

### **About ACFID**

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action.

#### **ACFID'S VISION**

- A world where all people are free from extreme poverty, injustice and inequality
- A world where the earth's finite resources are managed sustainably
- A compassionate Australia acting for a just and sustainable world

ACFID's vision will only be realised through the collective efforts of civil society actors, governments, businesses and people concerned for our common humanity.

#### **ACFID'S PURPOSE**

We lead and unite our members in action for a just, equitable and sustainable world.

Founded in 1965, ACFID has over 130 members working in 90 developing countries and supported by over 1.6 million Australians.

With our members and partners, ACFID seeks to be an influential policy voice, a catalyst for change and a standard bearer for good practice in the international development and humanitarian world.

### Foreword

ACFID's members choose to be accountable to the communities we support overseas, the communities who support us at home and the partners we collaborate with. Recognised as best practice in Australia and around the world, the ACFID Code of Conduct (the Code) is the means by which we build integrity, accountability and impact.

For the communities we support overseas, our members not only commit to protecting human rights through the Code, but aim to create a world where all individuals can enjoy their rights fully. Through setting and maintaining standards of good practice in local empowerment, the Code helps to ensure that those directly affected by a disaster or circumstance are at the heart of decision-making and development activities that create sustainable and lasting change.

For the communities who support us at home, building and maintaining trust in our work is crucial. A commitment to truthful communications which accurately describe the nature and scope of members' development work plays a critical role in accountability and transparency. ACFID's Fundraising Charter brings together fundraising standards from across states and territories to provide guidance on the suitable use of images and materials which are consistent with our values. During humanitarian appeals, our

members must communicate specifically what funds will be used for, offering clarity and reassurance to the public about where their donation is going. The Code's governance standards ensure donors can choose the initiatives they wish to support, and find information about how their donations have been used.

#### For the partners we collaborate with,

our members' staff and volunteers are key to building effective relationships. Working for an ACFID member means staff and volunteers can expect human rights principles of fairness, equity, and respect for social and cultural diversity are deeply embedded in policies, practices and organisational culture. Under the Code, ACFID's members have the responsibility to promote legal and ethical behaviour, as well as demonstrating they have a comprehensive understanding of legal and compliance obligations and actions that are needed to be taken to meet those obligations.

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### Foreword

ACFID's independent complaints-handling process is essential to the credibility of the Code. As part of their compliance ACFID's members are required to have a public complaints mechanism which can then be escalated to a complaint which is investigated by ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee. ACFID supports our members to remain compliant through tailored advice and learning and development opportunities, but following the complaints process, a member's signatory status can be suspended or revoked.

ACFID's Code of Conduct is deliberately aspirational. It goes beyond the minimum standards required by government regulation and focuses on good practice. Through the Code we encourage our members to learn, adapt, innovate, improve and evolve. In applying the Code, our members strive to improve their accountability, strengthen their effectiveness and ultimately create an environment where the best results are possible.

In studying this quick guide, we hope to show you how being accountable to those we support, who support us and who work with us is fundamental to everything we do.

Mudwell



Marc Purcell,

## Clare Retro



Clare Petre, Chair of the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee

### Introduction to this Quick Guide

This quick guide has been developed to provide a brief overview of the key elements that make up the ACFID Code of Conduct, the compliance requirements for ACFID's members, the Code's governance and accountability mechanisms, and how to make a complaint under the Code of Conduct.

This quick guide is an explanatory tool, it is not the Code of Conduct. To read the Code of Conduct or the associated Quality Assurance Framework, visit the 'read the Code' section of ACFID's website.

For further support in using the Code, ACFID's Good Practice Toolkit provides examples of good practice as well as tools, templates and resources. ACFID's Code e-learning module also offers members an introduction to the ACFID Code of Conduct. To access these resources and for further guidance visit ACFID's website.

This guide indicates where excerpts from the Code of Conduct have been used.



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### Code of Conduct

The ACFID Code of Conduct is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. It was developed in 1997 and comprehensively revised in 2010 and 2016.

