



# ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT – PRACTITIONERS' HANDBOOK

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Integrity. Accountability. Impact.



AUSTRALIAN  
COUNCIL  
FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

# 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.

# Introduction to the Practitioners' Handbook

This handbook provides a guide for ACFID's members on how to implement the ACFID Code of Conduct. It introduces every element of the Code, how they relate to one another and how they should be used and applied. The handbook also sets out the Code's compliance mechanisms and how members are assessed for compliance.

In implementing the Code, this handbook should be read alongside the Code's Quality Assurance Framework. 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 handbook indicates where excerpts from the Code of Conduct have been used. To read the Code in full, as approved by the ACFID Council, visit ACFID's website.

## 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.

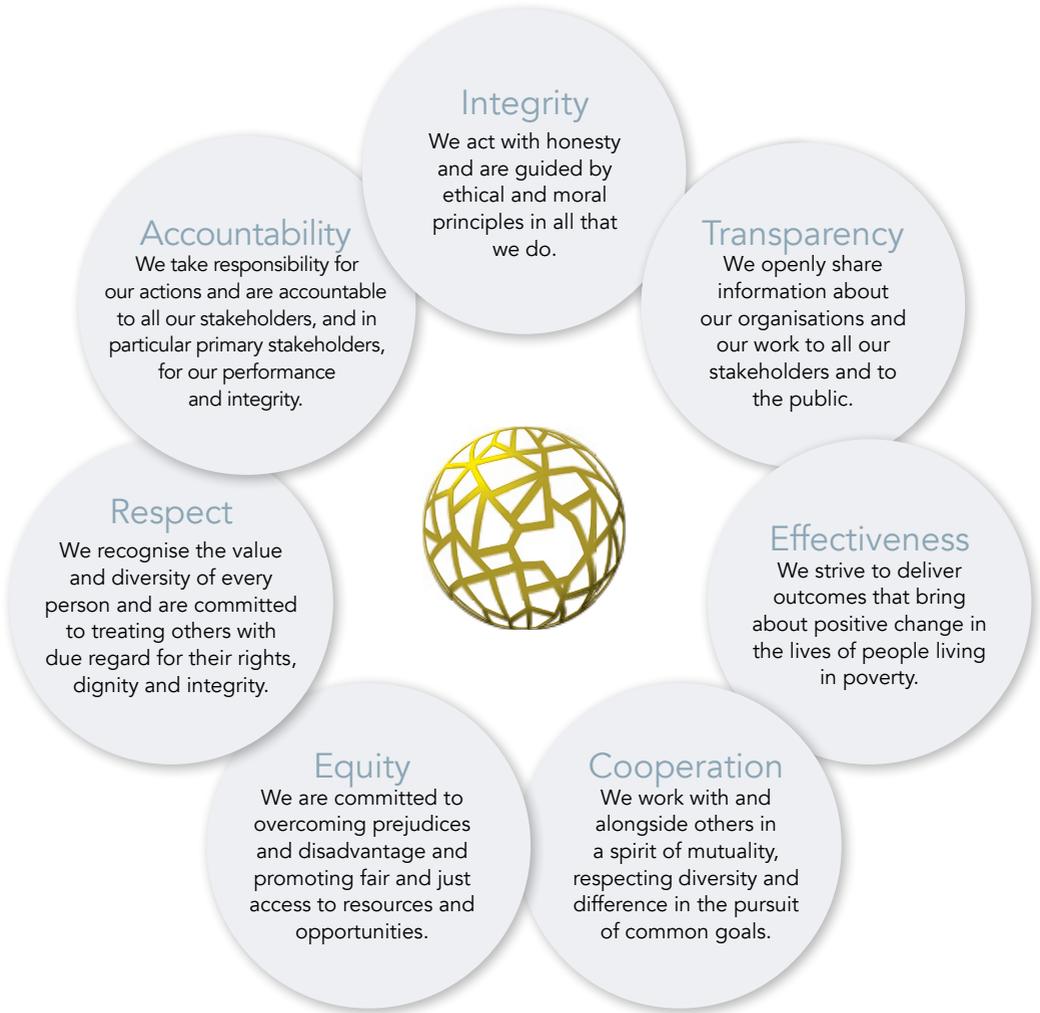
#### Code Objectives

- 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.

