

Learning Review
ACT's CHS Self-Assessment Pilot Project



FINAL REPORT
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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this Learning Review are solely those of the consultant team and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the ACT Alliance or its members.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Learning Review was to assess the ACT Alliance's **CHS Self-Assessment Support Pilot Project's** relevance, effectiveness and impact and to capture lessons to inform the Alliance's broader quality assurance and due diligence work.

The pilot project demonstrated clear value in strengthening members' organisational capacity and embedding accountability commitments. For many participants, this was the first structured engagement with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). The process enabled organisations to identify gaps, develop multi-year improvement plans, and revise or introduce key policies such as safeguarding, PSEAH and community feedback mechanisms. Staff reported increased confidence and ownership and in several cases the pilot contributed directly to enhanced credibility with donors and communities.

The review also identified significant institutional outcomes. The process catalysed organisational change, including updates to codes of conduct and standard operating procedures and promoted greater cross-departmental collaboration. The emphasis on peer-to-peer learning further reinforced ACT Alliance's localisation agenda, creating solidarity and mentoring opportunities among members. At the same time, the review surfaced important challenges in the pilot project. The self-assessment process was resource-intensive and technically demanding, especially for smaller organisations with limited staff capacity. The CHS Alliance tools and platform were often too complex, available only in English and not fully accessible for resource-constrained contexts. Questions of objectivity in self-assessment, sustainability of improvement plans, and risks of over-burdening members were also highlighted.

The review places particular emphasis on the issue of due diligence across the ACT Alliance. At present, the Alliance lacks a consistent and trusted approach, with members frequently subject to multiple, duplicative assessments. This creates inefficiency, reduces trust, and diverts resources from programming. There is broad consensus among members, both national and international, that a harmonised framework is required.

The proposed **due diligence passporting model**, grounded in the CHS, offers a practical and forward-looking solution. It would establish a set of minimum requirements ("red lines"), enable entry through multiple recognised due diligence processes and introduce a tiered system linked to proportional funding access. Importantly, the model embeds capacity strengthening as an integral component, ensuring that due diligence is not only about compliance but also about organisational development. Members across the Alliance indicate support for this direction, recognising its potential to reduce duplication, increase transparency and accountability and reinforce commitments to localisation. With careful attention to inclusivity, resourcing, and proportionality, the model provides a strong basis for building a more coherent, trusted and sustainable due diligence system for the ACT Alliance.

Introduction

ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) is the world’s largest global network of Protestant and Orthodox churches, along with related faith-based organisations, working in humanitarian aid, development and advocacy. ACT Alliance was created in January 2010, bringing together the World Council of Churches’ ACT International (a humanitarian alliance since 1995) and ACT Development (a development alliance created in 2007). It unites over 145 member organisations operating in 127 countries, mobilising around 30,000 staff and volunteers and raising over US\$2 billion annually.

The ACT Alliance Secretariat (Secretariat) is a registered Association in Switzerland with offices in Nairobi, Bangkok, Bogotá and Amman. It also has staff based in Toronto and New York.

Its mission is to achieve positive, sustainable change for impoverished and marginalised individuals, regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality. The current ACT Alliance Global Strategy, Hope in Action – Putting People First 2019-2026, sets the direction for the Alliance in response to the global societal, economic and political environment. Its core values are grounded in Christian faith; principles that shape ACT’s work:

- Human dignity for all.
- Jubilee care for creation.
- Stewardship of resources.
- Justice for the poor and oppressed.

Purpose and Scope of the Learning Review

The aim of this consultancy was to conduct an independent learning review of ACT Alliance’s CHS Self-Assessment Support Pilot Project (2023–2024), evaluating its relevance, effectiveness and impact, and capturing key lessons learned. The review identifies opportunities for integration with ACT Alliance’s broader quality assurance and due diligence efforts and can inform decisions to scale the initiative and align with ACT Alliance’s strategic objectives and good practice across the sector.

The consultancy objectives were:

Project Review

Assess the relevance, effectiveness and value of the pilot in strengthening members’ capacity to apply Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) principles and identify their capacity development needs.

Evaluate the design and delivery of the pilot, identifying strengths, limitations, good practices and lessons learned, particularly in the context of remote capacity strengthening approaches.

Strategic Recommendations

Provide practical recommendations to inform future support mechanisms and strategic investments in locally led capacity strengthening across the ACT Alliance.

Assess and recommend how CHS verification and the due diligence passporting tool can be aligned to develop a scaled-up, practical, streamlined and cohesive quality assurance framework for ACT Alliance; how international members can enhance their support to local and national members in terms of quality and accountability.

Methodology and Data Collection Tools

The consulting team applied a cohesive and empirically valid approach to data analysis and verification, combining data triangulation with qualitative methods. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data in a balanced manner, this approach provided a rigorous triangulation mechanism that underpinned evidence-based findings and recommendations.

To gather comprehensive and reliable data, the consulting team employed a range of interrelated methods and tools, including:

Desk Review

The consultant team reviewed internal and external documentation of the ACT Alliance and the Pilots, which included:

- Documentation related to the pilot.
- Organisational documents of participating members, e.g. Strategic Plans, key policies, organigrams, etc.
- Relevant strategic documents of the Secretariat with regard to quality assurance and due diligence policies, procedures and processes.

Key Informant Interviews

The team conducted key informant interviews to gather qualitative information.

Following a semi-structured interview format, the team conducted interviews with people from the following groups involved in the pilot project:

	Number of People
ACT Alliance Secretariat	8
Members who participated in the pilot	20
International members of the ACT Alliance	12
National members who did not participate in the pilot	13
External Stakeholders	5
Total	58

The consultant team used a semi-structured interview tool, a form of interviewing in which a limited number of guiding questions and themes are pre-determined.

Details on the people interviewed are provided in [Annex 4](#) and the questionnaires in [Annex 8](#).

Online Surveys

The consultants developed and distributed four separate surveys; each tailored to the specific group and their role in the pilot project. The objective was to capture the diverse interests and perspectives of key stakeholders engaged in the pilot, ranging from strategic oversight to direct service delivery and community experience.

The four surveys are as follows:

	Number Surveys Completed
ACT Alliance Secretariat	12

Members who participated in the pilot	13
International members of the ACT Alliance	9
National members who did not participate in the Pilot	24
Total	58

Details of the organisations that completed the survey are provided in [Annex 6](#) and the questionnaires in [Annex 7](#).

Focus group discussions

The consultancy team conducted focus group discussions as a qualitative information-gathering tool.

Details of the organisations that participated in the FGD are provided in [Annex 5](#) and the questionnaires in [Annex 8](#).

Learning Review Questions

The following questions, included in the Terms of Reference, were addressed in the Learning Review.

Pilot Project Effectiveness

- What were the key outcomes and achievements?
- How was the pilot perceived by participating members?
- What needs were identified, and what should follow-up support look like?
- What worked well and what could be improved in the pilot's design and implementation?
- How effective was the ACT Alliance Secretariat's support, and what other support do members expect in similar initiatives?
- How inclusive and accessible was the process, particularly for smaller and resource-constrained members?

Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

- What is ACT Alliance Secretariat currently doing in terms of due-diligence, and how it can improve its approach to strengthen locally led quality response?
- How can CHS verification and due diligence passporting tool be integrated effectively within the work of the ACT Alliance Secretariat?
- What are the risks and benefits of aligning CHS verification with due diligence from the perspective of ACT members (both local and international) and the secretariat?
- What resources are required for a comprehensive due-diligence approach across the Alliance?
- How can international members contribute (technically and financially) to local members' capacity strengthening?

Part 1: Findings Of the Learning Review

1.1. Pilot Project Effectiveness

1.1.1. Key outcomes and achievements

The following outcomes and achievements have been identified in the pilot project:

Strengthened Capacity and Awareness

The pilot project significantly expanded organisational understanding and application of the CHS. For many members, this was the first time engaging in a structured self-assessment¹, which provided a concrete framework to evaluate policies, systems and practices against internationally recognised standards. The process helped to embed the principles of accountability into day-to-day work, creating a stronger culture of learning and reflection.

Key achievements included:

- *Development of multi-year improvement plans* that extended beyond immediate project cycles. These plans served as roadmaps for institutional change, setting out actions across safeguarding, human resources, community feedback and programme management.
- Many organisations *revised or introduced safeguarding and protection-from-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse (PSEAH) policies*, reflecting a growing prioritisation of staff and community safety.
- *Feedback and complaints mechanisms* were established or improved, enabling communities to exercise their right to raise concerns and influence programme delivery.

Equally important was the increase in staff knowledge and confidence in humanitarian quality standards. Staff who had previously had little exposure to the CHS reported feeling better equipped to integrate its principles into programme design and monitoring. The process also encouraged cross-departmental collaboration, bringing together staff from various departments, including programmes, human resources, finance and administration, to collectively reflect on accountability commitments.

Enhanced Credibility and Trust

One of the most tangible outcomes of the pilot was the strengthening of trust between members, donors and communities. By demonstrating alignment with the CHS commitments, organisations were able to present themselves as more transparent, credible and accountable actors within the humanitarian and development space.

Funding members recognised the pilot as a cost-effective way of improving quality and accountability while reducing duplication in due diligence processes: this led to enhanced funding members confidence in national members and strengthened their positioning for future funding opportunities.

In several cases, self-assessment results were used to support applications to funding mechanisms, with positive feedback from external partners.

At the community level, the self-assessment process raised awareness of communities' rights and entitlements. Communities became more aware of the existence of feedback and complaint systems and were increasingly willing to use them. This not only improved accountability but also deepened trust between communities and member organisations, reinforcing the legitimacy of programmes in the eyes of those they were intended to serve.

¹ ACT Secretariat organized a global webinar for members followed by regional level check-in sessions (considering language and time zone). Members were asked to submit Expressions of Interest and proposals which went through an evaluation process for selecting the members for pilot.

Institutional Change and Ownership

The pilot contributed to substantive institutional change. All participants in the pilot formally joined the CHS Alliance as a result of the project, signalling long-term commitment to accountability. The act of joining was not only symbolic but also an indication of willingness to be held to account by an external body.

Organisations also developed or revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that accountability and safeguarding commitments were embedded into routine operations. In some cases, codes of conduct were updated and made mandatory for all staff and partners. These measures fostered greater organisational coherence, ensuring that accountability was no longer treated as an isolated activity but integrated across functions. Additionally, some participants reported that this process also improved coordination between different departments, such as programmes, finance and human resources.

The process acted as a catalyst for cultural change. Some members described the experience as an 'awakening' that revealed gaps previously overlooked, and motivated leadership to prioritise accountability. Importantly, ownership of the process rested with national staff rather than external consultants, fostering sustainability and building internal confidence in managing complex assessment processes.

Peer Learning and Localisation

In addition to the strong and effective collaboration among the CHS Alliance, ACT Alliance Secretariat and ACT Alliance members, peer-to-peer learning emerged as one of the pilot's defining achievements. The collective approach to self-assessment in some regions reduced costs and allowed members to share expertise and problem-solve together. Learning workshops and regional exchanges created spaces for honest reflection, where challenges could be openly discussed and successes shared. Some members of the pilot also shared their experiences and learnings at ACT Forums.

This emphasis on solidarity reinforces the ACT Alliance's localisation agenda by strengthening the leadership role of national members. Smaller organisations reported feeling more empowered through this collaborative, peer-based model, which balances relationships between national, international members and the Secretariat. The peer learning environment also created mentoring opportunities, with more experienced organisations supporting those undertaking the process for the first time. Collaborative learning opportunities reinforced mutual trust and solidarity within the Alliance.

1.1.2. Key Challenges

While the pilot achieved notable outcomes, it also surfaced challenges that will shape future scaling:

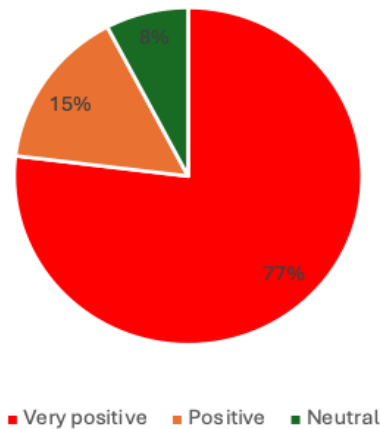
- **Resource intensity:** The process was time-consuming, often lasting several months, and required pulling staff from multiple departments. Smaller organisations without dedicated accountability staff found this particularly demanding.
- **Training gaps:** Members highlighted the lack of detailed training on how to conduct self-assessments and interpret verification guidance. Introductory sessions on the CHS were felt by some to be insufficient to prepare staff for the technical requirements of the process.
- **Language and accessibility barriers:** Tools were often complex and required translation. The need for adaptations to ensure inclusivity of people with disabilities, such as simplified language, audio formats, or sign language interpretation, was emphasised by some.
- **Sustainability risks:** Improvement plans were extensive, sometimes containing over a hundred indicators, which created concerns about staff and financial capacity to implement them fully. High staff turnover, with many on short-term contracts, further undermined sustainability.
- **Funding linkages:** While linking CHS self-assessment results to pooled fund eligibility could incentivise uptake, concerns were raised that this might disproportionately burden smaller members.

- **Objectivity of results:** Interviews explain the risk of objectivity in the self-assessment processes. While participants valued self-assessment as a tool for internal reflection and organisational learning, several stakeholders acknowledged inherent limitations in its objectivity and credibility. The key concerns are
 - **Inherent Bias:** Organisations assessing themselves are subject to bias, which can affect the accuracy and reliability of findings
 - **Credibility Gap:** Some members questioned whether self-reported scores and findings would be accepted by donors and partners without independent verification

1.1.3. Perceptions of the Pilot

Members who participated in the pilot perceived the CHS self-assessment as a useful tool for internal learning and improvement, rather than just for compliance. As the following graphs indicate, most participants consider their experience to have been very positive.

Rate your overall experience with the pilot



Members identified a range of impressions, but also acknowledged certain challenges or areas for improvement, as follows:

Positive Perceptions

The pilot was perceived as a valuable process for institutional learning and growth. It was seen as a significant learning experience that helped staff understand their organisational strengths and weaknesses. It also allowed them to reflect collectively and fostered a sense of shared responsibility for improving quality and accountability. The self-assessment was viewed as a useful tool for internal learning and improvement, rather than just for compliance purposes.

Some key points in relation to this positive perception were:

- **Actionable Improvement Plans:** The process helped them to identify gaps and specific areas for improvement, often resulting in detailed and time-bound improvement plans that served as clear roadmaps.
- **Alignment with International Standards:** The self-assessment enabled them to align their practices with international standards, thereby enhancing their credibility and professionalism.
- **Increased Visibility:** For some, the evaluation helped strengthen their visibility and integration within the humanitarian community, showcasing their commitment to accountability and potentially opening doors for new partnerships.

- **Practical Methodology:** The pilot provided a structured methodology to organise information and verify policies, practices and programme quality. It also emphasised the development of new, policies, and guidance to meet standards rather than merely fulfilling funding requirements.
- **Engaging Staff and Communities:** The pilot involved discussions with staff and community members, helping staff understand their role in upholding standards and empowering communities to provide feedback.
- **Contextualised Application:** The self-assessment allowed organisations to consider their unique characteristics and values, such as a faith-based approach, and integrate these principles into their work while still meeting international standards.

Limitations and Concerns

Despite the positive feedback, participating members also noted several limitations and concerns.

- **Contextual Constraints:** The self-assessment does not fully account for an organisation's specific context. For example, some organisations state that the questionnaire does not fit their types of programmes, such as migration programmes.
- **Practical Use of Scores:** Some members questioned how the self-assessment scores would be used in practice and how the results would translate into responsibilities toward communities.
- **Implementation vs. Policy:** A key observation was that simply having policies in place, which is often the focus of due diligence, does not guarantee that they are being applied. Participants noted that both self-assessment and external assessments may not be fully representative or accurate, and existing policies may not be implemented effectively.