The Code aims to improve international development and humanitarian action outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of ACFID's members. In conjunction with other aspects of ACFID's work, the effective delivery of the Code will contribute to the realisation of human rights and the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Code sets standards for practice rather than standards for results. It goes beyond the minimum standards required by government regulation and focuses on good practice. It articulates ACFID's members' understanding of good organisational and development practice for NGOs involved in international development and humanitarian action. This articulation is informed by members' experiences, the Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness, the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the Global Standard for Civil Society Organisations (GS), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ACFID's vision, purpose and values.

The Code applies equally to organisations working in development responses and humanitarian responses. While it does not replace the need for members engaged in humanitarian responses to adopt and be assessed against the Core Humanitarian Standard, the Code is aligned with the

approaches and style of the CHS and the GS. This enables interoperability and ease of interpretation across these other codes.

The Code provides assurance to all ACFID's members' stakeholders by enabling high standards of practice. A suite of compliance mechanisms is designed to ensure that all Code signatories are compliant with its requirements. It also contributes to continuous improvement through guidance for good practice and a range of professional development opportunities.

#### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the Code is to improve international development and humanitarian action outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of ACFID's members.

#### **Code Objectives**

- To enable high standards of practice by ACFID's members.
- To provide assurance to the stakeholders of ACFID's members.
- To enable self-regulation and influence external regulation of the sector.
- To champion standards of good practice for a broad range of development organisations.

### **Our Values**

Collectively agreed by ACFID's members, seven shared values represent the foundations on which the Code is built.

# Integrity We act with honesty

and are guided by ethical and moral principles in all that we do.

#### Transparency

We openly share information about our organisations and our work to all our stakeholders and to the public.

### Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions and are accountable to all our stakeholders, and in particular primary stakeholders, for our performance and integrity.

#### Respect

We recognise the value and diversity of every person and are committed to treating others with due regard for their rights, dignity and integrity.



#### Effectiveness

We strive to deliver outcomes that bring about positive change in the lives of people living in poverty.

#### Equity

We are committed to overcoming prejudices and disadvantage and promoting fair and just access to resources and opportunities.

#### Cooperation

We work with and alongside others in a spirit of mutuality, respecting diversity and difference in the pursuit of common goals.

Preamble, purpose, and objectives taken from the ACFID Code of Conduct

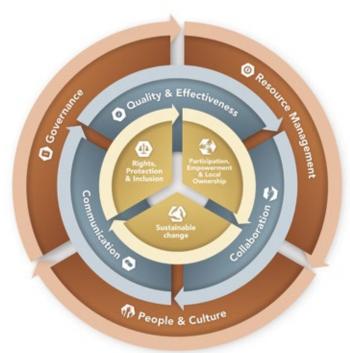
Values taken from the ACFID Code of Conduct

# Compliance

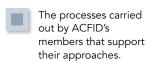
# The Code puts the shared values into practice through nine Quality Principles.

They describe high level principles of practice that, taken together, contribute to quality development and humanitarian action outcomes and increased stakeholder trust.

The nine Quality Principles are organised into three clusters as shown below.



The organisational systems of ACFID's members which provide the enabling environment for processes and approaches.



The approaches carried out by ACFID's members to achieve effective development and humanitarian outcomes

Figure 1 taken from the ACFID Code of Conduct – Architecture of the Code

# The Code's Quality Principles and Commitments

The nine Quality Principles each have a set of associated commitments which apply directly to ACFID's members and reflects the behaviours they are expected to adhere to.

#### **QUALITY PRINCIPLES**

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#### 1. Rights, Protection & Inclusion

Development and humanitarian responses respect and protect human rights and advance inclusion.

#### **COMMITMENTS**

- **1.1** We respect and protect human rights.
- 1.2 We respect and respond to the needs, rights and inclusion of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion
- .3 We support people affected by crisis.
- **1.4** We advance the safeguarding of children



# 2. Participation, Empowerment& Local Ownership

Development and humanitarian responses enable sustainable change through the empowerment of local actors and systems.