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

# Our Values

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

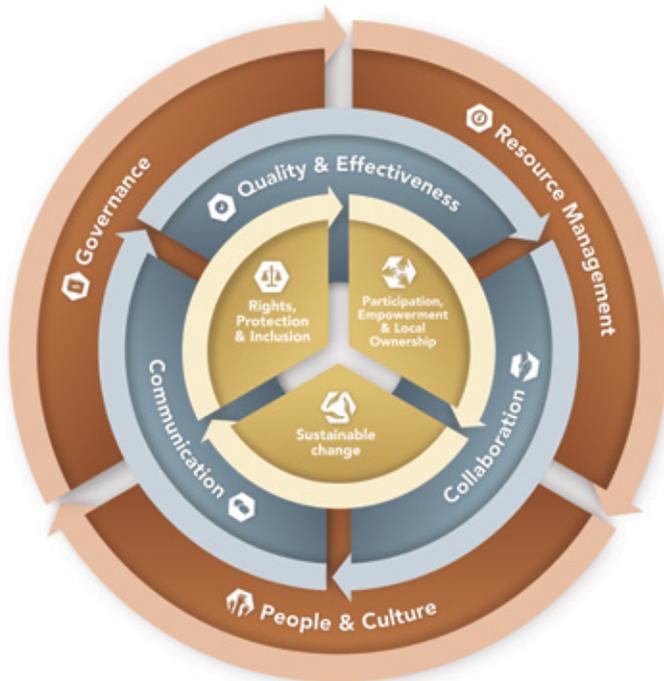


# How the Code Works

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 processes carried out by ACFID's members that support their 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



### 1. Rights, Protection & Inclusion

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



### 2. Participation, Empowerment & Local Ownership

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

## 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.
- 1.3 We support people affected by crisis.
- 1.4 We advance the safeguarding of children.
  
- 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.



### 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.

# 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.



## 2. Participation, Empowerment

Development and humanitarian responses enable sustainable change

Set of high-level commitments under each quality principle

Members must adhere to compliance indicators which correspond to each commitment

### Commitments

2.1 We promote the participation of primary stakeholders.

### Compliance Indicators

- 2.1.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to advancing the participation of primary stakeholders.
- 2.1.2 Members' planning process includes the participation of primary stakeholders.
- 2.1.3 Members monitor and evaluate their progress in the participation of primary stakeholders.

### Good Practice Indicators

- Members translate program and organisational information into action plans
- Members' planning cycles have realistic time frames to ensure progress
- Appraisal/selection process that includes strategies to ensure participation
- Members use structured mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups, etc. to engage primary stakeholders in governance and decision-making
- Members have a process in place that is clearly communicated and understood

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. This handbook provides the Compliance Indicators in full, but 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.*

## ent & Local Ownership

change through the empowerment of local actors and systems.

**To demonstrate compliance, members will have the following verifiers, commensurate with their size and the nature of their work:**

Policy, statement or guidance document that commits the member to enabling the participation and contribution of primary stakeholders.

Design or planning framework, tools, templates that require or approaches which consistently show evidence of the participation of primary stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation framework, tools, templates that require or approaches which consistently show evidence of the assessment of the participation of primary stakeholders.

tion into relevant local languages and in appropriate forms.

enable authentic participation of communities and individuals.

enable the participation of primary stakeholders.

ocus groups and community panels to enable full and authentic participation of g relating to activities that affect their lives.

nicated and available to seek feedback from local people.