1.1.4. The main needs identified

The organisations found during this process that the main needs were:

Capacity Building and Training

The organisations involved in the pilot project recognised the need to improve staff training and capacity. This is critical for ensuring that staff members not only understand the principles of the CHS but also have the practical skills to apply them effectively. The organisations also see this as a way to raise awareness among the communities they serve.

The staff members want to improve in:

- *Understanding their roles:* Ensure staff are aware of and understand their specific responsibilities in upholding the CHS principles.
- *Strengthening technical skills:* Improve technical skills and abilities needed to meet humanitarian standards.
- *Building their awareness:* Educate community members and people affected by crisis about their rights and their roles in humanitarian work.

Policy, Procedures and Systems Improvement

During the pilot project, participating organisations identified significant weaknesses in their internal policies, procedures and systems.

Specifically, they noted the following:

- *Internal Policies and guidance:* Organisations recognised the necessity of reviewing, updating, and creating new policies and guidance to better align with international standards.

- *Implementation of Policies:* Participants emphasised that merely having policies in place does not guarantee their effective application. They indicated that weaknesses were not only due to a lack of documentation but also to the lack of guidance or procedures for their implementation.

They stated that the main areas for improvement regarding policies and systems are:

- *Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):* Ensuring clear and robust policies are in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- *Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms:* Creating or improving systems that allow communities and individuals to provide feedback and raise complaints effectively and safely.
- *Partnerships:* Developing policies that guide collaborative efforts with other organisations, ensuring due diligence is conducted while partnerships are equitable and effective.
- *Improve Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms:* to more effectively track improvement plans and ensure the quality of programme delivery. This includes:
 - Developing Learning Systems: The pilot highlighted the need for more robust learning systems within the ACT Alliance to identify bottlenecks and improve the quality of humanitarian response programming.
 - Implementing Digital Tools: The use of digital tools, such as monitoring dashboards, was recommended to track the implementation of improvement plans, shifting the focus from punitive compliance to reflection, learning and growth.
 - Focusing on Quality: M&E should go beyond simply verifying the existence of policies to assessing whether they are being effectively applied in practice in ways that are appropriate to both the organisational and operational contexts.
- *Human Resources, including Code of Conduct and Staff Well-being.* It is necessary to have clear policies in place to ensure the well-being of staff and also to ensure that staff are aware of their rights and duties regarding the CHS.
- *Environmental impact.* Organisations need to develop and implement new policies and mechanisms to assess and minimise their environmental impact. Organisations should incorporate these practices into institutional environmental policies with receiving staff training on sustainability and environmentally responsible practices.

Resources Mobilisation

While the funding provided for conducting the self-assessment was considered very positive, participants highlighted that the lack of resources for implementing the action plans remains a critical gap. Also, there is insufficient funding to recruit dedicated human resources for accountability and programme quality functions, as well as to ensure proper follow-up on the implementation of the plans.

1.1.5. Activities to Address the Main Needs

To address the identified gaps, the participants in this learning review recommend the following actions:

- *Strengthen Human Resources and Capacity:* Recruit dedicated accountability officers or establish specialised quality and learning units. In addition, National members should provide regular training (in person or online) to their staff in key areas, such as CHS, PSEA, and safeguarding, to ensure these principles are consistently embedded in daily practice.
- *Support to improve Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms:* Develop and strengthen systems to capture, manage and respond to community feedback and complaints in a timely and transparent manner.

- *Support for Enhancing Data Management and Use:* Adopt user-friendly digital tools (e.g., Kobo, ODK) for collecting feedback. Train staff in data analysis to turn raw information into actionable recommendations that inform internal decision-making and donor reporting.
- *Enhance mechanisms to promote community participation,* such as establishing community advisory committees; developing procedures that ensure that operational teams conduct regular focus groups; and incorporating community representatives into project decision-making structures.
- *Continuing Promoting Peer-to-Peer Collaboration, for example, through ACT Forum:* For most of the participants, the peer-to-peer collaboration has been considered really positive, so they consider that the Secretariat should continue promoting this in structured peer learning and exchange with other organisations, both national and international, to share tools, practices, and lessons learned that strengthen collective institutional capacity.
- *Providing Technical Support for Policies and Procedures:* Review and update internal policies (e.g., HR, PSEA, procurement) to align with CHS requirements. Engage external consultants, Secretariat, International member and /or National member as needed to support policy development and implementation.
- *Access to Resources implements the Action plans.* A key activity will be to carry out advocacy efforts with international members, both by national organisations and the Secretariat, to support participants in implementing their action plans.

1.1.6. What worked well in The Pilot

For the participants, the following have been identified as areas that work well:

- *Effective Support and Facilitation:* The project benefited greatly from continuous support and guidance from the CHSA and ACT Alliance focal points. This technical and methodological assistance was crucial for understanding the process, utilising the tools and advancing the self-assessment.
- *Staff and Community Participation:* The pilot successfully engaged a wide range of staff from various departments (logistics, HR, finance, etc.), providing a more holistic view of the organisation. The use of interviews, focus groups and surveys also gave communities and beneficiaries a voice, which helped build trust.
- *Adaptable Tools and Methodology:* Many participants considered the tools overly technical and insufficiently contextualised; however, the methodology allowed them, with support from the Secretariat, to adapt the tools to their specific operational realities.
- *Focused and Timely Process:* The pilot was designed with clear objectives and a set timeframe. This helped organisations concentrate their efforts, maintain team motivation and in most cases achieve tangible results relatively quickly.
- *Peer-to-Peer Learning:* The opportunity to participate alongside other organisations was a key benefit. This peer exchange allowed organisations to share experiences, identify common challenges and learn from each other's solutions.
- *Immediate Organisational Impact:* The pilot's design enabled organisations to see quick results. Some recommendations were even implemented during the process, which gave the team a sense of shared responsibility and confirmed that the self-assessment was a valuable exercise.
- *Funding support.* The provision of funds for implementing the project was essential for conducting the self-assessment. However, as explained in the following section, the lack of funds to implement action plans is a clear gap.

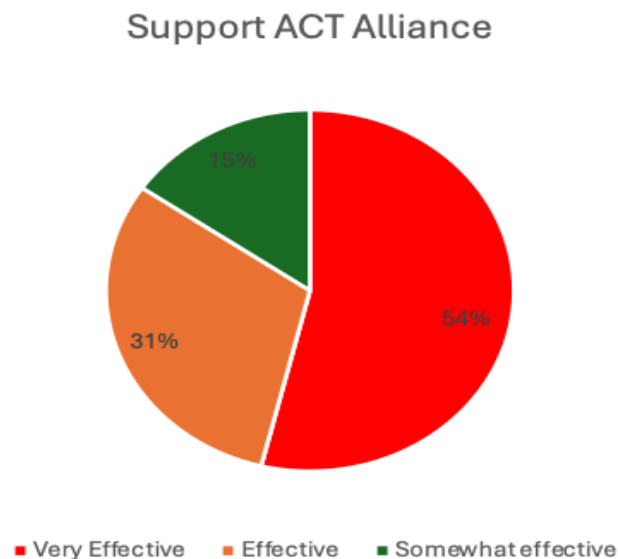
1.1.7. Areas to improve in the Pilot

For the participants, the following are the areas of the pilot that could be improved:

- *Improve Accessibility and Usability of the self-assessment questionnaires and CHSA online platform:* Simplify technical language in questionnaires and on the online platform. The tools should be more accessible and user-friendly, especially for communities with limited digital access.
- *Increase Training and Support:* Participants highly valued the guidance provided by ACT Alliance focal points, which was instrumental in helping them navigate the CHS self-assessment process. However, they noted that structured training at the outset of the pilot would have greatly improved their understanding of the tools and reduced the workload placed on the focal points. In particular, organisations highlighted the need for clear and comprehensive induction sessions focused on how to interpret and apply the CHS self-assessment, to ensure consistency, build confidence, and avoid the perception of the process as merely another external audit.
- *Adjust Project Timelines or Provide more resources:* Extend the duration of pilot projects or provide more resources, as the current timeframes (e.g., 8 months) may be too short for a comprehensive assessment with the actual capacities of the national partners, particularly when dealing with limited human resources and the time-consuming of some activities such as translations.
- *Provide More Funding:* Create specific funding streams to facilitate the training of staff from national organisations to undertake responsibility for humanitarian programme quality and accountability. This would help organisations bridge the financial gap between project activities and institutional development, enabling them to implement action plans.
- *Involve Local Organisations in Design:* Allow for greater participation of local organisations in the design of surveys and data collection mechanisms to better align them with the realities of their specific contexts.
- *Translate the Manual and Tools.* The manuals and tools, including survey questions, were available only in English, and it would be necessary to have them fully translated into the key languages, for example French and Portuguese. The key documents were translated into Spanish for this pilot.

1.1.8. ACT Alliance Secretariat's support

As the following graph shows, most participants considered the support from ACT Alliance to be effective or very effective.

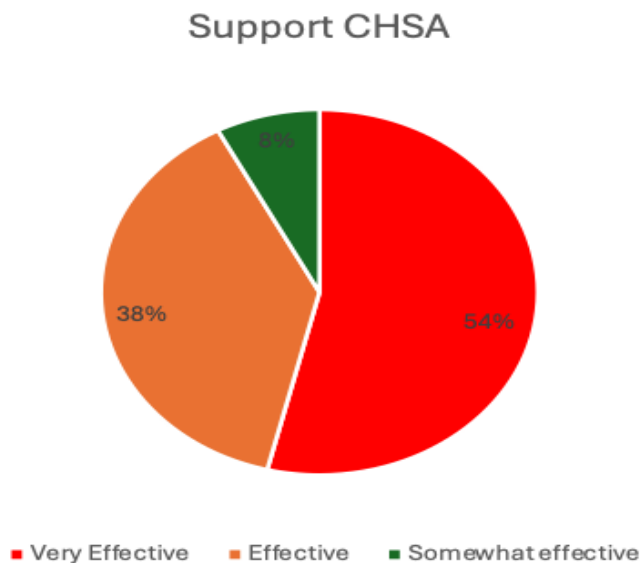


The participants wanted to highlight that the following support was crucial to implementing the pilot:

- *Translation and contextualisation of the self-assessment tool.* The participants expressed their gratitude to the ACT Alliance staff for supporting them in translating the main documents and contextualising the information to their specific context.
- *Financial support.* Although the financial support was not a significant amount, they indicate that it would have been almost impossible to implement the pilot without it. Also, they highlight the value of having flexibility in how the funds could be used.
- *Fostering peer learning and collaboration.* This initiative enabled the group to share challenges, experiences and effective solutions, which in turn fostered a strong sense of community and mutual support.
- *Mentoring and accompaniment.* Participants valued the Secretariat’s facilitated mentoring approach, which helped to clarify technical issues, in particular in relation to the online platform and verification guidance, as well as interpretation of scoring and findings.
- *Coordination and facilitation.* The Secretariat was instrumental in coordinating with participating members, engaging with the CHSA and ensuring that pilot activities progressed. This facilitation role was viewed as critical in creating a sense of collective direction and for maintaining momentum.

1.1.9. CHSA’s support, platform, tools and guidance

As the following graph shows, most participants considered the support from CHSA to be effective or very effective.



However, the participant found several challenges, mainly in relation to:

- *Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Process.* Participants reported several challenges with the Self-Assessment questionnaires and process. They noted that the questionnaires were not sufficiently contextualised to reflect their realities, which limited their usefulness. Language barriers also posed a significant difficulty, as both the manual and the questions were available only in English, creating barriers for organisations where English is not the primary working language. Additionally, some members struggled to interpret the questions and scores, which created uncertainty about how to use the tool effectively.

- *CHSA Online Platform.* Many participants commented that the online self-assessment platform is not very user-friendly, and that it was difficult to upload documents, especially in areas with poor internet connectivity. They also noted that the platform is only available in English, which made it even more challenging for them to navigate.

1.1.10. Recommendation to make it more inclusive and accessible for smaller and resource-constrained members

The main recommendations to make it more accessible and inclusive are:

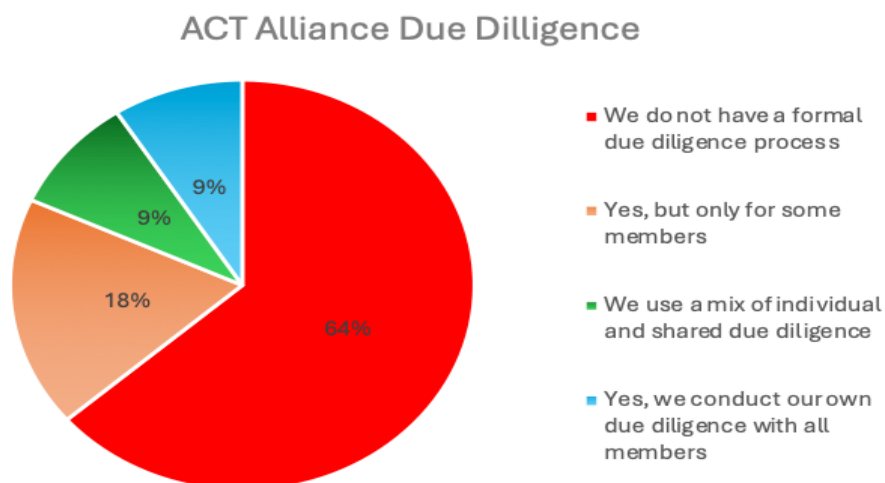
- *Provide Practical and Continuous Training:* Organisations need more than a one-time induction. They would benefit from intensive, hands-on training and continuous support. This training should be tailored to the realities of small teams with limited resources and should address political and social contexts.
- *Financial Support:* To ensure the success of the self-assessment, organisations need financial support; without it, most participants consider that they could not have completed the self-assessment.
- *Technical Support:* For many participants, the technical language, questions and platform were a significant challenge, so they believe that the ACT Alliance needs to have a technical team available to help organisations resolve their technical queries.
- *Cost of CHSA membership:* Review and clarify fees and associated costs for the self-assessment process, such as CHSA membership, to avoid unexpected financial burdens for participating organisations in the future.

Also, the participants recommend to CHSA to simplify the Process: It is essential to make the self-assessment as straightforward as possible, especially for organisations new to the CHS. This includes simplifying technical language, designing clearer questionnaires and enhancing the online platform’s user-friendliness.

1.2. Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

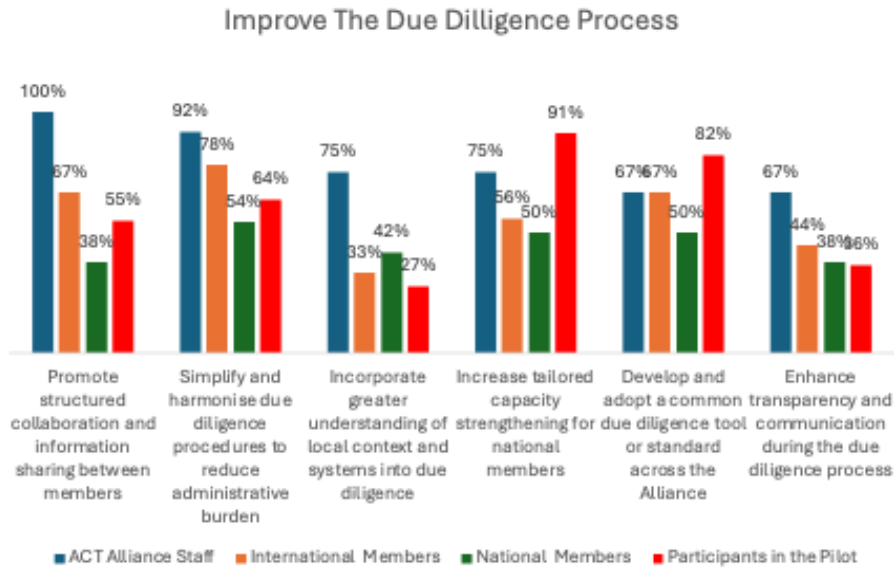
1.2.1. ACT Alliance Secretariat due diligence

Notably, the majority ACT Alliance staff reported that the alliance does not have a formal due diligence process, and only 9% stated that due diligence involves all members, a finding that points to a lack of clarity and shared understanding, as shown in the following graph.



