide guidelines for governance, members, secretariat staff, and partners who would represent ACT Alliance in external structures ; To anticipate and mitigate risks that may arise from ACT's members' and forums' relationships with external entities.	ACT members are encouraged to engage with a wide spectrum of stakeholders (other faith-based actors, non-governmental organisations and networks, governments and intergovernmental institutions, United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, international finance institutions, private sector entities) while respecting the vision and mission of ACT Alliance including the implementation of a long-term strategic direction.	ACT Forums are encouraged to engage with a wide spectrum of stakeholders (other faith based actors, non-governmental organisations and networks, governments and intergovernmental institutions, United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, international finance institutions, private sector entities) while respecting the vision and mission of ACT Alliance including the implementation of a long term strategic direction.	<p>ACT Secretariat provides guidelines (Terms of reference (ToR)) and appoint a focal point representative member for any particular external relationship.</p> <p>For external relationships, ACT Secretariat develops an explanatory note which explain the objectives of the relationship (terms of reference of the relationship, timeframes, memorandum of understanding (if needed)).</p> <p>The ACT Alliance co-branding could be applicable if ACT Alliance engages in activities with external partners.</p> <p>The ACT Secretariat reviews the explanatory note and makes recommendations to the General Secretary for final approval or referral to governance (advisory groups created if necessary).</p>	Approves revisions to policy.

5. Membership Disciplinary Policy (2011)					
Accountability mechanism	ACT policy commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT Governance
Outlines procedures for disciplinary measures against ACT members who have breached an ACT code or policy leading to possible censure, suspension of privileges, restoration and exclusion.	To strive for high quality and continuous improvement in ACT's humanitarian, development and advocacy work.	Membership of ACT comes with a commitment to adhere to ACT codes and policies. This policy applies to all members and keeps members informed of the procedures and actions they may face if agreed commitments are not met.	ACT forums promote adherence to ACT codes and policies.	The ACT secretariat, in cooperation with the Membership and Nominations Committee has a responsibility to ensure that the policy is updated regularly and that recommended membership disciplinary measures are in line with the approved policy.	Approves revisions to the policy.  ACT governance takes membership disciplinary decisions based on the advice and recommendations from the Membership and Nominations committee (MNC) and ensures that these decisions are in line with the approved policy.

**Standards that ACT Alliance is Committed to:**

**1. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)**

<b>Accountability Mechanism</b>	<b>ACT Policy Commitment</b>	<b>ACT members</b>	<b>ACT forums</b>	<b>ACT Secretariat</b>	<b>ACT governance</b>
Defines an international standard on quality and accountability of humanitarian action to communities and people affected by crises and provides nine commitments to assess, improve and recognise achievement of requirements.	To promote improved quality and accountability to communities and people affected by humanitarian crises.	<p>Each ACT member has a responsibility to address quality and accountability in their work. Some ACT members are also CHS Alliance members and are at different stages in the process of self-assessment, external verification and certification.</p> <p>All ACT members are required to adhere to, apply and implement the Core Humanitarian Standard in their humanitarian work, to adhere to the CHS in their development and advocacy work and to support other ACT members to improve their own implementation of the nine CHS commitments.</p>	The forum promotes the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability to help ACT member organisations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises to design, implement, assess and improve their programmes in the areas of quality and accountability.	<p>As a member of the CHS Alliance, the ACT secretariat is committed to meeting the highest standards of quality, accountability and people management and promoting it across the Alliance.</p> <p>The CHS commitments are mandatory for the ACT Secretariat and must be addressed in all its work in relation to the Alliance.</p>	Approves ACT membership of CHS Alliance and ACT's engagement in any external verification or certification process.

## 2. The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief

Provides principles which all NGOs should adhere to in their disaster response work and describes the relationships agencies working in disasters should seek with donor governments, host governments and the UN system.	To judge the conduct of ACT programmes on the ground using the principles as a yardstick.	All ACT members are committed to understanding and adhering to this code as it holds principles that apply to both humanitarian and development work.  All ACT members sign a section in the ACT membership application form stating that they commit to adhere to the code and thus must comply.	Forums promote the code in ACT's work and highlight the fact that disaster-affected communities have a right to expect those who seek to assist them to measure up to these standards.	The ACT secretariat promotes the code as part of ACT's way of working and ensures that the approach and actions related to ACT Appeals are in line with the principles.	ACT governance formally adopts the code and/or any possible revisions by SCHR, as an ACT code.
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## 3. The Sphere Standards: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