Quality Principle translated from collective values

Members demonstrate compliance, for example through policy implementation, evidence of practice and staff training and guidance

This provides members with a checklist of good practice to follow and monitor their progress

# Quality Principles, Commitments and Compliance Indicators

This section of the handbook includes the Quality Principles, Commitments and Compliance Indicators which members need to adhere to in order to be considered compliant with the Code.



## 1. RIGHTS, PROTECTION & INCLUSION

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

### 1.1 We respect and protect human rights.

- 1.1.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to human rights.
- 1.1.2 Members contribute to the realisation of human rights in their development and humanitarian initiatives
- 1.1.3 Members protect primary stakeholders from discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect based on an analysis of the context in which they are working.

### 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.

- 1.2.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to the inclusion and representation of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion.
- 1.2.2 Members' planning process includes consultation with those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion and analysis of their needs and rights and barriers to their inclusion in context-specific ways.

- 1.2.3 Members monitor and evaluate their progress in addressing the needs, rights and inclusion of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion in context-specific ways.
- 1.2.4 Members consider the potential impact of their development and humanitarian initiatives on those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion with a view to preventing unintended harm.

### 1.3 We support people affected by crisis.

- 1.3.1 Members that support or undertake humanitarian assistance are guided by humanitarian assistance principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.
- 1.3.2 Members that support or undertake humanitarian assistance recognise and work towards application of the Core Humanitarian Standard.
- 1.3.3 Members support or undertake humanitarian assistance coordinate and complement the work of others providing assistance.
- 1.3.4 Members support or undertake humanitarian assistance promote the role and leadership of local actors.

### 1.4 We advance the safeguarding of children.

- 1.4.1 Members demonstrate their organisational commitment to the safeguarding of children.
- 1.4.2 Members have a code of conduct that advances child safeguarding behaviours and applies to all personnel, partners and project visitors.
- 1.4.3 Members have a documented child safeguarding incident reporting procedure and complaints handling procedure that aligns with principles of privacy and promotes safety and dignity.



## 2. PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT & LOCAL OWNERSHIP

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

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### 2.1 We promote the participation of primary stakeholders.

- 2.1.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to advancing the participation of primary stakeholders.
- 2.1.2 Members' planning process includes the participation of primary stakeholders.
- 2.1.3 Members monitor and evaluate their progress in the participation of primary stakeholders

### 2.2 We promote the empowerment of primary stakeholders.

- 2.2.1 Members have formal mechanisms for primary stakeholders to contribute their ideas, feedback and complaints so that they have a voice in and ownership of their own development and humanitarian initiatives.
- 2.2.2 Members promote opportunities for primary stakeholders to participate in decision-making about the initiatives that affect them.

### 2.3 We promote gender equality and equity.

- 2.3.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to gender equality and equity.
  - 2.3.2 Members' planning process includes consultation with those marginalised due to their gender, in particular women and girls, contextual analysis of barriers to their inclusion and identification of opportunities for their participation.
  - 2.3.3 Members promote opportunities for those marginalised due to their gender, in particular women and girls, to participate in decision-making.
  - 2.3.4 Members monitor and evaluate their progress in promoting gender equality and equity.
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**2.4 We promote the empowerment of people with disabilities.**

- 2.4.1** Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- 2.4.2** Members' planning process includes consultation with people with disabilities and contextual analysis of the barriers to social inclusion and participation.
- 2.4.3** Members promote opportunities for people with disabilities and/or their representative organisations to participate in decision-making.
- 2.4.4** Members monitor and evaluate their progress in promoting the empowerment of people with disabilities.

**2.5 We promote the participation of children.**

- 2.5.1** Members whose initiatives prioritise children demonstrate an organisational commitment to their participation.
- 2.5.2** Members whose initiatives prioritise children enable children's views to influence initiative designs.
- 2.5.3** Members whose initiatives prioritise children have complaints handling processes that are child friendly.