1.2.2. How can the ACT Alliance improve due diligence

The following graph shows that, for most participants in the study, the best ways to improve due diligence processes are:



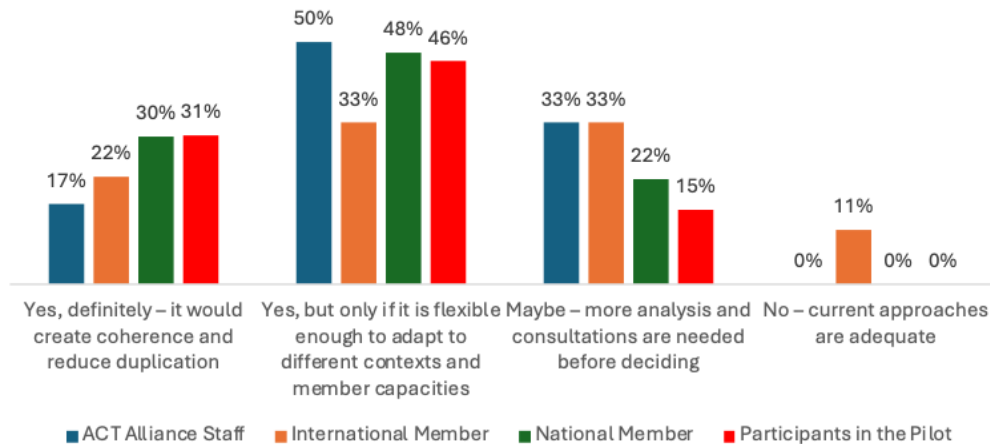
From the attached graph, it is clear that for ACT Alliance staff and international partners, the main priorities are to promote structured collaboration and information sharing between members, and to simplify and harmonise due diligence processes to reduce the administrative burden.

For participants in the pilot and national and local members, the priorities are different, focusing on the development and adoption of a common due diligence tool or standard across the ACT Alliance, as well as increased and tailored capacity strengthening for national and local organisations. While the support received during the pilot was reported to have been critical, feedback suggests that additional support would be welcomed. This was also highlighted during the interviews, where most organisations emphasised that having to undergo multiple due diligence processes each year places a significant strain on both financial and human resource costs. Reducing this burden would therefore be highly valuable.

1.2.3. Integrating CHS verification and due diligence passporting into the work of the ACT Alliance Secretariat

The following graph outlines whether ACT Alliance should consider adopting a shared due diligence approach aligned with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification).

Due diligence approach aligned with the CHS Verification Mechanism

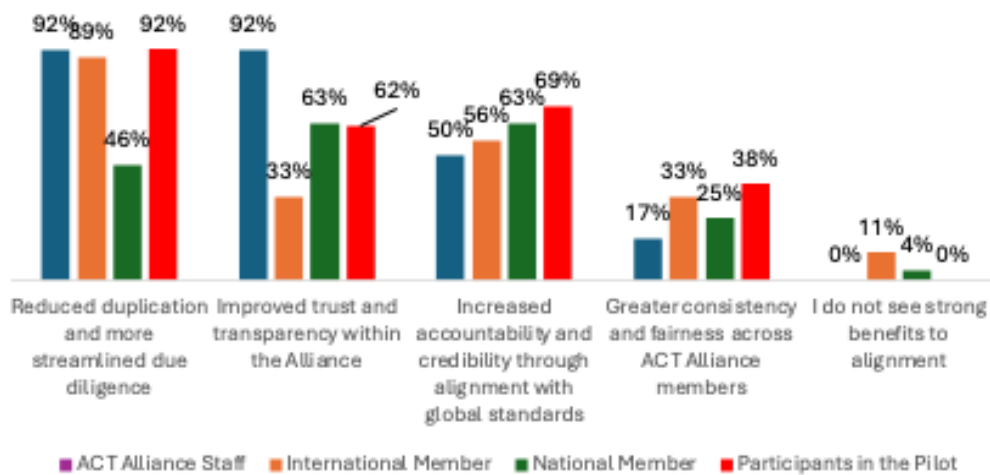


There is broad support for the ACT Alliance to adopt a shared due diligence approach aligned with the CHS Verification Mechanism, as the survey shows. All participants prefer a flexible model tailored to different contexts. Only a minority of international members felt the current approach was sufficient.

1.2.4. The benefits of aligning CHS verification with due diligence

Regarding the benefits of implementing a due diligence process that is aligned with CHS verification the participants consider the following benefits (they could choose as many options as they wanted):

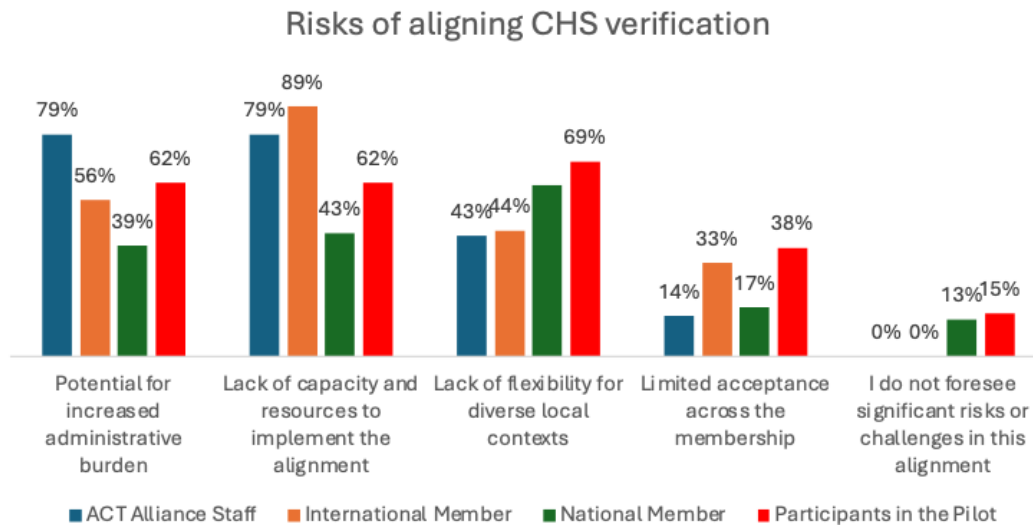
Benefits of aligning CHS verification



Based on the feedback gathered from ACT Alliance staff, international members, national and local members, including participants in the pilot, there is a strong consensus on the benefits of implementing a new due diligence system. A key finding is that all groups, particularly ACT Alliance Staff, international members and pilot participants, strongly value the potential to reduce duplication and streamline due diligence processes. Additionally, participants see significant benefits through alignment with global standards, including improved trust and transparency, as well as increased accountability and credibility. The overwhelmingly positive reception was underscored by the fact that very few participants expressed doubts about the value of such alignment.

1.2.5. The risks of aligning CHS verification with due diligence

Regarding the risks of implementing a due diligence process that is aligned with CHS verification, the participants consider the following risks (they could choose as many options as they wanted):



Analysis of the risks and challenges associated with a new due diligence system reveals key concerns across different groups within the ACT Alliance. A major finding is the potential for increased administrative burden; a concern raised most frequently by Secretariat staff and pilot participants. Additionally, a significant challenge is the lack of capacity and resources needed for implementation, a risk highlighted by Secretariat staff and international members. Furthermore, national members and participants in the pilot expressed strong reservations about the system's lack of flexibility in adapting to diverse local contexts.

While the majority of participants saw clear benefits, a small number of members across all groups also noted the risk that the new system might not be accepted or recognised by all members. These findings suggest that, despite the widespread support for the benefits of a streamlined approach, the organisation must address the tangible concerns related to the administrative and financial capacity required for a successful rollout.

1.2.6. Resources required for a comprehensive due-diligence approach across the Alliance

For all participants, implementing associated action plans for a new due diligence system would require a significant investment in human, financial and technical resources. Based on the interviews, there is a general consensus that dedicated staff are needed to provide technical support and guidance to members, especially national and local members who may lack the necessary structures and resources.

Furthermore, the interview findings highlight the importance of financial resources. It was noted that funds are essential for the success of such an endeavour. Some respondents proposed that a percentage of funds from Emergency Appeals and the Rapid Response Fund (RRF) could be allocated to self-assessment and capacity-strengthening initiatives. Some respondents stressed that while the idea of CHS certification is appealing, many members would not be able to afford it without financial support.

Finally, having the necessary technical resources is seen as essential, including comprehensive training and orientation on how to conduct surveys, alongside the development of a practical due diligence tool that is responsive members' needs.

1.2.7. International members' contribution to local members' capacity strengthening

The participants in the learning review believe that the international members can support capacity strengthening through:

- *Financial and Technical Support*: International members possess the technical capabilities to assist national and local members, who often lack the necessary infrastructure to conduct due diligence processes effectively. They can provide financial assistance for more complex assessments. One suggestion is for international members to contribute to common funds for capacity strengthening, which can be financed by a percentage of the funds from Emergency Appeals or the Rapid Response Fund (RRF).
- *Sharing Expertise and Best Practices*: International members can engage in peer learning and collaboration. They can contribute to the capacity-building processes of national members. It is important to involve them in a more long-term way.
- *Policy and Process Alignment*: International members can support the "passporting system," which would enable the sharing and acceptance of due diligence information among other members, thereby preventing duplication of effort and saving costs. They can also work to ensure that due diligence tools are recognised by the wider humanitarian sector. The support from international members can help move the due diligence agenda forward and set an example for the wider sector.
- *Overcoming Barriers*: One of the challenges faced is the reluctance from some members in the Global North to allocate funds for these processes, often preferring bilateral relationships over investing in shared mechanisms essential to strengthen the ACT Alliance's collective capacity and impact. International members have a critical role to play in addressing this reluctance by actively supporting common funding streams and promoting coordination across the alliance, helping to break down silos and reinforce shared goals.

1.3. *Lessons Learned*

1. Institutional change is achievable but resource intensive

The development of multi-year improvement plans and the revision of policies and procedures, such as safeguarding, PSEA and feedback mechanisms, demonstrated tangible progress achieved as a result of the pilot project. However, extensive improvement plans often exceeded the human and financial capacity of smaller members, highlighting the need for proportional approaches and additional support.

2. Local ownership is central to sustainability

Locally led processes fostered confidence and accountability, with several organisations describing the experience as an "awakening" that prompted leadership to prioritise quality and accountability commitments.

3. Peer learning reinforces localisation

Regional exchanges and mentoring were seen as valuable and effective, enabling mutual support, and strengthening solidarity. Smaller organisations particularly benefited from opportunities to learn from more experienced peers.

4. Trust with donors has increased

The pilot demonstrated that alignment with the CHS strengthens organisational credibility, positioning members for funding opportunities. In some cases, staff reported that the self-assessment has contributed to accessing new funding opportunities.

5. Valuing Voices of Staff and Communities to Strengthen Trust and Positioning of the Organisation

The self-assessment process, centred on listening to the opinions and perspectives of staff and community members, generated a sense of value and empowerment by making participants feel that their contributions truly mattered. This recognition not only encouraged improvements in organisational performance but also strengthened the credibility and positioning of organisations, reinforcing respect and trust both between the organisation and the community and among staff members.

6. Strengthen Positioning in the Humanitarian Network

The self-assessment process allowed organisations to demonstrate their commitment to the CHS, reinforcing their credibility with partners and donors. This commitment to the CHS enhanced their positioning as key actors within their national humanitarian networks.

7. Accessibility remains a significant barrier

The tools and platform were viewed as overly technical, available only in English, and not sufficiently inclusive of people with disabilities, underscoring the need for translation, contextualisation and adaptation.

8. Support was critical but uneven.

Participants valued the Secretariat and CHSA accompaniment, yet identified the need for more practical training, user-friendly tools and sustained technical support throughout and at the end of the process.

1.4. Recommendations

1. Simplify and adapt the self-assessment tools

Streamline questionnaires, clarify scoring criteria and translate tools into major languages; ensure accessibility through alternative formats and more user-friendly platforms

Recommendation for CHSA.

2. Capacity building should focus on the gaps identified in the self-assessment

International partners and the ACT Alliance Secretariat should concentrate their support on strengthening the specific, identified weaknesses, rather than investing in areas that were not prioritised through the self-assessment

Recommendation for Secretariat, International Members, and National Members (Peer to Peer Collaboration)

3. Strengthen training and accompaniment

Provide comprehensive induction and ongoing mentoring. Develop hands-on training modules on CHS application, PSEA and feedback systems.

Recommendation for Secretariat, International Members, and National Members (Peer to Peer Collaboration)

4. Allocate dedicated resources

Ensure that accountability and quality functions are sustainably resourced through dedicated staff and funding. Explore allocation of a percentage of ACT Alliance funds (e.g. Emergency Appeals, RRF) to support institutional development and CHSA membership fees.

Recommendation for Secretariat and International Members.

5. Shift from policy adoption to practice

Support members over time to operationalise safeguarding, feedback and HR policies.

Recommendation for National members, with the technical support of the Secretariat.

6. Institutionalise peer learning

Formalise regional exchanges and mentoring frameworks, building existing structures within the ACT Alliance, ensuring that smaller members can access sustained support. Facilitate co-design of processes with national and local members to reflect local contexts.

Recommendation for International and National members, with the technical support of the Secretariat.

7. Integrate CHS in the Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Accountability system

Integrate the CHS into existing Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning systems. Doing so would enable organisations to better fulfil their humanitarian obligations and improve overall performance.

Recommendation for National members, with the technical support of the Secretary.

8. Promote Passporting and Integrate CHS into due diligence processes

Pilot a “passporting” system that allows CHS self-assessment results to be recognised across Alliance and donor processes. Ensure flexibility to adapt to diverse contexts and prevent undue burden on smaller members.

Recommendation for Secretariat and International members.

1.5. Conclusion

The CHS self-assessment pilot project has demonstrated the value of the CHS self-assessment process as a mechanism for strengthening accountability and organisational learning. It catalysed substantive institutional change, raised staff awareness and enhanced trust among donors, alliance members and communities. At the same time, the exercise was resource-heavy, technically complex and at times, insufficiently adapted to local realities.

It is essential to note that all participants expressed strong satisfaction with the project and would recommend it to other organisations. Although it requires effort, the benefits are clear, as outlined in this report.

The evidence indicates that ownership at the national level and the facilitation of peer learning were significant reasons for the project’s success. There is also a clear demand to integrate CHS verification into ACT Alliance due diligence processes as a means of reducing duplication and increasing coherence. However, this must be implemented in a flexible manner, with appropriate resourcing, to avoid creating additional burdens for smaller members.

Overall, the pilot demonstrates that the CHS self-assessment is not merely a compliance mechanism but can also serve as a catalyst for organisational change.

Part 2: Proposed DD Passporting Framework and Approach.

2.1 Overall Framework and Approach

2.1.1 Overview

This section outlines a proposal for a streamlined due diligence (DD) passporting framework for use within the ACT Alliance, enabling members to recognise and integrate existing due diligence processes into an ACT Alliance framework for DD and capacity strengthening. The goal is to reduce duplication, build mutual trust and support faster, more effective and coordinated response to humanitarian crises.

The approach outlined here is adaptable and scalable to facilitate its application across diverse organisational models and operational contexts.

2.1.2 Definition of the due diligence passporting concept

Passporting due diligence means that once an organisation has been assessed and meets agreed standards, that assessment can be used across different partnerships, reducing duplication, saving time and creating greater opportunity for meaningful support to strengthen local leadership.

2.1.3 Why it is needed

At a global level, the ACT Alliance currently does not have a consistent or trusted due diligence approach in place, including for funding mechanisms such as the Rapid Response Fund (RRF) or Emergency Appeals (EA). The existing approach to screening or assessing partners is ad hoc, inefficient and can lead to delays, creating frustration for both implementing members and funding members.