Accountability Mechanism	ACT Policy Commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT governance
Reflects the commitment to a principled and rights-based response. Provides minimum standards in key lifesaving sectors such as: Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (WASH); Food Security and Nutrition; Shelter and Settlement; and Health.	To improve the quality of humanitarian response in situations of disaster and conflict, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system to disaster-affected people.	All ACT members sign a section in the ACT membership application form stating that they commit to the Sphere Standards. Though it is a voluntary standard, all members should aspire to these internationally accepted standards and/or justify why they cannot meet the standards.	Forums promote the standards, provide or identify opportunities for training, and ensure that ACT appeals meet these minimum standards where possible.	The ACT secretariat promotes the standards as part of ACT's way of working and ensures that the approach and actions related to ACT appeals are in line with the standards.	ACT governance formally adopts the standards as ACT standards.

4. Principles of Partnership					
Accountability Mechanism	ACT Policy Commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT governance
Provides five principles on which NGOs and the UN should base their partnership approaches.	To build and nurture an effective partnership. To acknowledge diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognising the interdependence among humanitarian organisations.	All ACT members have a responsibility to base their partnership approaches on the five principles of equality, transparency, results-orientated approach, responsibility and complementarity.	Forums adopt the principles of good partnerships in their work approaches.	The ACT secretariat promotes and adopts the principles of partnership in its work with members and promotes their adoption as a way of working across ACT member partnerships.	Principles endorsed by the governing board and put into practice in their ways of working.

5. Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS					
Accountability Mechanism	ACT Policy Commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT governance
Outlines guiding principles which apply a human rights approach to the range of HIV-specific health, development and humanitarian work undertaken by NGOs responding to HIV.	To involve people living with HIV and affected communities in responding to HIV and acknowledge that the experience of individuals and communities is an essential ingredient in effective community response to the challenges of HIV.	<p>ACT members who work on HIV-related initiatives have a responsibility to adopt and implement the principles outlined in the code. The code provides a common framework and good practice principles applicable to all NGOs engaged in responding to HIV.</p> <p>The code includes key resources such as tool kits and manuals that can assist in putting the principles into practice that can be used and/or adapted by ACT members.</p>	The forum promotes the code and its related principles in relation to ACT's HIV work.	The secretariat signs the code on behalf of the alliance and promotes the code and its related principles in relation to ACT's HIV work.	ACT governance endorses the code and any revisions thereof.

6. Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness					
Accountability Mechanism	ACT Policy Commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT governance
The eight Istanbul principles for CSO Development Effectiveness are a set of mutually shared values guiding the development work of civil society organizations worldwide. ACT was part of the processes that led to the creation of these principles.	Commits to:  Respect and promotion of human rights and social justice.  Gender equality and women empowerment.  People's empowerment, ownership, and participation; environmental sustainability; transparency and accountability; equitable partnership etc.	Each member has a responsibility to ensure these principles are reflected in their sustainable development cooperation work.	The forum promotes and supports members in their efforts to implement the eight principles in their work and provides a platform for their reflection at national level for continuous improvement.	The ACT secretariat actively promotes the principles in the development work of members and forums.	Adopts the principles and reflects on any revisions thereof.



7. SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme					
Accountability Mechanism	ACT Policy Commitment	ACT members	ACT forums	ACT Secretariat	ACT governance
<p>The purpose of this scheme is to establish a minimum standard for humanitarian, development, and other civil society organizations to share information as part of their recruitment process about people who have been found to have committed “Misconduct” meaning sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, during employment.</p> <p>The Scheme is intended to be consistent with and support implementation of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS).</p>	<p>To ensure the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) within the aid sector.</p>	<p>Members build their understanding about the SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme and are encouraged to sign-up.</p>	<p>The forums support the discussion among members to understand the SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.</p> <p>Communicate the questions/possible challenges foreseen in implementation of scheme to the ACT Secretariat.</p>	<p>Implement the SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme at ACT Secretariat-level as part of recruitment for staff &amp; long-term consultants.</p> <p>HR ask for misconduct statement from former employers of the candidates seeking employment with ACT Secretariat.</p> <p>Secretariats facilitate discussions with ACT Quality &amp; Accountability Reference Group and Safeguarding Communities of Practice to plan the roll-out of Scheme at membership level.</p>	<p>ACT governance endorses the subscription to SCHR Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.</p>