### 3. SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

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

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#### 3.1 We seek durable and lasting improvements in the circumstances and capacities of primary stakeholders.

**3.1.1** Members design initiatives in response to the root causes of poverty and inequity.

**3.1.2** Members identify and influence local organisations and/or primary stakeholders to enhance and promote their own development.

**3.1.3** Members support local partners to develop their capacity to influence their own development.

#### 3.2 We contribute to systemic change.

**3.2.1** Members build on and enhance the existing strengths and capacities of primary stakeholders.

**3.2.2** Members work with local systems and structures such as institutions, civil society, community structures and authorities (where appropriate) to support and strengthen local people and systems.

**3.2.3** Members that undertake advocacy and/or campaigning, support initiatives that are evidence-based, accurate and reflect the perspectives of primary stakeholders.

#### 3.3 We promote environmental stewardship and sustainability.

**3.3.1** Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to environmental sustainability and improved environmental outcomes in their development and humanitarian initiatives.

**3.3.2** Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to environmental sustainability and improved environmental outcomes in their organisation's internal operations.



## 4. QUALITY & 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.

- 4.1.1 Members have stated vision, mission, values and an organisational strategy.
- 4.1.2 Members' initiatives are clearly linked to their organisational vision, mission and values.

### 4.2 We analyse and understand the contexts in which we work.

- 4.2.1 Members' planning and practice are informed by analysis of context, evidence and research, and inclusion of the perspectives and knowledge of primary stakeholders.
- 4.2.2 Members assess and manage risk in their development and humanitarian initiatives.
- 4.2.3 Members undertake research and establish their own ethical guidelines for research.

### 4.3 We invest in quality assessment of our work.

- 4.3.1 Members assess the quality of their strategies, designs and plans.
- 4.3.2 Members monitor, evaluate and learn from their work.

### 4.4 We reflect on, share and apply results and lessons with stakeholders.

- 4.4.1 Members disseminate information about results and lessons to all stakeholders – primary stakeholders, partners and donors.
- 4.4.2 Members reflect on results and lessons in order to inform and improve practice.



## 5. COLLABORATION

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

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### 5.1 We respect and understand those with whom we collaborate.

5.1.1 Members work with others in mutually respectful ways.

5.1.2 Members undertake due diligence and capacity assessments of organisations with whom they work in formal partnerships.

### 5.2 We have a shared understanding of respective contributions, expectations, responsibilities and accountabilities of all parties.

5.2.1 Members negotiate shared goals and respective contributions with partners and those they collaborate with.

5.2.2 Members coordinate with and complement the work of others.

### 5.3 We invest in the effectiveness of our collaborations and partnerships.

5.3.1 Members support mutually identified capacity-strengthening strategies with their partners.

5.3.2 Members assess their collaborations and partnerships.



## 6. COMMUNICATION

Development and humanitarian organisations communicate truthfully and ethically.

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### 6.1 We are truthful in our communications.

- 6.1.1 Members' public materials accurately describe the organisation and its work.
- 6.1.2 Members have organisational protocols for the approval of public materials.

### 6.2 We collect and use information ethically.

- 6.2.1 Members' communications are accurate, respectful, and protect privacy and dignity.
- 6.2.2 Members have organisational requirements for the collection of information, images, and stories.
- 6.2.3 Members are respectful and considerate of the reputation of other ACFID members.



## 7. GOVERNANCE

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

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### 7.1 We are not-for-profit and formed for a defined public benefit.

7.1.1 Members define their public benefit and specify the rules to ensure that they operate as a not-for-profit entity.

### 7.2. We meet our legal and compliance obligations.

7.2.1 Members are registered and meet their reporting and legal obligations to the relevant authorities.

7.2.2 Members have organisation-wide requirements for the protection of privacy.

### 7.3 We are accountable to our stakeholders

7.3.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to operating transparently with all stakeholders.