Moreover, the absence of a shared baseline for assurance in the ACT Alliance can contribute to reduced trust and lead funding members to repeat or undertake their own checks on members. This duplication slows down response times and challenges the ACT Alliance's ability to act quickly, equitably and in alignment with its commitments to localisation and quality.

While findings from the Learning Review of ACT Alliance's CHS Self-Assessment Pilot Project highlight differing priorities across the ACT Alliance, across all groups consulted, there is broad agreement that undergoing multiple, duplicative due diligence processes imposes high financial and human resource costs, making harmonisation a clear and urgent need. For international partners and Secretariat staff, the focus is on improving collaboration, information sharing and streamlining due diligence (DD) procedures to reduce administrative burden. In contrast, local members prioritise the adoption of a common DD tool or standard and access to tailored capacity strengthening.

Evidence from those interviews focused on developing a conceptual approach, aligned with the CHS Self-Assessment framework, for DD passporting in the ACT Alliance indicate the urgent need for a harmonised due diligence passporting framework to address the widespread duplication, inefficiency and burden caused by multiple, uncoordinated due diligence processes. Local and national members reported the strain of repeated assessments, which divert limited financial and human resources from programme delivery. International members and the Secretariat also recognise that the current approach lacks consistency and credibility, undermining trust and slowing down responses. A common, CHS-aligned framework would enable mutual recognition of due diligence, support localisation by levelling the playing field for smaller organisations, and provide a clear, scalable pathway for improvement and risk management. Crucially, it would foster collaboration, reduce administrative load, and enhance the ACT Alliance's ability to respond quickly and accountably in crisis settings.

A passporting approach would allow the ACT Alliance to pilot a coherent, proportionate due diligence system through RRF funding, reducing delays, increasing transparency and demonstrating a path towards a fairer, faster and more locally led funding mechanism.

2.1.4 CHS as a core foundation

The ACT Alliance is committed, through its Quality and Accountability Framework, to align its work with the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). This makes the CHS an appropriate foundational pillar for any shared due diligence approach developed within or for the ACT Alliance.

- CHS is widely recognised as the main global quality and accountability standard for the sector.
- The CHS can underpin both due diligence and capacity development.
- CHS Self-Assessment can be a valid entry point for passporting: an organisation's engagement with the CHS through self-assessment can be recognised as a legitimate step within the passporting system.

The principle of accepting the CHS as a core foundation is important because due diligence passporting systems are designed to accept and recognise multiple forms of due diligence evidence, instead of requiring organisations to go through a similar donor-specific or compliance-heavy process. By recognising the CHS self-assessment as an acceptable and credible form of evidence, the ACT Alliance:

- Creates a lower-barrier entry point especially for local and national members.
- Encourages ownership and self-reflection in areas of quality, accountability and good governance.
- Aligns due diligence with a recognised, sector-wide standard.
- Can foster progressive capacity strengthening, with the CHS forming the base of a longer journey.

2.1.5 Proposed model

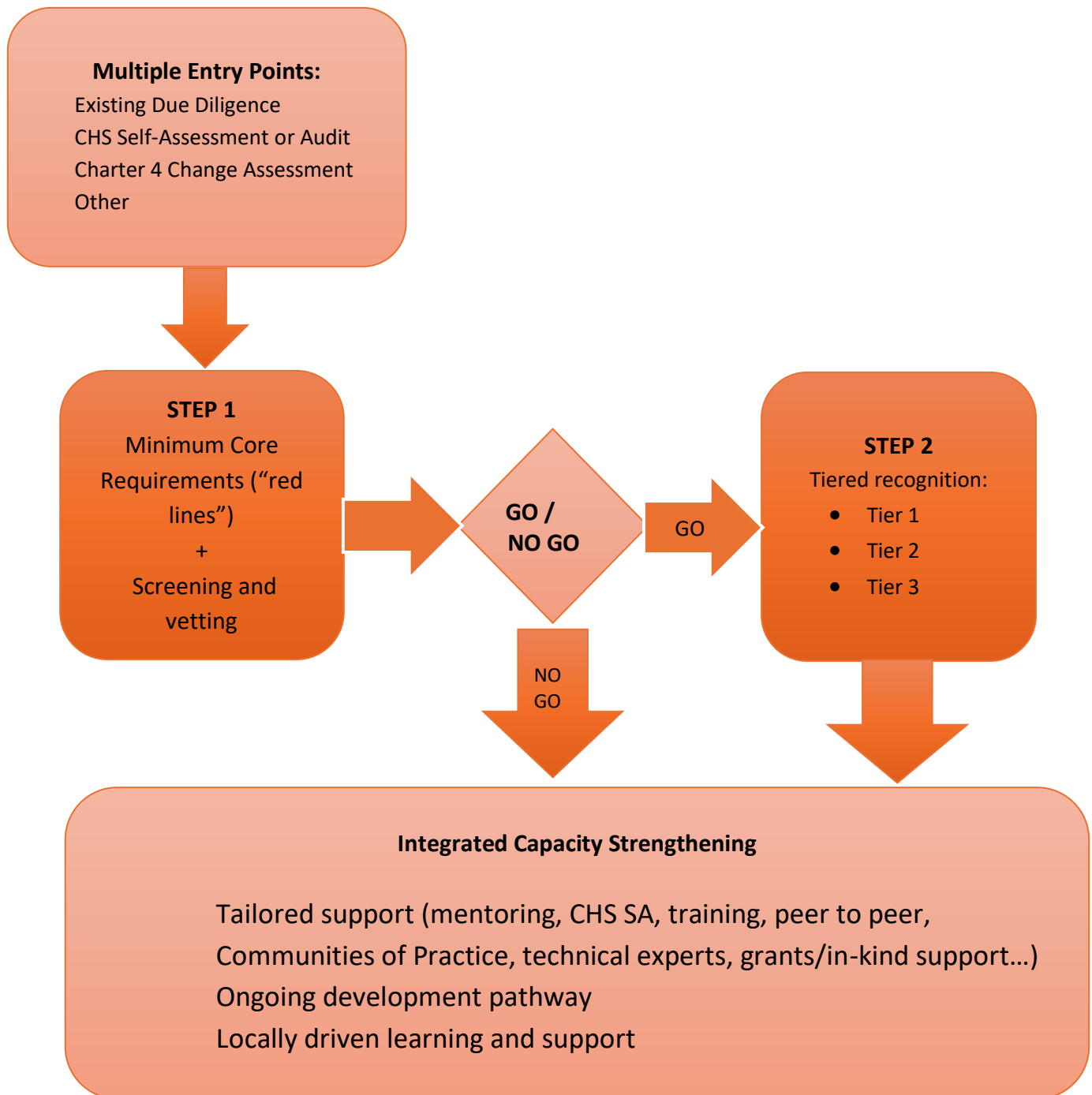
The proposed model for a Due Diligence Passporting Framework for ACT Alliance is a graduated, multi-layered system designed to balance risk management with equity, access and localisation. It aims to provide a streamlined, inclusive and scalable mechanism for verifying organisational capacity and accountability, while reinforcing the ACT Alliance's shared values of solidarity, trust and stewardship.

Ethos and Principles

This model is underpinned by the following key principles:

- *Equity* – recognising and valuing the diversity of ACT Alliance members and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.
- *Access* – enabling smaller or newer organisations to participate meaningfully, without unnecessary administrative burdens.
- *Localisation* – reinforcing ACT Alliance's commitment to locally led action by creating entry points and support mechanisms tailored to local and national members.
- *Risk-informed* – ensuring a basic standard of compliance and accountability while matching requirements to actual risk levels.
- *Mutual recognition and efficiency* – reducing duplication by recognising existing credible due diligence processes and certifications.

Proposed Model



Agreed Minimum Core Requirements (Non-Negotiables or "Red Lines")

Define a limited, clear set of baseline due diligence requirements that all participating organisations must meet to ensure basic compliance, accountability and risk management. These “red lines” should be minimal yet robust, reflecting the ACT Alliance’s commitments to programme quality, safeguarding and responsible stewardship — while remaining accessible to a wide range of members.

Multiple Entry Points

Allow members to enter the passporting system through diverse, credible forms of due diligence, such as existing due diligence assessments, CHS audits, or CHS self-assessments. This recognises the existing efforts and investments made by organisations, reduces duplication and supports a more inclusive approach.

Two-Step Assurance: Minimum Threshold + Tiered Recognition

Step 1: Go/No-Go Decision Based on Minimum Core Requirements

All participating organisations must first meet a small set of non-negotiable minimum requirements ("red lines") to be eligible for any funding through the passporting system. The tool could be based on an adapted version of the C4C assessment tool, integrating ACT Alliance requirements as necessary.

These could include, for example:

- Legal and governance.
- ACT Alliance membership requirements.
- Financial and HR.
- Accountability.
- CHS commitment (as per the ACT Alliance’s Quality and Accountability Framework).

There should also be a requirement for compliance with screening and vetting requirements for financial transfers².

This is a ‘GO / NO-GO’ decision, ensuring a baseline level of accountability, safeguarding and legal compliance.

Step 2: Tiered Recognition Based on Due Diligence Results

Once the red lines are met, the depth and outcome of the due diligence (regardless of the tool used) inform a tiering decision.

- Each tier reflects the scale and complexity of funding that the organisation is equipped to manage responsibly.
- Lower tiers may enable access to smaller grant amounts with potentially lighter reporting and oversight.
- Higher tiers open access to larger funding amounts with potentially greater reporting responsibilities.
- This model balances risk management with inclusivity, ensuring that all organisations meet a basic threshold, while still recognising and supporting a wide range of capacity levels and funding access.

This can ensure that:

² This proposed approach assumes that ACT Alliance will carry out appropriate vetting and background checks on key personnel and board members, and screen financial transactions against relevant sanctions lists, counter-terrorism lists, and other compliance checks prior to any financial transfer.

- Organisations with strong systems and verified results can access larger or more complex funding.
- Smaller or emerging organisations can access funding proportionate to their capacity, while receiving support to move up tiers over time.
- The system remains fair, transparent, and enabling, avoiding duplication and heavy processes for small grants or lower-risk contexts.

This tiered model:

- Encourages continuous improvement and growth, not pass/fail outcomes.
- Respects the diversity of organisations in the ACT Alliance.
- Supports timely, equitable responses by matching requirements to actual capacity and risk.

Integrated Capacity Strengthening Mechanisms

Embed capacity strengthening as a core component of the passporting approach, not as a follow-up, but as an integral part of the process. To ensure this, it is recommended that a dedicated portion of funding be allocated from within existing funding mechanisms. For example, ringfencing 15% of RRF/EA funds for capacity strengthening, as currently under discussion, would provide a clear and practical commitment to this goal. Dedicated budget allocation is essential to ensure that capacity strengthening is not ad hoc but planned, adequately resourced and aligned with ACT Alliance’s broader strategic objectives.

To ensure coherence and sustainability, the capacity strengthening component should be guided by a structured framework that is directly linked to the Due Diligence (DD) process. This framework would identify priority areas for capacity development based on DD findings and provide a menu of tailored support options (e.g. technical accompaniment, CHS self-assessment tools, peer learning, coaching). It should be flexible enough to reflect varying organisational contexts and capacities, while grounded in ACT Alliance standards, such as membership requirements and the CHS commitments. The framework could also include a simple roadmap or capacity action plan template that local organisations co-develop during or immediately after the DD process, ensuring that capacity support is not only responsive but also integrated into broader organisational development strategies. Establishing a dedicated capacity strengthening fund—either as a percentage of RRF/EA funding (e.g. 15%) or through a separate pooled mechanism—would enable the operationalisation of this framework and reinforce ACT Alliance’s commitment to long-term, locally led capacity strengthening.

The objectives are to scale up the overall capacity of the ACT Alliance to respond to crises in a timely and effective manner, and to establish increased pooled funding that positions the Alliance as a viable, trusted and robust mechanism for supporting locally led responses.

Capacity investments should be linked to:

- ACT Alliance membership requirements and vision, mission and strategy.
- The CHS.
- Individual organisational priorities.

Support could include resources to undertake CHS self-assessments, peer mentoring, technical accompaniment, participation in training or learning networks, peer support and communities of practice. Local organisations should be able to shape their own learning and development pathways, reinforcing ACT Alliance’s commitment to locally led action and long-term organisational strengthening.

Leveraging ACT Alliance Forums and Working Groups

To ensure effective development, piloting and rollout of the due diligence passporting system, the model should actively engage and make use of existing ACT Alliance forums at regional and national levels where these are functioning well. The forums could serve as platforms for coordination, peer support and shared

learning, and would be well-positioned to support contextualisation of the passporting approach to reflect local realities and operational needs. For this to be effective, linkages should be established between the forums and the ACT Secretariat, to enable communication, shared planning and mechanisms for forums to provide feedback and receive guidance and support. Designated focal points within forums could help facilitate this exchange and ensure alignment with global processes and standards.

Additionally, it should involve relevant, existing working groups, including the Due Diligence Working Group, the Quality and Accountability Reference Group, and the Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Response Group.

This collaborative approach is important because by leveraging the experience, networks and expertise of these groups, the ACT Alliance can create a more inclusive, practical and sustainable system, ensuring broad ownership and shared responsibility.

Built-In Feedback Loop for Continuous Learning and Adaptation

To ensure the passporting model remains responsive to member experiences, especially during the pilot phase, a simple feedback mechanism should be established. This would allow members and partners to share insights on what’s working, what’s unclear and where improvements are needed, without overburdening the system.

A proposed approach could include:

- *Creating a light-touch feedback channel* (e.g. short surveys, structured check-ins, or email submissions) for pilot participants.
- *Designating a small reference group or sub-group* (possibly drawn from the Due Diligence Working Group or Q&A Reference Group) to review and filter feedback.
- *Providing regular summaries* to the RRF Manager and relevant Secretariat staff to inform real-time adjustments.

This process would support adaptive learning, enable early course correction, and promote shared ownership, while remaining feasible within the Alliance’s resource and staffing constraints.

Due Diligence Passporting Steering Group

Establish a Steering Group to provide oversight, guidance and support to the Secretariat (and specifically to the Global Quality and Accountability Coordinator) in developing, piloting and refining the due diligence passporting system.

The main responsibilities should be:

- Advising on the development of tools (e.g. red lines, CHS-based checklist, tiering framework).
- Approving pilot selection and overseeing pilot implementation.
- Reviewing feedback from members and ensuring adaptive learning during the pilot phase.
- Making decisions or recommendations on tiering, eligibility or exceptions.
- Guiding how capacity strengthening resources are prioritised and distributed.
- Ensuring alignment with ACT Alliance’s commitments to quality, accountability, localisation and risk management.

Proposed composition of DD Passporting Steering Group

Stakeholder	Role
ACT Secretariat – Global Q&A Coordinator	Convenor and ACT Secretariat Focal Point
ACT Secretariat - Global Q&A Coordinator	Lead on DD processes

National/Local ACT members (from pilot countries)	Ensure local perspectives and realities are represented
Funding member representatives	Represent donor confidence and risk assurance
Representative(s) from the Quality & Accountability Reference Group	Ensure CHS alignment
Representative(s) from the Due Diligence Working Group ³	Technical guidance on vetting and risk
Emergency Preparedness & Humanitarian Response Reference Group representative	Links to EA/RRF processes
ACT Secretariat - Head of Humanitarian Affairs	Strategic oversight

The main characteristic should be:

- Meets quarterly or more frequently during pilot phase.
- Light Terms of Reference.
- May appoint smaller sub-groups to deal with specific issues (e.g. process review, appeals, lessons learned).
- Outputs are documented and shared transparently with relevant ACT Alliance bodies (e.g. ACT forums, governance, relevant working groups).