- **2.1** We promote the participation of primary stakeholders.
- **2.2** We promote the empowerment of primary stakeholders.
- **2.3** We promote gender equality and equity.
- **2.4** We promote the empowerment of people with disabilities.
- **2.5** We promote the participation of children.

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#### 3. Sustainable Change

Development and humanitarian responses contribute to the realisation of sustainable development.

- **3.1** We seek durable and lasting improvements in the circumstances and capacities of primary stakeholders.
- **3.2** We contribute to systemic change.
- **3.3** We promote environmental stewardship and sustainability.



#### 4. Quality And Effectiveness

Development and humanitarian organisations and responses are informed by evidence, planning, assessment and learning.

- **4.1** We articulate clear strategic goals for our work.
- **4.2** We analyse and understand the contexts in which we work.
- **4.3** We invest in quality assessment of our work.
- **4.4** We reflect on, share and apply results and lessons with stakeholders.



#### 5. Collaboration

Development and humanitarian responses are optimised through effective coordination, collaboration and partnership.

- **5.1** We respect and understand those with whom we collaborate.
- **5.2** We have a shared understanding of respective contributions, expectations, responsibilities and accountabilities of all parties.
- **5.3** We invest in the effectiveness of our collaborations and partnerships.



#### 6. Communication

Development and humanitarian organisations communicate truthfully and ethically.

- **6.1** We are truthful in our communications.
- **6.2** We collect and use information ethically.



#### 7. Governance

Development and humanitarian organisations are governed in an accountable, transparent and responsible way.

- **7.1** We are not-for-profit and formed for a defined public benefit.
- 7.2 We meet our legal and compliance obligations.
- **7.3** We are accountable to our stakeholders.
- 7.4 We have responsible and independent governance mechanisms.



#### 8. Resource Management

Development and humanitarian organisations acquire, manage and report on resources ethically and responsibly.

- **8.1** We source our resources ethically
- **8.2** We ensure that funds and resources entrusted to us are properly controlled and managed.
- **8.3** We report on the acquisition and use of our resources.



#### 9. People And Culture

Development and humanitarian organisations manage and support their people fairly and effectively.

- **9.1** We have the human resource capacity and capability to deliver our work.
- **9.2** We protect, value and support our people.
- **9.3** We manage our people effectively and fairly.
- **9.4** We enable our people to conduct themselves professionally and according to our stated values.

Quality Principles and Commitments taken rom the ACFID Code of Conduct

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# What are the requirements for ACFID's members?

Each Commitment has associated Compliance and Good Practice Indicators. They provide the basis for assessing compliance and continuous improvement.

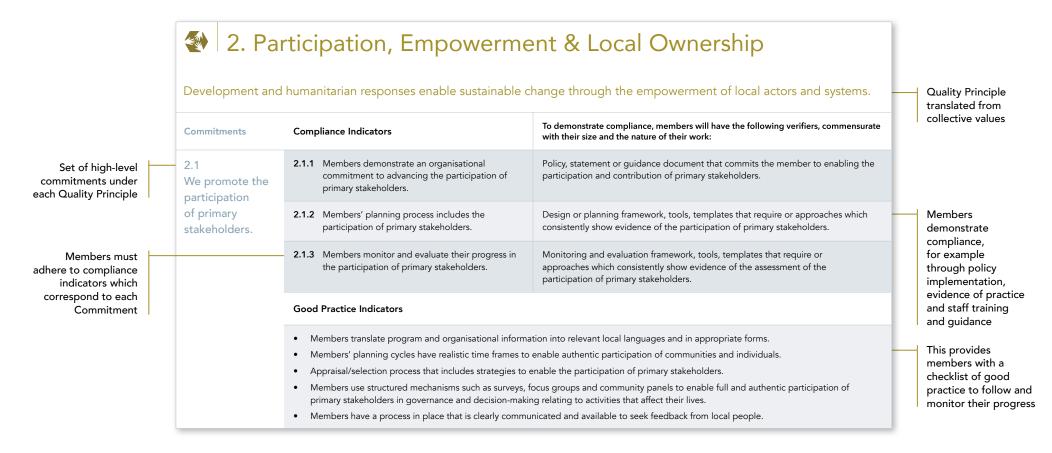
Members must meet the Compliance Indicators and adhere to the Code's compliance mechanisms in order to be considered compliant with the Code. Each Compliance Indicator includes Verifiers which provide the evidence of Code implementation. For example, this could be a policy, procedure or guidance implemented by the member.