7.3.2 Member development initiatives consistently demonstrate the separation of development activities from non-development activities

7.3.3 Members enable stakeholders to make complaints to the organisation in a safe and confidential manner.

7.3.4 Members make information about their organisation and its work available to all stakeholders.

7.3.5 Members seek input and feedback from all stakeholders.

### 7.4 We have responsible and independent governance mechanisms.

7.4.1 Members have a governing body.

7.4.2 Members establish their membership and define how the organisation is governed and operates.

7.4.3 Members manage conflicts of interest with responsible persons, staff and volunteers relating to all activities undertaken by the organisation.



## 8. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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

### 8.1 We source our resources ethically.

- 8.1.1 Members have organisational standards for the acceptance of donations.
- 8.1.2 Members report their compliance with the ACFID Fundraising Charter annually to their own governing body.
- 8.1.3 Members have organisational standards for the procurement of goods and services.

### 8.2 We ensure that funds and resources entrusted to us are properly controlled and managed.

- 8.2.1 Members can control and manage their financial resources and risks.
- 8.2.2 Members are effective in their use of resources and minimise financial wastage in the planning and implementation of activities.
- 8.2.3 Members undertake measurement, analysis and review of financial performance and financial position.
- 8.2.4 Members produce and publish annual audited financial statements.
- 8.2.5 Members undertake due diligence assessments of partners who manage funds on behalf of the member.

### 8.3 We report on the acquisition and use of our resources.

- 8.3.1 Members publish an annual report.
- 8.3.2 Members publish annual ACFID-Code-compliant financial statements in their Annual Reports.
- 8.3.3 Members fully and accurately disclose administration costs and costs of any public fundraising.



## 9. PEOPLE AND CULTURE

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

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### 9.1 We have the human resource capacity and capability to deliver our work.

9.1.1 Members have an organisational structure appropriate to the scope of their work.

9.1.2 Members provide a clear description of roles and performance expectations.

### 9.2 We protect, value and support our people.

9.2.1 Members provide professional development opportunities for staff and key volunteers.

9.2.2 Members enable staff and volunteers to make complaints and report wrongdoing through fair, transparent and accessible procedures.

9.2.3 Members protect the safety, security and well-being of staff and volunteers.

### 9.3 We manage our people effectively and fairly.

9.3.1 Members are fair, transparent and non-discriminatory in their management of staff and volunteers.

9.3.2 Members comply with human resource regulatory requirements and legislation.

9.3.3 Members manage the performance and grievances of their staff and volunteers in a fair and transparent manner.

### 9.4 We enable our people to conduct themselves professionally and according to our stated values.

9.4.1 Members specify the expectation of professional conduct of all staff and volunteers.

9.4.2 Members' staff and volunteers work in accordance with agreed standards of practice.

Photo: Jim Holmes / AusAID



# Compliance

ACFID's members commit to being compliant with all aspects of the Code, and to continuously monitor their compliance.

## Compliance with the Code

Members must be compliant with all applicable aspects of the Code. To achieve compliance, members will need to understand and apply two key components of the Code:

- The ACFID Code of Conduct: the nine Quality Principles and 32 Commitments that lay out the standard of practice to which ACFID's members commit.
- The Quality Assurance Framework: a separate but linked document that details the Compliance Indicators, Verifiers and Good Practice Indicators for each of the Principles and Commitments of the Code.

Compliance with the Commitments is assessed against the Compliance Indicators as detailed in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). Each of the Compliance Indicators has one or more Compliance Verifiers. Verifiers are the description of evidence that would substantiate compliance with the indicator. To demonstrate compliance, members will have the verifiers in place, commensurate with the size and nature of their work.

Satisfaction of all relevant Compliance Indicators is necessary to achieve compliance with the Code. To be compliant with the Code, ACFID's members will have the required policies,

processes, guidelines and documentation in place appropriate to the size and nature of the organisation and its work. They will also ensure that their policies, processes and guidelines are implemented and subject to regular review.