2.2. Key recommendations and next steps

In line with the ACT Alliance’s vision of a world where all people live with dignity, peace and full respect for human rights, and building on its commitments to localisation, the Grand Bargain, and the ACT Alliance Code of Good Practice, the following recommendations are proposed to guide the development and piloting of a due diligence passporting approach:

1. Adopt a Shared, Flexible Passporting Framework

Establish a due diligence passporting model grounded in mutual recognition, minimum core requirements, and multiple entry points, including CHS self-assessments and other credible due diligence assessments such as the C4C Due Diligence Passporting Tool.⁴

Use the CHS as the foundational benchmark, in line with the ACT Alliance Quality and Accountability Framework.

2. Ensure the Approach Enables Local Leadership

Design the system to remove barriers for local and national organisations.

Build in mechanisms for partners to shape their own capacity development priorities, in line with ACT Alliance’s commitment to equitable, empowering partnerships.

3. Link Passporting to Capacity Strengthening Pathways

The due diligence passporting model should do more than assess readiness, it should also enable and support growth, especially for local and national organisations. This means embedding capacity strengthening as a core and continuous component of the system, not an optional add-on.

³ The ToR of the DD WG could be adapted to fulfil the role of a Steering Group if membership was expanded to cover all stakeholders.

⁴ The C4C (Charter for Change) Due Diligence Passporting Tool was designed by Humentum in collaboration with member organisations of the Charter for Change coalition, including ACT Alliance members: Christian Aid, Dan Church Aid, Kerk in Actie, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Swiss Church Aid (HEKS).

To do this, the model should:

- Link due diligence outcomes to tailored support.
- Use the due diligence process to identify areas where an organisation needs to grow with the ultimate goal of becoming eligible for Tier 3 level funding, particularly in contexts that are highly vulnerable to shocks and crises, both natural and human-made.
- Use results to inform partner-led capacity pathways, to support self-defined priorities and strengthen systems over time.

Enable a Range of Flexible Support Options – these could include:

- Peer learning and exchange (especially within ACT Alliance forums).
- Mentoring or accompaniment from other ACT Alliance members.
- Access to technical expertise (e.g. on financial systems, safeguarding, MEAL).
- Grants or in-kind support to carry out CHS self-assessments, adapt policies, train staff, attend learning events or develop tools.

Plans should be led by, or co-designed with national and local members, allowing them to define what support is most relevant and how it should be delivered.

4. Position CHS as Both a Benchmark and a Learning Tool

The CHS should not only inform the due diligence baseline but also guide the capacity strengthening journey.

Organisations can revisit the CHS over time (e.g. through repeated self-assessments or as they move through due diligence tiers) to track progress and reflect on learning.

5. Pilot the Approach with a Representative Group of Members

To test the feasibility, usability and inclusivity of the due diligence passporting model, a targeted pilot phase should be launched with a smaller group of national and local implementing members.

Key Elements of the Pilot:

- Convene a technical working group (drawing from existing groups such as the Due Diligence Working Group and Q&A Reference Group) to:
 - Refine the model and tools.
 - Agree on core baseline requirements.
 - Identify suitable pilot contexts.
- Select approximately 12 national and local implementing members from across different ACT regions, with attention to:
 - Organisational size and scale.
 - Geographic diversity — with an emphasis on high-risk or crisis-prone countries, where humanitarian response depends on local actors.
- Ensure the pilot is designed to:
 - Reflect the realities of local organisations working with limited resources and/or capacity.
 - Test how the model can enable rather than burden smaller, local actors.
 - Generate learning on how passporting can support more equitable access to funding and decision-making.

The pilot will allow ACT Alliance to ground the model in local realities, align with its localisation commitments and ensure the system is practical and inclusive from the outset.

6. Pre-Qualification Before Crisis: A Proactive Approach

To ensure readiness and avoid delays during emergency responses, the pilot should adopt a pre-assessment and pre-qualification process, assessing participating organisations before a crisis occurs or funding is requested. Over time, the aim is to build an increasingly broad pool of pre-qualified member organisations, ensuring a greater number are ready to respond when needed.

The pilot should start processing organisations immediately upon selection into the pilot, rather than waiting for a funding trigger (e.g. RRF application).

Organisations that meet the red lines criteria are pre-qualified and entered into the passporting system.

For organisations that do not yet meet the baseline, the system should:

- Clearly identify the gaps.
- Invest in capacity strengthening (e.g. mentoring, tools, peer support) to help them meet the threshold.
- Offer a pathway to re-assessment and eventual pre-qualification.

7. Using CHS Indicators Where No Due Diligence Exists

In cases where a member or partner has no prior due diligence or assessment available, ACT Alliance can conduct its own baseline organisational assessment using the *10 CHS indicators for a coherent organisational approach*.

This approach allows ACT Alliance to:

- Establish a credible and consistent entry point into the passporting system.
- Align with its existing Quality and Accountability Framework.
- Use a sector-owned standard that bridges due diligence and capacity development.
- Avoid duplication by providing a single, coherent assessment that can be recognised by multiple stakeholders.
- Assessments using the CHS coherent organisational approach indicators can also feed directly into capacity strengthening plans, enabling a joined-up process rather than separate compliance and development tracks.

8. Institutionalise Learning and Continuous Improvement

Create space for regular feedback and learning loops across the Alliance.

Use the pilot findings to adapt the model, strengthen tools, and build trust across the different stakeholder groups.

9. Align with Broader Sector Initiatives

Where possible, harmonise with sector-wide efforts (e.g. CHS Alliance, C4C Due Diligence Passporting (DDPP) initiative, HQAI, Start Network, donor platforms) to avoid duplication.

Use ACT Alliance's voice and leadership to champion systemic change, contributing to a more coherent and equitable humanitarian ecosystem.

This passporting approach offers ACT Alliance a tangible way to live out its commitments to localisation, accountability and mutual respect, while strengthening collaboration, reducing administrative burdens, and upholding the dignity and leadership of all partners.

10. Information Management

Define roles and responsibilities within the Secretariat, regional teams and ACT forums to coordinate, validate and update due diligence information.

Currently, the ACT Membership Portal provides a basic platform for communication and member contact details. However, it functions more like a static website and lacks the functionality needed to support an efficient due diligence system.

Short-Term

In the short term, ACT Alliance should leverage Microsoft SharePoint (the current Secretariat platform) as the primary platform for due diligence information management.

This includes:

- Establishing a structured, secure folder system.
- Applying consistent metadata and naming conventions.
- Implementing clear access controls and ownership for content updates.
- Using Power BI or similar tools for visual reporting and tracking.

Long term

In the longer term, ACT Alliance can lay the groundwork for an integrated IMS. While utilising SharePoint as an interim solution, ACT can begin planning for an integrated IMS that connects due diligence with project, finance and partner data.

Key steps include:

- Documenting functional requirements (e.g., integration of due diligence with finance and project data).
- Exploring low-cost or open-source platforms, including those already used by ACT members.
- Developing a business case and roadmap for long-term IMS development, contingent on funding availability.

This phased approach allows the ACT Alliance to manage current needs while preparing for a scalable, cost-effective solution in the future.

2.3 Outline for ACT Alliance Two-Tier Framework for Due Diligence Passporting

2.3.1 Step 1

Go/No Go Decision based on Minimum Core Requirements. This could be based on an adapted version of the C4C assessment tool, integrating ACT Alliance requirements as necessary. In some cases, existing due diligence assessments (e.g. CHS self-assessments, C4C, or donor assessments) may provide relevant information to help inform this initial decision. However, any previous assessments will need to be reviewed and checked for relevance, completeness, and accuracy. Certain areas may also require further validation—such as through a follow-up conversation with the organisation or by requesting additional documentation—before a final Step 1 decision can be made.

#	Area	Evidence (examples)	Yes/No
1	ACT Alliance Membership	Mandatory policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ACT Code of Good Practice- ACT Code of Conduct- ACT Safeguarding Policy Framework	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender Justice Policy - Complaints Policy 	
2	Legal/Governance	Registration as a legal entity in their country of operation Functioning governing body (e.g. board of directors, trustees, executive council)	
3	Financial	Annual financial statements (and audits where required by law) Basic financial controls Anti-fraud policy Procurement policy	
4	HR	HR manual Security protocols Staff wellbeing policies	
5	Accountability	Feedback and Complaint handling mechanism	
6	Data Protection	Policy or process on data and community information protection (can be integrated into safeguarding)	
7	CHS Commitment	Commitment to the CHS ⁵	

COMPULSORY: Sanctions/Screening (prior to financial transfer): Board and key staff screened for sanctions/terrorist watchlists per financial compliance norms.

2.3.2 Step 2 (Multiple entry points)

Path A: Passport an Existing Assessment (see Annex 1)

If the organisation already has one of the following, the Secretariat reviews and validates it against CHS-aligned criteria (assessments should be conducted within the previous 2 years). Even where an existing assessment is available, the ACT Alliance Secretariat must still be reviewed for completeness and relevance and may require supplementary information or clarification to ensure it meets the required standard.

#	Accepted Passporting Sources	Includes
1	CHS self-assessment	Self-Assessment Report and CHS improvement plan
2	CHS certification/verification audit	Summary report and detailed findings
3	C4C DD Assessment	Completed and dated checklist; action plan if available
4	ACT Alliance member or other NGO led DD	Completed report (dated); action plan if available
5	Institutional Donor DD (e.g. FCDO, ECHO, UN)	Completed report (dated); action plan if available

Path B: ACT-Led Rapid DD Assessment (see [Annex 2](#))

Used when no valid prior assessment exists.

In urgent situations where a member is seeking to respond to a crisis, but no prior due diligence exists, a modest initial release of funds may be considered following Go/No-Go clearance (based on core requirements), to enable rapid operational start-up. The full due diligence process would then be completed in parallel as a condition for further funding.

⁵ Organisations can demonstrate commitment to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) in several ways, such as through a formal statement of alignment; evidence of having initiated or completed a CHS self-assessment; integration of CHS commitments into key policies or operational tools; or by referencing CHS within their own quality and accountability frameworks or practices.

Use a light, structured tool based on the **10 CHS Coherent Organisational Approach indicators**. These 10 indicators offer a strong, strategic foundation for an ACT Alliance due diligence tool that is:

Ethical - centred on communities and affected populations.

Credible - grounded in a global standard.

Practical - scalable and applicable to diverse members.

Developmental - linked to capacity strengthening.

Aligned - with ACT Alliance’s values and commitments.

They can help ensure that due diligence is not only about managing risk but also about building trust, enabling local leadership, and promoting accountability at all levels (see [Annex 3](#) for a more detailed justification for using these 10 indicators).

The tool can be:

- Structured as a scoring tool (e.g. 0-2 scale per indicator – not met/partial/met – use red/amber/green for easy visualisation)
- Supported by a short document review and 2-3 interviews.
- Designed to be completed within 2-3 working days.

This tool should not only assess the existence of policies and systems, but also the extent to which they are understood and used in practice (processes/practices).

The Secretariat should oversee the completion of this assessment, undertaken either by members of the Secretariat staff or with support from designated ACT Forum focal points. The modality of the assessment—whether conducted onsite, remotely, or through a hybrid approach—will depend on the specific context. For example, in countries where there is an active and engaged ACT Forum involved in the Due Diligence (DD) process, it may be feasible for the assessment to be carried out in-person by someone onsite. However, it is anticipated that most assessments will likely be conducted remotely. Operationally, the assessment could be led by one individual from the Secretariat, who coordinates and draws on inputs from relevant colleagues as needed. The lead person may vary depending on the nature of the identified risks—for instance, if risks are primarily related to financial or resource management capacity, a finance staff member could lead with support from programme and membership teams; conversely, if the risks pertain more to programme quality and accountability, a programme coordinator might take the lead role.

2.3.3 Step 3: Tiering Based on DD Results

All organisations who passed [Step 1](#) (red lines) are then tied based on the depth and strength of their systems and practices.

Tiering Based on Assessment Results (Not Tool Type)

Tier	Description	Access	Support Required
Tier 1 – Foundation	Basic systems in place; needs support to strengthen application	Small grants (e.g. up to 50K)	Accompaniment, policy development, CHS self-assessment support
Tier 2 – Developing	Policies and systems applied and some practices embedded	Medium grants (e.g. up to 150K)	Peer learning, capacity investments
Tier 3 – Advanced	Strong and documented policies and systems with evidence of practice and continuous learning and improvement	Large grants (no funding limit)	Technical expertise, may provide mentorship/support to others

2.3.4 Step 4: Link to Capacity Strengthening Pathways

Based on the results of the assessment, organisations develop or co-design a capacity strengthening pathway (especially for Tier 1 and Tier 2 members).

- This could focus on areas like governance, compliance, internal controls, risk management, finance, safeguarding, MEAL, data protection, communications, etc.
- Support may include:
 - Peer mentorship from stronger ACT Alliance members
 - Participation in ACT Alliance learning forums or regional trainings
 - Grants for policy or tool development, CHS self-assessment, experts/consultants, self-assessment processes
 - Accompaniment from ACT Alliance working group members or Secretariat

2.3.5 Step 5: Enter into the Passporting System and Information Management Platform

All eligible organisations (Go/No-Go passed) with completed assessments are entered into a secure due diligence passporting system (initially SharePoint-based).

The system should include:

- Date of assessment and type (passport or ACT Alliance-led)
- Summary of findings
- Tier assignment
- Capacity support plan (if applicable)
- Expiry/renewal date for revalidation (e.g. every 2–3 years or after major changes)

2.3.6 Step 6: Governance and Quality Control

The Due Diligence Passporting Steering Group (see for more information [in this section](#)):

- Oversees consistency and integrity of assessments.
- Approves tiering decisions in complex or borderline cases.
- Monitors appeals or disputes.
- Ensures feedback from pilot members is reviewed and acted upon.

Annexes

Annex 1: Example Mapping Matrix for Benchmarking External DD Tools

To ensure consistent tiering, use a benchmarking matrix that compares external DD tools used for passporting to the 10 CHS Coherent Organisational Approach indicators.