The Good Practice Indicators describe a higher standard of practice compared to the Compliance Indicators. Members work towards achieving the Good Practice Indicators over time but do not need to meet them to be considered compliant.

This example taken from the Code's Quality Assurance Framework shows

how members are required to meet each Quality Principle.

The Compliance Indicators, Compliance Verifiers, Good Practice Indicators and associated definitions form part of the Code's Quality Assurance Framework. To study the Verifiers and Good Practice Indicators in detail consult the Framework. Visit ACFID's website to download a copy or contact ACFID to request a copy.



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### Who oversees the Code?

The Code is independently governed by the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee (the CCC).

The CCC determines whether new members are code compliant; monitors compliance of existing members; and handles complaints made against ACFID's members. Only the CCC can grant, suspend and revoke Code signatory status.

#### Compliance with the Code

The ACFID Code of Conduct is voluntary and self-regulatory. ACFID's members commit to being compliant with all aspects of the Code, and to continuously monitor their compliance.

Responsibility for compliance with the Code rests primarily with ACFID's members who self-assess against the Compliance Indicators. The governing body of each ACFID member has primary responsibility for verifying compliance with all Compliance Indicators. ACFID undertakes relatively limited external verification in line with the principle of self-regulation.

The Code applies to all ACFID's members and their international development and humanitarian programs. Members are expected to use all reasonable efforts to support their implementing partners to operate in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct when delivering aspects of a member-supported initiative. Further, there are some requirements which members must extend to partners

through MOUs or similar including those relating to child safeguarding, separation of development and non-development activity, financial wrongdoing and complaints handling.

Compliance is assured through a suite of mechanisms by which ACFID's members are bound. These include:

- Assessment of Code compliance on application for membership;
- A public commitment to the Code and links to the Code complaints handling process on member websites;
- · Submission of a triennial Code Self-Assessment (CSA), which is reviewed by ACFID;
- Submission of annual and financial reports, together with an exceptions report, which notes exceptions to compliance that have occurred during the previous year, and corrective action taken;
- Spot checks carried out by ACFID on any areas of potential non-compliance, including checks of websites undertaken: and
- An independent complaints handling process

## List of ACFID's Members

#### Non-Compliance

If a member is found to be noncompliant with the Code at any time, the member is required to submit a plan of corrective action which will return them to compliance.

If a member does not achieve compliance within an agreed period, a set of sanctions will be implemented which extends to suspension and revocation of code signatory status. ACFID will publicise suspensions or revocation.

#### Complaints about an ACFID member

All ACFID members have their own mechanisms to handle complaints and this information can be found on their websites. All complaints should first be raised with the relevant ACFID member.

If you are not satisfied with the member's response or believe it is not appropriate to refer the matter to the member's own complaints-handling process, a complaint can be lodged directly with the Code of Conduct Committee.

## Code of Conduct Committee Complaints Handling

The CCC provides an independent mechanism to address any complaints made against an ACFID member which is believed to have breached the Code.

ACFID's members agree to be bound by the independent, accessible, fair and confidential complaints handling process by:

- Complying with the complaints process as set out in the Code Good Practice Toolkit:
- Complying with CCC requests for information within all reasonable time limits set; and
- Where a breach of the Code is identified, complying with the corrective or disciplinary action agreed to with the CCC.

Further details about the complaints process and how to make a complaint to one of ACFID's members or via the CCC can be found on ACFID's website – www.acfid.asn.au.

#### **FULL ACFID MEMBERS**

ACC International Relief

Act for Peace – NCCA

ActionAid Australia

Action on Poverty

Adara Development Australia

ADRA Australia

Afghan Australian
Development Organisation

Anglican Aid

Anglican Board of Mission

Anglican Overseas Aid

Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia

Asia Pacific Journalism Centre

Asian Aid Organisation

Assisi Aid Projects

Australasian Society for HIV Medicine

Australia for UNHCR

Australia Hope International Inc.