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 this principle of self-regulation.

The Code applies to ACFID's members and their international development and humanitarian programs. As signatories to the Code, ACFID's members certify that all parts of their organisation that are associated with international development and humanitarian initiatives operate in a manner that is compliant with the Code. It should be noted, however, that Code commitments relating to financial reporting apply to the entire legal entity of the ACFID member.

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. 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. These requirements are clearly articulated in the relevant Compliance Indicators and Verifiers. In extending these requirements, members should take into account the size, nature and risk profile of their partners.

### Assessment of compliance

Compliance with the Code is assured through a suite of mechanisms by which ACFID's members are bound. These compliance mechanisms are:

### Application for ACFID Membership

- On application, organisations must complete the Code Self-Assessment process and submit the organisational documentation requested to demonstrate their compliance.
- On application, the organisation must provide copies of the additional documents that demonstrate membership eligibility and compliance as set out in the Membership Application Guidelines.
- Organisations must submit their final application within 12 months of lodging their initial application.
- Organisations are entitled to use the ACFID member logo after they have been approved as interim members by the ACFID Board.

### Periodic Assessment

A minimum of one in every three years (as notified by ACFID), members complete a

Code Self-Assessment (CSA) and submit requested documents that verify their compliance with selected compliance indicator.

- The CSA includes a declaration of compliance with the Code from the member's governing body. ACFID reviews members' self-assessment and supporting documentation
- The CSA process must be completed within 5 months of the conclusion of the member's financial year.
- Members must promptly respond to ACFID regarding any reasonable requests for clarification or additional information.
- Members must comply with any resulting remedial actions.

Members' governing bodies submit their annual and financial reports to ACFID each year. These reports are assessed one in every three years at the same time as the CSA through the Annual Reporting Assessment Process.

- Annual reports and financial statements (if not included in the annual report) must be provided to ACFID within 5 months of the member's financial year end.
- Members must promptly respond to ACFID regarding any reasonable requests for clarification or additional information.
- Members must comply with any resulting remedial actions.

On the years that members are not required to complete a CSA, they must complete an exceptions report, which notes any exceptions to compliance that occurred during the previous year, and

## COMPLIANCE

outlines actions undertaken to ensure that compliance is met.

- The exceptions report must be provided to ACFID within 5 months of the member's financial year end.

### Spot Checks

- ACFID's ongoing assessment of risk identifies any areas of potential non-compliance that may be detrimental to the interests of ACFID, its membership or the Code.
- ACFID undertakes spot checks of compliance in these areas as needed
- This process includes checks of websites undertaken during emergency appeals.
- Members must comply with requests for additional information to verify compliance as a result of these checks.
- Members must comply with any resulting remedial actions.

### Non-compliance

In the event of non-compliance, the member must submit a plan that outlines how they will become compliant within a time frame of up to twelve months, or sooner if the area of non-compliance is considered higher risk. The member must re-submit any required documentation at the end of that period. The onus is on the member to submit supporting documentation and ensure compliance within that period. If a member does not achieve compliance within that period, a set of sanctions may be implemented. These sanctions extend to the suspension and revocation of Code signatory status.

Members will notify ACFID if they become aware of major transgressions against the Code in their own organisation or make a complaint to the Code of Conduct Committee of major transgressions by other members.

ACFID will publicise any suspension or revocation of signatory status.

### Code of Conduct Complaints Handling

The Code of Conduct Committee provides an independent mechanism to address a complaint made against a specific Code signatory organisation which is believed to have breached the Code.

Members agree to be bound by the independent, accessible, fair and confidential ACFID Code complaints handling process.

- Members must comply with the complaints process as set out in the Good Practice Toolkit.
- Members must comply with Code of Conduct Committee requests for information within all reasonable time limits set.
- Where a breach of the Code is identified, members must comply with the corrective or disciplinary action agreed to with the Code of Conduct Committee, as described in the Good Practice Toolkit.