Example (for illustration purposes only):

CHS Indicator	ACT DD tool	CHS Self-Assessment / Audit	C4C DD Assessment	Donor DD Assessment
1.6 – Transparent info-sharing and meaningful participation	Fully covered	Fully covered	Not covered	Partially covered
2.6 - Understanding of context and vulnerabilities	Fully covered	Fully covered	Not covered	Not covered
3.5 - Support reinforces locally led action	Fully covered	Fully covered	Partially covered	Not covered
4.4 – Safeguarding from exploitation and abuse	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered
4.5 - Environmental responsibility	Fully covered	Fully covered	Not covered	Fully covered
5.6 - Complaints are welcomed and acted on	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered
6.4 - Collaboration and equitable partnerships	Fully covered	Fully covered	Not covered	Partially covered
7.4 – learning and improvement	Fully covered	Fully covered	Not covered	Partially covered
8.7 – Fair and effective HR management	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered
9.6 – Ethical and effective resource management	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered	Fully covered

Annex 2: ACT Alliance-led Due Diligence Tool (Step 2)

Example (for illustration purposes only):

CHS Indicator	Core Questions	Adapted Questions / Prompts	Examples of evidence
1.6 - Transparent information-sharing and meaningful participation	<p>Does the organisation have a process or policy to share information and involve communities in decision-making?</p> <p>Does the organisation share information and involve communities in decisions?</p>	<p>How do you explain projects to communities?</p> <p>Can people provide feedback or ask questions?</p> <p>Who participates in planning or review meetings?</p> <p>Can you tell me how you share information with communities before or during your projects?</p>	<p>Information Sharing/community Engagement/Participation policies</p> <p>Community feedback mechanisms (examples)</p> <p>IEC and communication materials</p> <p>Meeting records/minutes</p> <p>Posters/flyers</p> <p>WhatsApp messages</p> <p>Community feedback stories</p>
2.6 - Understanding of context, vulnerabilities and diverse needs	<p>How does the organisation assess the needs and risks facing different groups?</p> <p>Does the organisation assess and reflect diverse needs, capacities and risks in its programming?</p>	<p>Who do you consult before designing activities?</p> <p>How do you decide who gets support?</p> <p>How do you include vulnerable groups?</p> <p>How do you make sure your programmes fit the local context or culture?</p> <p>Can you give an example where you adapted a project because of what the community told you?</p>	<p>Context/needs assessments</p> <p>Targeting criteria, Inclusion strategy</p> <p>Notes from field visits</p> <p>Staff explanations</p> <p>Selection criteria</p> <p>Examples of adapted support</p>
3.5 - Support reinforces locally led action	<p>How does the organisation promote and reinforce local leadership and decision making?</p>	<p>Are community leaders or local actors involved in decision-making?</p> <p>Who decides what gets funded or prioritised?</p> <p>How do you partner with others locally?</p> <p>Do local people or organisations help decide what activities you do or how the work is managed?</p> <p>How do you ensure they lead the process where possible?</p>	<p>MOUs with local actors</p> <p>Evidence of local leadership in governance/project design</p> <p>Localisation policy</p> <p>Evidence of shared decision-making</p> <p>Testimonies from partners</p> <p>Descriptions/ToRs for community leadership roles</p>
4.4 - Safeguarding from exploitation and abuse	<p>Are there safeguarding mechanisms to protect people from harm or abuse by staff/volunteers?</p>	<p>Do staff/volunteers understand what misconduct looks like?</p> <p>What would a community member do if something went wrong?</p> <p>Are there clear rules for staff conduct?</p>	<p>Safeguarding policy</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p> <p>DNH policy</p> <p>Staff/volunteer training records</p> <p>Complaints handling information</p>

		<p>If someone in the community has a safety concern or complaint, how do they report it?</p> <p>If someone reports abuse or harm, what would happen? Who responds?</p> <p>Can you give an example of how you responded to such a concern?</p>	<p>Contact point for concerns</p> <p>Awareness posters/materials</p>
4.5 - Environmental responsibility	Are environmental risks identified and managed in programmes?	<p>Do you consider environmental impacts when planning activities?</p> <p>Are there any local practices to reduce waste or conserve resources?</p> <p>Can you share an example where you tried to reduce waste or environmental harm?</p>	<p>Environmental policy</p> <p>Risk assessments</p> <p>Mitigation action plans</p> <p>Staff explanations</p> <p>Small-scale mitigation efforts (e.g. tree planting, avoiding plastic use)</p>
5.6 - Complaints are welcomed and acted on	Is there a complaints mechanism that is accessible to communities?	<p>Has anyone ever raised a complaint? What happened?</p> <p>How do you let people know they can complain?</p> <p>What's your process for handling complaints from community members or staff?</p> <p>Who handles complaints and how do you make sure people feel safe to speak up?</p>	<p>Complaints policy</p> <p>Complaints handling log (anonymised)</p> <p>Complaints information materials</p> <p>Oral records/verbal accounts</p> <p>Suggestion box</p> <p>Name of responsible person shared with community</p>
6.4 - Collaboration and equitable partnerships	Are partnerships based on fair decision-making and resource sharing?	<p>How are partners chosen?</p> <p>Are budgets or decisions shared?</p> <p>Do partners feel respected and heard?</p> <p>Tell me about your relationships with partners or funders.</p> <p>How are decisions and resources shared?</p> <p>How do you handle disagreements or misunderstandings?</p>	<p>Partnership policy</p> <p>Partner MOUs/agreements (showing shared roles/budgets)</p> <p>Partner feedback</p> <p>Shared work plans</p> <p>Informal agreements</p> <p>Notes from partner meetings</p>
7.4 - Learning and improvement	How does the organisation learn from past experience to improve?	<p>Do you reflect on what went well or what didn't?</p> <p>Have you changed the way you work based on experience?</p> <p>How do you document or share lessons learned?</p> <p>What do you do with lessons learned or feedback from projects?</p>	<p>MEAL system</p> <p>Learning reviews</p> <p>After-action reviews</p> <p>Project reflections</p> <p>Change logs</p> <p>Staff interviews, Examples of programme adaptation</p> <p>Team reflections</p>

		Can you give an example of how you changed your approach based on what you learned?	Internal memos Case studies/stories of change
8.7 - Fair and effective HR management	Are staff recruited and managed fairly and transparently?	How do you recruit and manage your staff or volunteers? Is there a way to raise issues or grievances? How do you ensure fair treatment? What steps do you take to make sure everyone is treated fairly and knows their role?	HR policy Job descriptions Recruitment records Staff feedback/survey data Informal HR processes Contracts or letters of agreement Reference checks
9.6 - Ethical and effective resource management	Are financial and other resources managed responsibly and ethically?	Who keeps financial records? Is there a budget? Are financial reports shared with anyone? How are purchases approved? How do you keep track of project funds? Who checks the records? Who is responsible for managing finances in your organisation? How do you keep records of money spent, and how do you ensure funds are used responsibly?	Financial manual Audited accounts Procurement policy Anti-fraud/corruption policies/measures Ledger books Signed receipts Cashbooks Bank statements Hand-written budgets

For smaller organisations that do not have a well-established policy base, it is important to adapt the process to their operational realities and context.

Key principles:

- Perfect documentation is not necessary - the aim is to understand systems and practice, not just check for formal policies and documented processes.
- Encourage storytelling - let organisations explain how they work in practice.
- Accept informal but consistent practices - for smaller organisations, reliable routines can be valid substitutes for formal systems.
- Use semi-structured discussions with staff or volunteers (guided conversations) based on a set of key themes or questions, designed to draw out evidence of practice — not just whether policies exist, but how things are done in reality.

Annex 3: Rationale

Rationale for using the 10 CHS Coherent Organisational Approach Indicators as a Strong Foundation for ACT's Due Diligence Tool

1. *They anchor accountability to communities*
 - The indicators are directly linked to the CHS nine commitments, which place affected communities at the centre.
 - This ensures that due diligence is not just about accountability to donors, but also about accountability to communities, reinforcing ethical and responsible practice.
2. *They provide a globally recognised benchmark*
 - The indicators are drawn from a globally accepted standard (CHS), providing a trusted reference point for what good quality and accountability look like.
 - They help organisations benchmark their systems and practices against a widely recognised standard which is useful for internal improvement and external credibility.
3. *They act as a practical starting point for CHS Self-Assessment*
 - For organisations unfamiliar with the CHS Self-Assessment process, the indicators serve as an entry point or foundation for self-reflection and organisational development.
 - This makes them useful for smaller or emerging organisations, enabling participation in a meaningful but manageable way.
4. *They are focused on systems not outcomes*
 - The indicators look at whether core systems, policies and practices are in place.
 - This makes them useful for due diligence purposes, allowing assessments to consider whether an organisation has the capacity to manage funds, ensure quality and manage risks.
5. *They support capacity strengthening and continuous improvement*
 - Rather than being pass/fail, the indicators help identify where an organisation is currently, where it wants to develop and what support it may need.
 - This enables the due diligence tool to serve not only as a compliance check, but also as a development pathway, in line with ACT Alliance's values around accompaniment and growth.
6. *They help identify key gaps and strengths*
 - The indicators touch on critical areas such as leadership commitment, staff capacity, risk management, complaint handling and accountability culture.
 - They enable self-reflection and external assessment of whether the foundations for safe, ethical and effective programming are in place.
7. *They are compatible with other DD Frameworks*
 - The indicators align well with other sectoral frameworks (e.g. donor compliance, C4C DDPP, Start Network DD), making them a unifying framework for passporting.
 - They allow ACT Alliance to maintain coherence with external standards while tailoring the tool to the Alliance's specific context and values.
8. *They are scalable and flexible*
 - Organisations can engage with the indicators at different levels of depth depending on their size and maturity and role, making them suitable for a tiered, inclusive due diligence model.
 - This supports context-appropriate standards while maintaining a shared standard across the Alliance.

Annex 4. List of people interviewed

	Name	Organisation	Role
ACT Alliance Secretariat			
1	Niall O'Rourke	AA Secretariat	Head of Humanitarian Affairs
2	Cyra Bullecer	AA Secretariat	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Bangkok Office
3	Rizwan Iqbal	AA Secretariat	Accountability and Safeguarding Coordinator, Global
4	Gaya Massink	Kerk in Actie	Quality & Accountability Advisor, Seconded from Kerk in Actie
5	Sokanta Chanda	AA Secretariat	Humanitarian Finance Coordinator & Member of ACT Due Diligence Working Group
6	Ioakeim Vravas	AA Secretariat	PMER Officer
7	Lars Krause	AA Secretariat	Programme Quality Advisor
8	Claudia Espinosa	AA Secretariat	LAC Focal Point
Staff from participating members			
9	Anastasia Maylinda	YAKKUM's Emergency Unit (YEU) - Indonesia	Manager
10	Charles Macharia	Anglican Development Services (ADS) - Kenya	Programme Manager
11	Catalina Catuti	AIDRom - Romania	Programmes Manager
12	Arnest Aninda Sarkar	Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) - Bangladesh	Coordinator (Bilateral Programs)
13	Josephine Ninsiima	Church of Uganda (CoU) - Uganda	Program Officer - Climate Change, Environment & DRM
14	Sami Khoury	Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) - Jordan & Palestine/Lebanon	Program Manager
15	Samer Laham	Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) - Syria and Lebanon	Regional Director of Diaconia Department
16	Ghassan Chahine	Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) - Syria and Lebanon	
17	Hobitina HANITRARIMBOLA	Sampan'asa Momba Ny Fampandrosoana (SAF) - Madagascar	Operation Manager
18	Kimberly Llanos	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO) - Colombia	Asesora Psicosocial en Paz y Reconciliación
19	Juan Pablo Alvarez	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO) - Colombia	
20	Esperanza González	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO) - Colombia	Emergency Response
21	Ana Mendivelso	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO) - Colombia	Diaconia Director
22	María Amparo Peña	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	Gerente Nacional de PME

23	Diana Aceituno	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	Volunteer
24	Suyapa Edith Ucles	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	National Manager of Programs and Safeguarding
25	Cesar Carcamo Sula	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	Manager Valle de Sula
26	Marlene Chinchilla	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	Manager La Campa Lempira
27	Raquel Lopez	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	Manager Tomala Lempira
28	Danilo Valencia	Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teológicos y Sociales (CIEETS) - Nicaragua	Director de Programa Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo
International member organisations			
29	Coleen Heemskerk	Act Church of Sweden	Humanitarian Director/ Co-Chair of ACT Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Response (EPHR) Reference Group
30	Tjitske Havinga	Kerk in Actie	Financial Officer
31	Michael Mosselmans	Christian Aid - UK	Head of Humanitarian Division/ Co-Chair of ACT EPHR Reference Group
32	Allan A. Calma	Lutheran World Federation - Switzerland	Global Humanitarian Coordinator
33	John Gilmore	Retired - Australia	Ex Co-Chair of Reference Group on Quality, Accountability & Complaints
34	Eija Alajarva	FELM - Finland	Head of Programme support and institutional funding
35	Daniela Simm	DKH - Germany	Humanitarian Advisor Partnership and Localization
36	Anna Muinonen	FCA – Finn Church Aid	Member of ACT Alliance Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints
37	Karen Birgitte Rasmussen	DCA	Member of ACT Alliance Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints
38	Terry Russell	Anglicans in Development	Members of ACT Alliance Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints
39	Gerhard Buttner	Christian Aid	Member of ACT Due Diligence Working Group
40	Renata Marie Ellingsen	Norwegian Church Aid	Member of ACT Due Diligence Working Group
National members who did not participate in the pilot			
41	Shama Mall	Community World Service Asia - Pakistan	Deputy Regional Director
42	Zainab Mir	Community World Service Asia - Pakistan	Programme Coordinator
43	Patricia Mungcal	National Council of Churches in the Philippines - Philippines	Humanitarian Lead
44	Nicolas Rosenthal	Hora de Obrar - Argentina	Director (also moderator of ACT Alliance Governing Board)

45	Kellen Machibya	Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service - Tanzania	Program Manager
46	Gabi Homsani	GOPA DERD	Member of ACT Alliance Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints
47	Karen Nazaryan	Armenian Round Table Foundation - Armenia	Executive Director
48	Tooba Siddiqi	CWSA	Member of ACT Alliance Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints
49	Ulibile Gwate	Lutheran Development Service Zimbabwe	Member of ACT Alliance Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints
51	Felix Minjale	Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD)	Malawi
50	Paul Muzalia Mulolwa	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo	Congo
52	Tomasa Morán	Christian Association for Education and Development	El Salvador
53	Keziah Kargbo	Council of Churches in Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
External stakeholders			
54	Omolola Adewunmi	CHS-Alliance	Quality Assurance Manager
55	Jordi Capdevila	CHS-Alliance	Head of Quality Assurance
56	Bonanventure Sokpoh	CHS-Alliance	Policy & Outreach Senior Advisor
57	Sarah Kambarami	HQAI	Supervisor Auditor
58	Mariela Montiel	START Network	Due Diligence Manager

Annex 5. Focus Groups Discussion

Organisation	Number of people
Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) - Honduras	5 people (4 men + 1 woman)
Anglican Development Service (ADS) - Kenya	4 people (4 men)
YAKKUM's Emergency Unit (YEU) - Indonesia	3 people (3 women)
AIDROM - Romania	4 people (3 women + 1 man)
Reference Group on Quality, Accountability and Complaints	8 people (5 women + 3 men)
Due Diligence Working Group	7 people (3 women + 4 men)

Annex 6. Survey Participants

ACT Alliance Staff

Name	Role
Niall O'Rourke	Head of Humanitarian Affairs
Cyra Bullecer	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Bangkok Office
Rizwan Iqbal	Accountability and Safeguarding Coordinator, Global
Gaya Massink	Quality & Accountability Advisor, Seconded from Kerk in Actie
Jessica Ravard	Governance and Membership Coordinator
Ruth Watson	EU Policy Advisor for Humanitarian Policy and Practice (also part of steering committee ICVA CoP)
Lars Krause	Programme Quality Advisor
Caroline Njogu	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Nairobi Office
Muhammad Waqas	Humanitarian Programme Officer, Bangkok Office
George Majaj	Acting Regional Representative, MENA
Thorsten Göbel	Executive Director
Rachel Tavernor	Advocacy and Policy Manager

Participants in the Pilot

Name	Country
YAKKUM's Emergency Unit (YEU)	Indonesia
AIDRom	Romania
Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB)	Bangladesh
Church of Uganda (CoU)	Uganda
Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR)	Jordan & Palestine/Lebanon
Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)	Syria & Lebanon
Sampan'asa Momba Ny Fampanandrosoana (SAF)	Madagascar
Cuban Council of Churches (CIC)	Cuba
Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO)	Colombia
Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM)	Honduras
Interchurch Center for Theological and Social Studies/Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teológicas y Sociales (CIEETS)	Nicaragua
Christian Center for Reflection & Dialogue/Centro Cristiano de Reflexión y Diálogo (CCRD)	Cuba
Anglican Development Services (ADS)	Kenya

International Members

Name	Country
Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS)	Australia

Cordaid	Netherlands
DanChurch Aid (DCA)	Denmark
Finn Church Aid	Global
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, FELM (2 surveys sent)	Finland
HEKS/EPER	Switzerland
UMCOR	US Based, Worldwide Programming
United Church of Christ (UCC)	United States

National Members who did not participate in the Pilot

Organisation	Country
Fundación Protestante Hora de Obrar	Argentina
Koinonia Presencia Ecumenica y Servicio	Brasil
Lutheran Hope Cambodia Organization (LHCO)	Cambodia
Evangelical Lutheran in Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
BOAD/ACT Alliance	Democratic Republic of Congo
Asociación Cristiana de Educación y Desarrollo. ALFALIT	EL Salvador
EOC DICAC	Ethiopia
Lutheran World Service India Trust	India
CDRM&CDS	Indonesia
PELKESI	Indonesia
National Council of Churches of Kenya (2 surveys sent)	Kenya
Evangelical Lutheran Development Service	Malawi
Churches Action in Relief and Development	Malawi
CEPAD	Nicaragua
Christian Council of Nigeria	Nigeria
Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization	Serbia
GOPA-DERD	SYRIA
St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee (EPDC)	Syria
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	Tanzania
Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS)	Tanzania
CEDEPCA	Guatemala
Methodist Development and Relief Agency (MeDRA)	Zimbabwe

Annex 7. Survey Questionnaires

4.1. Survey for ACT Pilot Participants

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.