Australian Business Volunteers Australian Doctors for Africa

Australian Doctors International

Australian Himalayan Foundation

Australian Lutheran World Service

Australian Marist Solidarity

Australian Medical Aid Foundation

Australian Mercy

Australian Red Cross

Australian Respiratory Council

AVI

Beyond the Orphanage

Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia)

Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation

Bright Futures Child Aid and Development Fund (Australia)

**Burnet Institute** 

Business for Millennium Development

CARE Australia

Caritas Australia

CBM Australia

ChildFund Australia

CLAN (Caring and Living as Neighbours)

Credit Union Foundation Australia

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Fund

Diaspora Action Australia

Diplomacy Training Program

Door of Hope Australia Inc.

Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)

**EDO NSW** 

**Engineers without Borders** 

Every Home Global Concern

Family Planning New South Wales

Fairtrade Australia New Zealand

Food Water Shelter

Foresight (Overseas Aid and Prevention of Blindness)

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Fred Hollows Foundation, The

Global Development Group

Global Mission Partners

Good Return

Good Shepherd Services

Grameen Foundation Australia

Habitat for Humanity Australia

Hagar Australia

HealthServe Australia

Heilala

Hope Global

The Hunger Project Australia

International Children's Care (Australia)

International Christian Aid and Relief Enterprises

International Needs Australia

International Nepal Fellowship (Aust) Ltd

International RiverFoundation

International Women's Development Agency

Interplast Australia & New Zealand Islamic Relief Australia

KTF (Kokoda Track Foundation)

Kyeema Foundation

Lasallian Foundation

Leprosy Mission Australia, The

Live & Learn Environmental Education

Love Mercy Foundation

Mahboba's Promise Australia

Marie Stopes International Australia

Marist Mission Centre

Mary MacKillop International

Mary Ward International Australia

Mercy Works Ltd.

Mission World Aid Inc.

MIT Group Foundation

Motivation Australia

Murdoch Children's Research Institute

MAA International

Nusa Tenggara Association

Oaktree Foundation

Opportunity International Australia Oxfam Australia

Palmera Projects

Partner Housing

Partners in Aid

Partners Relief and Development Australia

People with Disability Australia

PLAN International Australia

Quaker Service Australia

RedR Australia

Reledev Australia

RESULTS International (Australia)

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

Salesian Missions

Salvation Army (NSW Property Trust)

Save the Children Australia

Service Fellowship International Inc.

School for Life Foundation

SeeBeyondBorders

Sight For All

So They Can
Sport Matters

Surf Aid International

Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation Australia

TEAR Australia

Transform Aid International (incorporating Baptist World Aid)

UNICEF Australia

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA

UnitingWorld

Volunteers in Community Engagement (VOICE)

WaterAid Australia

World Vision Australia

WWF-Australia

YWAM Medical Ships

#### **AFFILIATE MEMBERS**

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations

Australian National University – School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences

Deakin University – Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation La Trobe University – Institute of Human Security and Social Change

Murdoch University – School of Management and Governance

Refugee Council of Australia

RMIT – Centre for Global Research

Swinburne University of Technology Centre for Design Innovation

Transparency International Australia

University of New South Wales – International

University of Melbourne
– School of Social and
Political Sciences

University of Queensland – Institute for Social Science Research

University of Sydney

– Office of Global

Engagement

University of the Sunshine Coast – USC International Development

University of Technology, Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures

Vision 2020

University of Western Australia – School of Social Sciences

Western Sydney University
- School of Social Sciences
and Psychology

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#### **UNITED AGAINST POVERTY**

ACFID unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty

#### THE ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT

First developed in 1997, the ACFID Code of Conduct is a self-regulatory code of good practice for Australia's aid and international development non-governmental organisations. The Code strengthens international development and humanitarian action by enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of ACFID's members.

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