This survey forms part of the Learning Review ACT's CHS Self-Assessment Pilot Project. The information gathered in this survey will only be seen by the independent consultants and will not be directly shared with ACT Alliance.

This survey is being completed by ACT Alliance members who have participated in the Pilot Project.

Responses will be collated, and only summary findings will be included in the report. The survey will close on 6 September. Please complete your response before this time.

By completing this survey, you agree that your information can be used for the evaluation. If you have any questions about the review or the survey, or you wish to provide additional information, please email the consultant, Jorge Menendez, at jmenendez@oneginconsulting.com

If you choose to answer only some questions, please click 'next' until you reach the last page. You can go back and change answers at any time during the survey.

1. General Information

1.1 Name of organisation:

1.2 Country:

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

2. Outcomes and Achievements

2.1 What were the main outcomes or achievements of the pilot in your organisation?

- Improved and strengthened institutional quality
- Improved and strengthened institutional accountability
- Identification of internal gaps
- Alignment with international standards (CHS, etc.)
- Other: _____

2.2 In your own words, what impact did this pilot have on your organisation?

Overall Perception

3.1 How would you rate your overall experience with the pilot?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

3.2 Why did you select that rating?

Identified Needs

4.1 What key needs were identified in your organisation as a result of the pilot?

4.2 What type of follow-up support would be most useful?

- Technical assistance
- Peer mentoring
- Dedicated funding for institutional strengthening
- Access to digital tools and resources
- Other: _____

3. *Common Capacity Needs*

5.1 What capacity gaps did you observe that also affect other national member organisations?

5.2 What kind of interventions could effectively address these gaps?

Pilot Design and Implementation

6.1 What aspects of the pilot's design or implementation worked well?

6.2 What aspects could be improved?

Role of the ACT Secretariat

7.1 How would you rate the support provided by the ACT Secretariat during the pilot?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not effective at all

7.2 What additional support would you expect from the ACT Secretariat in future similar initiatives?

Role of the CHS Alliance

8.1 How would you rate the support provided by the ACT Secretariat during the pilot?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not effective at all

8.2 What additional support would you expect from the ACT Secretariat in future similar initiatives?

Inclusiveness and Accessibility

9.1 Was the process inclusive and accessible to smaller or resource-constrained member organisations?

- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Don't know

9.2 What measures could improve the participation of members with fewer capacities or resources?

Additional Comments

10.1 Would you like to share any final recommendations or reflections about your participation in the pilot?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning – Survey Questions

1. Current Practices and Opportunities for Improvement

1.1 How many ACT Alliance members do you currently have that fund projects or programmes?

- 1 - 2
- 3 -5
- 5 – 10
- More than 10

1.2 Do all members conduct an individual due diligence process?

- Yes, all members perform their own due diligence process
- No, between 75% and 99% of members perform due diligence
- No, between 50% and 74% of members perform due diligence
- No, between 25% and 49% of members perform due diligence
- No, fewer than 25% of members perform due diligence

1.3 Do some member organisations share due diligence information with each other to reduce the burden on your organisation?

- Yes, this happens regularly and systematically
- Yes, but only occasionally or informally
- No, members do not share due diligence information
- I don't know / Not sure

1.4 How can ACT International members improve their approach to due diligence to enhance a locally led, quality response?

- By simplifying due diligence procedures to reduce the administrative burden on local organisations.
- By providing more tailored capacity-building and technical support to local members.
- By fostering greater collaboration and information sharing among members to avoid duplication.
- By developing a standardised due diligence process that all member organisations use consistently.
- By integrating local context and cultural understanding into due diligence criteria.
- By increasing transparency and communication throughout the due diligence process with all stakeholders.
- Other: explain _____

2. Risks and Benefits of Aligning CHS and Due Diligence

2.1 Do you think ACT Alliance should consider adopting a single due diligence tool aligned with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Yes, definitely – it would create coherence and reduce duplication.
- Yes, but only if it is flexible enough to adapt to different contexts and member capacities.
- Maybe – more analysis and consultations are needed before deciding.
- No – I think the current approaches are sufficient.
- No – aligning with CHS verification may not suit all members' realities or needs.

3.2 In your opinion, what would be the main benefits of aligning CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) with ACT's due diligence requirements?

- It could reduce duplication and streamline due diligence processes across the Alliance.
- It would enhance credibility and accountability by aligning with internationally recognised standards.
- It could strengthen trust and transparency between members and external partners.
- It would support more consistent and fair assessments across all members.
- I don't see significant benefits in aligning CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) with ACT's due diligence.

3.3 What do you see as the main risks or challenges in aligning the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) with ACT's due diligence requirements?

- It may be too rigid and not flexible enough to reflect local contexts and capacities.
- It could increase the administrative burden instead of reducing it.
- It might not be accepted or recognized by all members or external partners.
- There may be resource and capacity gaps to implement such an alignment effectively.
- I do not foresee significant risks or challenges in this alignment.

4. Resources and Capacity Needs

4.1 What type of resources (financial, human, technical) do you think would be required to implement a comprehensive due diligence approach across the Alliance?

- Financial
- Human
- Technical
- Others: _____

4.2 Are there specific areas where support is most urgently needed (e.g., training, tools, coordination)?

- Training
- Tools
- Coordination
- Mentoring
- Others: _____

5. Role of International Members

5.1 In your opinion, how can international ACT members support local members in strengthening their due diligence capacities?

- By providing technical assistance and mentoring
- By providing training
- By offering financial support
- By advocating for simplified and context-sensitive requirements with external donors.
- By facilitating peer-to-peer learning and exchange between local and international members.
- By providing financial support for peer-to-peer learning and exchange between local members.
- I'm not sure / I don't think international members have a significant role to play in this area.

5.2 What recommendations would you suggest to improve how ACT Alliance approaches due diligence across the membership?

- Recommendations 1:
 - Recommendations 2:
 - Recommendations 3:
-

4.2. Survey for ACT National Members Who Did Not Participate in the Pilot

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.

This survey forms part of the Learning Review ACT's CHS Self-Assessment Pilot Project. The information gathered in this survey will only be seen by the independent consultants and will not be directly shared with ACT Alliance.

This survey is being completed by ACT Alliance members who Did Not Participate in the Pilot

Responses will be collated, and only summary findings will be included in the report. The survey will close on 6 September. Please complete your response before this time.

By completing this survey, you agree that your information can be used for the evaluation. If you have any questions about the review or the survey, or you wish to provide additional information, please email the consultant, Jorge Menendez, at jmenendez@oneginconsulting.com

If you choose to answer only some questions, please click 'next' until you reach the last page. You can go back and change answers at any time during the survey.

1. General Information

1.1 Name of organisation:

1.2 Country:

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

2. Awareness and Perception of the Pilot

2.1 Were you aware of the pilot and the opportunity to participate?

Yes

No

Not sure

2.2 If yes, what was the main reason your organisation did not participate?

Lack of time or human resources

Lack of information or clarity about the pilot

Limited organisational interest at the time

Other (please specify): _____

2.3 From your perspective, what was your general impression of the pilot and its relevance for national members?

Capacity and Support Needs

3.1 Has your organization identified institutional strengthening needs that a similar pilot could help address?

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, please describe briefly:

3.2 What type of support would be most useful for your organisation in a future pilot?

Technical guidance and tools

Peer learning and mentoring

Access to funding for institutional development

External assessments and feedback

Other: _____

3. Interest in Future Participation

4.1 Would your organisation be interested in participating in a similar pilot in the future?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

4.2 What conditions would help facilitate your participation in the future?

Inclusiveness and Accessibility

5.1 What barriers do you see for smaller or resource-constrained organizations to participate in self-assessments or CHS assessments?

5.2 What would make such initiatives more accessible and inclusive?

Final Comments

6.1 Any additional feedback or suggestions you would like to share?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning – Survey Questions

1. Current Practices and Opportunities for Improvement

1.1 How many ACT Alliance members do you currently have that fund projects or programmes?

- 1 - 2
- 3 -5
- 5 – 10
- More than 10

1.2 Do all members conduct an individual due diligence process?

- Yes, all members perform their own due diligence process
- No, between 75% and 99% of members perform due diligence
- No, between 50% and 74% of members perform due diligence
- No, between 25% and 49% of members perform due diligence
- No, fewer than 25% of members perform due diligence

1.3 Do some member organisations share due diligence information with each other to reduce the burden on your organisation?

- Yes, this happens regularly and systematically
- Yes, but only occasionally or informally
- No, members do not share due diligence information
- I don't know / Not sure

1.4 How can ACT International members improve their approach to due diligence to enhance a locally led, quality response?

- By simplifying due diligence procedures to reduce the administrative burden on local organisations.
- By providing more tailored capacity-building and technical support to local members.
- By fostering greater collaboration and information sharing among members to avoid duplication.
- By developing a standardised due diligence process that all member organisations use consistently.
- By integrating local context and cultural understanding into due diligence criteria.

- By increasing transparency and communication throughout the due diligence process with all stakeholders.
- Other: explain _____

1.5 How familiar are you with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- I am very familiar and have implemented the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)
- I am somewhat familiar with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) but have limited practical experience.
- I have heard of the self-assessment process but have not used it.
- I am not familiar with the self-assessment process
- I am unsure or need more information about these processes.

2. Risks and Benefits of Aligning CHS and Due Diligence

2.1 Do you think ACT Alliance should consider adopting a single due diligence tool aligned with CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Yes, definitely – it would create coherence and reduce duplication.
- Yes, but only if it is flexible enough to adapt to different contexts and member capacities.
- Maybe – more analysis and consultations are needed before deciding.
- No – I think the current approaches are sufficient.
- No – aligning with CHS verification may not suit all members’ realities or needs.

3.2 In your opinion, what would be the main benefits of aligning CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) with ACT’s due diligence requirements?

- It could reduce duplication and streamline due diligence processes across the Alliance.
- It would enhance credibility and accountability by aligning with internationally recognised standards.
- It could strengthen trust and transparency between members and external partners.
- It would support more consistent and fair assessments across all members.
- I don’t see significant benefits in aligning CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) with ACT’s due diligence.

3.3 What do you see as the main risks or challenges in aligning the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) with ACT’s due diligence requirements?

- It may be too rigid and not flexible enough to reflect local contexts and capacities.
- It could increase the administrative burden instead of reducing it.
- It might not be accepted or recognized by all members or external partners.
- There may be resource and capacity gaps to implement such an alignment effectively.
- I do not foresee significant risks or challenges in this alignment.

4. Resources and Capacity Needs

4.1 What type of resources (financial, human, technical) do you think would be required to implement a comprehensive due diligence approach across the Alliance?

- Financial
- Human
- Technical
- Others: _____

4.2 Are there specific areas where support is most urgently needed (e.g., training, tools, coordination)?

- Training
- Tools
- Coordination
- Mentoring

Others: _____

5. Role of International Members

5.1 In your opinion, how can international ACT members support local members in strengthening their due diligence capacities?

- By providing technical assistance and mentoring
- By providing training
- By offering financial support
- By advocating for simplified and context-sensitive requirements with external donors.
- By facilitating peer-to-peer learning and exchange between local and international members.
- By providing financial support for peer-to-peer learning and exchange between local members.
- I'm not sure / I don't think international members have a significant role to play in this area.

5.2 What recommendations would you suggest to improve how ACT Alliance approaches due diligence across the membership?

Recommendations 1:

Recommendations 2:

Recommendations 3:

4.3. Survey for International Members

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.

This survey forms part of the Learning Review ACT's CHS Self-Assessment Pilot Project. The information gathered in this survey will only be seen by the independent consultants and will not be directly shared with ACT Alliance.

This survey is being completed by international members of ACT Alliance.

Responses will be collated, and only summary findings will be included in the report. The survey will close on 6 September. Please complete your response before this time.

By completing this survey, you agree that your information can be used for the evaluation. If you have any questions about the review or the survey, or you wish to provide additional information, please email the consultant, Jorge Menendez, at jmenendez@oneginconsulting.com

If you choose to answer only some questions, please click 'next' until you reach the last page. You can go back and change answers at any time during the survey.

1. General Information

1.1 Name of organisation:

1.2 Country or regional scope:

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

2. Awareness and Engagement with the Pilot

2.1 Were you aware of the ACT pilot project on CHS self-assessment?

Yes

No

Somewhat

2.2 Did your organisation have any involvement or receive updates during the pilot?

Yes

No

Not sure

2.3 If yes, what was your level of engagement or observation?

Active engagement

Occasional updates

Indirect observation only

Other: _____

3. Perceived Value and Benefits

3.1 In your view, what were the key strengths or benefits of the pilot? (Select all that apply)

Promoted ownership and learning among national members

Helped identify real institutional capacity gaps

Contributed to quality and accountability improvements

Provided a cost-effective model for due diligence

Enhanced alignment with CHS or donor expectations

Other (explain): _____

3.2 Please describe any specific strengths or results you observed or were informed about:

Weaknesses and Risks

4.1 What weaknesses or limitations did you observe or foresee in this pilot approach?

- Limited external validation
- Potential for bias in self-assessment
- Not standardised across contexts
- Low scalability
- Other: _____

4.2 Please elaborate on any concerns or drawbacks you see with the self-assessment model:

Future Potential and Recommendations

5.1 Would you support the use of similar approaches (e.g., self-assessments + facilitated guidance) in future institutional strengthening efforts?

- Yes
- Possibly
- No
- Not sure

5.2 What would increase your confidence in this type of model?

- External review or triangulation
- Integration with funding or capacity-building programs
- Use of recognised standards (e.g., CHS, Sphere)
- Stronger monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- Other: _____

5.3 What recommendations would you offer to improve the effectiveness or credibility of this type of initiative?

Final Comments

3.1 Do you have any additional reflections, suggestions, or areas of interest from your organisation regarding members' assessments or capacity strengthening?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning**Section 1: Current Practices and Opportunities for Improvement**

1.1 How many national ACT Alliance members do you currently fund or support through project or program funding?

- 1 – 2
- 3 – 5
- 6 – 10
- More than 10

1.2 Do you carry out an individual due diligence process for each local member?

- Yes, we conduct our own due diligence with all members
- Yes, but only for some members
- No, we rely on another member's due diligence in most cases
- We use a mix of individual and shared due diligence
- We do not have a formal due diligence process

1.3 Do you currently share your due diligence findings or documentation with other ACT members?

- Yes, regularly and systematically
- Yes, occasionally or informally
- No, we do not share due diligence information
- I don't know / Not applicable

1.4 Do you currently share your due diligence findings or documentation with the ACT Alliance Secretariat?

- Yes, regularly and systematically
- Yes, occasionally or informally
- No, we do not share due diligence information
- I don't know / Not applicable

1.5 In your opinion, what could be improved in the due diligence practices to enable a more locally led, efficient, and accountable approach?

- Simplify and harmonise due diligence procedures to reduce administrative burden
- Increase tailored capacity strengthening for national members
- Promote structured collaboration and information sharing between members
- Develop and adopt a common due diligence tool or standard across the Alliance
- Incorporate greater understanding of local context and systems into due diligence
- Enhance transparency and communication during the due diligence process
- Other: _____

1.6 How familiar are you with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Very familiar – our organisation has implemented it
- Somewhat familiar – we know about it but haven't applied it
- Aware – we have heard of it but not used it
- Not familiar
- Need more information

Section 2: Alignment Between CHS and Due Diligence

2.1 Should ACT Alliance consider adopting a shared due diligence approach aligned with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Yes, definitely – it would improve coherence and reduce duplication
- Yes, but only if flexible and adaptable to different contexts
- Maybe – further consultation and evidence is needed
- No – current approaches are adequate
- No – CHS alignment may not work for all members

2.2 What do you see as the main benefits of aligning due diligence processes with CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Reduced duplication and more streamlined due diligence
- Increased accountability and credibility through alignment with global standards
- Greater consistency and fairness across ACT members
- Improved trust and transparency within the Alliance
- I do not see strong benefits to alignment

2.3 What are the main risks or challenges of aligning ACT due diligence with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Lack of flexibility for diverse local contexts
- Potential for increased administrative burden

- Limited acceptance across the membership
- Lack of capacity and resources to implement the alignment
- I don't see major risks

Section 3: Capacity and Resource Needs

3.1 What types of resources would be required to implement a harmonised due diligence approach across ACT Alliance?

- Financial
- Human
- Technical
- Other: _____

3.2 In which areas can your organisation support national members to strengthen their due diligence capacity?

- Provide technical assistance and mentoring
- Deliver targeted training
- Offer financial support
- Advocate with donors for more appropriate, simplified requirements
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning between members
- Fund peer-to-peer learning among local members
- I don't think international members have a major role in this area

3.4 What recommendations do you have to strengthen ACT Alliance's overall approach to due diligence?

Recommendation 1:

Recommendation 2:

Recommendation 3:

4.4. Survey for ACT Alliance Secretariat Staff

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.

This survey forms part of the Learning Review ACT's CHS Self-Assessment Pilot Project. The information gathered in this survey will only be seen by the independent consultants and will not be directly shared with ACT Alliance.

This survey is being completed by ACT Alliance Secretariat Staff

Responses will be collated, and only summary findings will be included in the report. The survey will close on 6 September. Please complete your response before this time.

By completing this survey, you agree that your information can be used for the evaluation. If you have any questions about the review or the survey, or you wish to provide additional information, please email the consultant, Jorge Menendez, at jmenendez@oneginconsulting.com

If you choose to answer only some questions, please click 'next' until you reach the last page. You can go back and change answers at any time during the survey.

1. General Information

1.1 Name:

1.2 Department/Unit:

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

2. Engagement and Roles

2.1 What was your role or level of involvement in the pilot initiative?

Coordination/Management

Technical Support

Monitoring and Evaluation

Communications/Advocacy

I was not involved

Other: _____

2.2 How would you describe your overall experience supporting this pilot?

Effectiveness of Internal Processes

3.1 Which elements of the pilot's internal planning and implementation worked well?

3.2 What challenges or limitations did you face during implementation?

Time constraints

Coordination with national members

Resource limitations

Lack of clear tools/guidance

Other: _____

3.3 How effectively were Secretariat staff coordinated and supported during the pilot?

Very effectively

Somewhat effectively

- Not very effectively
- Not sure

3. Outcomes and Stakeholder Feedback

4.1 From your perspective, what were the main outcomes or achievements of the pilot?

4.2 Based on communications with international and national members, how was the pilot perceived externally?

4.3 What value did Secretariat's involvement add to the pilot?

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

5.1 What key lessons learned should be applied to future pilots or institutional strengthening initiatives?

5.2 What specific tools, guidelines, or support mechanisms would improve Secretariat operations in similar initiatives?

Final Comments

6.1 Any additional reflections, suggestions, or concerns you would like to share?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

Section 1: Current Practices and Opportunities for Improvement

1.1 Do you carry out an individual due diligence process for each national member?

- Yes, we conduct our own due diligence with all members
- Yes, but only for some members
- No, we rely on another member's due diligence in most cases
- We use a mix of individual and shared due diligence
- We do not have a formal due diligence process

1.2 Do you currently share your due diligence findings or documentation with other ACT members?

- Yes, regularly and systematically
- Yes, occasionally or informally
- No, we do not share due diligence information
- I don't know / Not applicable

1.3 In your opinion, what could be improved in the due diligence practices in the ACT Alliance to enable a more locally led, efficient, and accountable approach?

- Simplify and harmonise due diligence procedures to reduce administrative burden
- Increase tailored capacity strengthening for national members
- Promote structured collaboration and information sharing between members
- Develop and adopt a common due diligence tool or standard across the Alliance
- Incorporate greater understanding of local context and systems into due diligence
- Enhance transparency and communication during the due diligence process
- Other: _____

1.4 How familiar are you with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Very familiar – our organisation has implemented it
- Somewhat familiar – we know about it but haven't applied it
- Aware – we have heard of it but not used it
- Not familiar
- Need more information

Section 2: Alignment Between CHS and Due Diligence

2.1 Should ACT Alliance consider adopting a shared due diligence approach aligned with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Yes, definitely – it would improve coherence and reduce duplication
- Yes, but only if flexible and adaptable to different contexts
- Maybe – further consultation and evidence is needed
- No – current approaches are adequate
- No – CHS alignment may not work for all members

2.2 What do you see as the main benefits of aligning due diligence processes with CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Reduced duplication and more streamlined due diligence
- Increased accountability and credibility through alignment with global standards
- Greater consistency and fairness across ACT members
- Improved trust and transparency within the Alliance
- I do not see strong benefits to alignment

2.3 What are the main risks or challenges of aligning ACT due diligence with the CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)?

- Lack of flexibility for diverse local contexts
- Potential for increased administrative burden
- Limited acceptance across the membership
- Lack of capacity and resources to implement the alignment
- I don't see major risks

Section 3: Capacity and Resource Needs

3.1 What types of resources would be required to implement a harmonised due diligence approach across ACT Alliance?

- Financial
- Human
- Technical
- Other: _____

3.2 In which areas can the Secretariat support national members to strengthen their due diligence capacity?

- Provide technical assistance and mentoring
- Deliver targeted training
- Offer financial support
- Advocate with donors for more appropriate, simplified requirements
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning between members
- Fund peer-to-peer learning among local members
- I don't think international members have a major role in this area

3.4 What recommendations do you have to strengthen ACT Alliance's overall approach to due diligence?

- Recommendation 1:
- Recommendation 2:
- Recommendation 3:

Annex 8. Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews Questions

5.1. ACT Pilot Participants' Questions

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

A. Key Outcomes and Achievements

- In your view, what were the most significant results or achievements of the pilot project?
- Were the intended objectives of the pilot clearly defined and met? Why or why not?

B. Perception of the Pilot

- How would you describe your overall experience with the pilot project?
- What were the most valuable aspects of your participation in the pilot?
- Did the pilot meet your expectations? Please explain.

C. Identified Needs and Follow-Up Support

- What specific capacity gaps or organisational needs were identified during the pilot?
- What kind of follow-up support would be most useful for your organisation?
- Do you think the pilot created momentum for longer-term institutional strengthening? Why or why not?

D. Common Capacity Needs Across Members

- Were there any capacity challenges or support needs that you saw repeatedly across multiple members?
- Are there areas where joint capacity strengthening (e.g. peer learning or shared tools) would be helpful?

E. Design and Implementation

- What elements of the pilot's design and implementation worked particularly well?
- What aspects could be improved in future phases or similar initiatives?

F. Support from ACT Secretariat

- How would you assess the quality and timeliness of the support provided by the ACT Secretariat?
- What other kinds of support would you expect from the Secretariat in future pilots or processes?

G. Inclusion and Accessibility

- Was the process inclusive and accessible for members of different sizes and capacities?
- Did your organisation face any challenges in fully participating in the pilot?
- How could the process be made more accessible, especially for smaller or resource-constrained members?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

A. Current Practice & Challenges

- What due diligence processes have you undergone in the past 12–24 months?
- How do the current due diligence demands from different ACT International members affect your operations?
- Have you been asked to repeat similar due diligence processes for different ACT International members?

B. CHS and Quality Standards

- Were you applying the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) prior to being involved in the pilot project?
- Did you find CHS self-assessment process useful for improving your systems and access to funding?

C. Experience with ACT Processes

- What is your experience with ACT's own due diligence processes?
- Are these processes supportive of your organisation's growth and local leadership and how? If not, why not?

D. Capacity and Resource Needs

- What type of support (technical, financial, mentorship) do you need to strengthen your systems to meet due diligence standards?
- How do you prefer such support to be provided — by ACT Secretariat, larger members, external partners?

5.2. ACT National Members Who Did Not Participate in the Pilot

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

A. Perception and Awareness of the Pilot

- Were you aware of the pilot project and its objectives?
- How was the pilot presented to your organisation?
- What were your initial impressions or thoughts about the pilot?

B. Decision Not to Participate

- What were the main reasons your organisation chose not to participate in the pilot?
- Were there any specific concerns or barriers (e.g. capacity, time, relevance) that influenced your decision?
- Was the timing, format, or requirements of the pilot a factor in your decision?

C. Perceived Value and Relevance

- From your perspective, what were the most important achievements or benefits of the pilot for participating members?
- Do you believe this type of pilot could be relevant or useful for your organisation in the future?
- What aspects of the pilot made it more or less attractive to your context?

D. Identified Organisational Needs

- Even though you did not participate, has your organisation identified any capacity strengthening or institutional needs that could be addressed through similar initiatives?
- What kind of support would be most valuable to your organisation in the coming years?

E. Feedback on Design and Accessibility

- Based on what you know, were the design and implementation of the pilot appropriate and accessible for smaller or resource-constrained members?
- What suggestions would you have to improve the accessibility or relevance of future initiatives like this?

F. Role of the ACT Secretariat

- How could the ACT Secretariat better support members like yours to engage in future pilots or institutional strengthening efforts?
- What type of communication or outreach would make participation more feasible for your organisation?

G. Recommendations for Future Initiatives

- What changes or conditions would make participation more likely or beneficial for your organisation?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

A. Current Practice & Challenges

- What due diligence processes have you undergone in the past 12–24 months?
- How do the current due diligence demands from different ACT International members affect your operations?
- Have you been asked to repeat similar due diligence processes for different ACT International members?

B. CHS and Quality Standards

- Do you apply the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) in your organisation/projects?
- Have you engaged in the CHS self-assessment process outside of the pilot project? If so, was it useful for improving your systems and access to funding?

C. Experience with ACT Processes

- What is your experience with ACT's own due diligence processes?
- Are these processes supportive of your organisation's growth and local leadership and how? If not, why not?

D. Capacity and Resource Needs

- What type of support (technical, financial, mentorship) do you need to strengthen your systems to meet due diligence standards?
- How do you prefer such support to be provided — by ACT Secretariat, ACT International members, external partners?

5.3. International Members of ACT Alliance

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

A. Awareness and Perception of the Pilot

- Were you informed about the pilot project and its objectives?
- What was your general impression of the pilot initiative and its relevance to the Alliance?
- Do you believe such initiatives add value to the broader ACT Alliance?

B. Engagement and Role

- Did your organisation play any role in the pilot (e.g. funding, technical support, peer learning)?
- If not, would you have been interested in being involved? In what capacity?
- How do you see the role of international members in supporting similar pilot initiatives?

C. Perceived Impact and Results

- From your perspective, what were the most important outcomes or learnings from the pilot?
- Do you think the pilot contributed meaningfully to strengthening national members' institutional capacities?
- What aspects of the pilot do you consider particularly successful or innovative?

D. Alignment with Broader Strategic Goals

- How well do you think the pilot aligns with ACT Alliance's strategic priorities, such as localisation, accountability, and mutual capacity sharing?

- Do you see this type of pilot as a pathway toward more equitable partnerships within the Alliance?

E. Support and Collaboration Opportunities

- What support (financial, technical, advocacy) could your organisation offer to strengthen national member capacities in future initiatives?
- Would your organisation be open to sharing due diligence information, tools, or resources with other members as part of a harmonised approach?

F. Reflections on Design and Scalability

- What could be improved in the design or implementation of future pilots to make them more inclusive, scalable, or impactful?
- Do you see value in expanding or institutionalising this type of initiative across the Alliance?

G. Recommendations for Future Phases

- What specific recommendations would you offer for improving future rounds or similar initiatives?
- How can the ACT Secretariat and international members collaborate more effectively to support national member capacity strengthening?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

- What due diligence criteria do you currently use when channeling funds to ACT Alliance members?
- Do you or would you accept CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) as a basis for reduced due diligence (passporting)? Why or why not?
- What are your key risks or compliance concerns when working with smaller/local members?
- Would you support a shared due diligence system that is aligned with CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification)? Why or why not?
- What would make a passporting due diligence system workable and trustworthy for you for the Alliance?
- Are you willing to invest in the capacity strengthening of local members? In what form?
- Are you willing to invest in capacity support to the Secretariat to support an alliance-wide system for due diligence and due diligence passporting? In what form?

5.4. ACT Alliance Secretariat Staff

Section: Pilot Project Effectiveness

A. Strategic Rationale and Design

- What was the main rationale behind launching this pilot project?
- To what extent did the design of the pilot reflect ACT Alliance's strategic goals (e.g. localisation, strengthening national members, harmonised due diligence)?
- What key factors or assumptions influenced the approach taken?

B. Implementation and Coordination

- What worked well in the coordination and implementation of the pilot at the Secretariat level?
- What challenges were encountered during the implementation, and how were they addressed?
- How effective was internal collaboration between departments or units involved in supporting the pilot?

C. Engagement and Participation

- How would you assess the level of engagement from participating national members?
- Were there any specific barriers to participation that the Secretariat observed or helped address?
- What strategies were used to ensure accessibility and inclusion, especially for smaller or lower-capacity members?

D. Outcomes and Learning

- From your perspective, what were the most significant results or learnings from the pilot?
- How has the pilot contributed to understanding the capacity needs of national members?
- Did any unexpected insights or needs emerge that could shape future programming?

E. Internal Reflection and Capacity

- What internal capacities or processes within the Secretariat supported or limited the pilot's success?
- What lessons has the Secretariat drawn from this pilot for future multi-member initiatives?
- Is there a need to strengthen specific areas internally (e.g. facilitation, monitoring, coordination) to better support such processes?

F. Alignment with CHS and Due Diligence

- How do you see the role of the pilot in informing or supporting a more harmonised approach to due diligence?
- Should ACT Alliance move toward a common framework or tool (e.g. based on CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification))? Why or why not?

G. Next Steps and Recommendations

- What would you recommend as next steps to consolidate the pilot's results?
- What would be needed (resources, structures, partnerships) to scale or institutionalise this type of initiative?
- How could the Secretariat strengthen its role in supporting member-led institutional development in the future?

Section: Strategic Fit and Forward Planning

Challenges and Gaps

- What barriers have you faced in trying to get broader ACT member buy-in for using CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) as a basis for due diligence?
- What are the limitations of using CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) for the Alliance's for due diligence purposes?
- Are there common areas of weakness that have emerged during the pilot that might impact the ability of members participating in the pilot to pass standard/typical donor due diligence requirements? What are they?

Integration and Passporting Across the Alliance

- In your view, what's needed to make due-diligence passporting work across diverse ACT members?
- What concerns, if any, have larger (donor) members raised about relying on CHS Verification Mechanism (self-assessment/certification) or passported due diligence from other members?
- What ACT-specific requirements would need to be included in a passporting tool that aren't already covered by the CHS?

Tool Development and Next Steps

- Based on the pilot, what features would a practical due diligence tool need to have to serve both donor and implementing members?
- Do you think a tiered or risk-based approach to due diligence (e.g. based on funding size or program risk) would be helpful?
- How should the Alliance ensure the quality, trust, and consistency of passported self-assessments? (e.g. peer review, third-party validation, digital platform?)

Capacity Strengthening and Equity

- How can the Secretariat or international members better support smaller/local members to strengthen their systems based on CHS or due diligence results?
- What has worked well (or not) in terms of sharing resources or technical expertise during the pilot?

Looking Forward

- What would success look like for you in the next 12–18 months regarding due diligence passporting within ACT?
- What support does the Secretariat need to take this initiative to scale (from members, leadership, donors).