ACFID's members are required, as part of their compliance with the Code, to have a public complaints mechanism on their website.

## Governance of the Code

The Code is owned by ACFID's members and the ACFID Council must agree to any changes.

ACFID's Code of Conduct is independently governed on behalf of the ACFID Board and ACFID Council by the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee (CCC). The CCC has autonomy in decision-making in regard to determining the Code signatory status of ACFID's members, compliance assessments and complaints handling. Only the CCC has authority to grant, suspend and revoke Code signatory status which is a pre-requisite for ACFID membership.

The Quality Assurance Framework is owned by the CCC. Any changes to the framework must be approved by the CCC following appropriate consultation with members and with advice and support from the Development Practice Committee and ACFID secretariat. Any changes to the Quality Assurance Framework approved by the CCC are tabled at the ACFID Board with the Board retaining a right of veto. Changes become operative upon approval by the Board.

The Code Secretariat, located within the ACFID Secretariat, supports the CCC and undertakes administration and management of the Code.

*Taken from the ACFID Code of Conduct – Governance of the Code*



Photo: Jim Holmes / AusAID

# General Definitions

These definitions are provided to clarify key terms with reference to the Code of Conduct.

**Accessible:** Easy to approach, reach, speak with or use. Presented in a form, format, language or media that is readily useable.

**Accountability:** The processes through which an organisation makes a commitment to respond to and balance the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making processes and activities, and delivers against the commitment (Pathways to Accountability, the GAP Framework One World Trust, 2005).

**Actors:** An organisation, government department or individual with a role or influence (Safety with Dignity, Action Aid, 2009).

**Advocacy:** Activities undertaken to change the systemic and structural causes of poverty and disadvantage which may include popular campaigning, lobbying, research, policy positions, alliances and use of the media. It may occur both in Australia and globally (Australian Tax Office).

**Affiliate:** An organisation to which the signatory organisation has some form of membership, formal association or alliance.

**Capability:** A feature, ability, or competence that can be developed or improved. ('Differentiating Competence, Capability and Capacity', Innovating Perspectives, Vol. 16. No. 3, 2008).

**Capacity:** 'The ability of individuals, organisations, and whole societies to

define and solve problems, make informed choices, order their priorities and plan their futures, as well as implement programs and projects to sustain them' ('Nurturing Capacity in Developing Countries: From Consensus to Practice', Capacity Enhancement Briefs, No 1. World Bank Institute).

**Child Safeguarding:** Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds (adapted from DFAT Child Protection Policy).

**Civil society organisation (CSO):** Includes non-government organisations (NGOs), not-for-profit organisations (NPOs), charities and community-based organisations (CBOs). Can also include religious organisations, trade unions, foundations and any institutions outside of the corporate and government sectors (Pathways to Accountability: The GAP Framework, One World Trust, 2005).

**Collaborate:** A process in which two parties contribute core competencies and share the risks and decision-making to achieve mutual objectives. Typically considered less formal than a partnership (see Partnership).

**Communities:** Locally organised or informal groups or networks (Safety with Dignity, Action Aid, 2009).

**Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction (International Standards Organisation standard on complaints handling).

**Development:** Improving the conditions of communities in a sustainable way. It is based on working with communities, rather than for or on behalf of communities (see Sustainable Change).

**Development and humanitarian initiatives:** Activities undertaken in order to reduce poverty and address global justice issues. In the non-government organisation sector, this may occur through a range of engagements that includes community projects, humanitarian response and emergency management, community education, advocacy, volunteer sending, provision of technical and professional services and resources, environmental protection and restoration, and promotion and protection of human rights.

**Dignity:** The feeling of having decision-making power, freedom and autonomy over life choices, together with the feeling of self-worth and self-confidence, and feeling that one has the respect of others (Safety with dignity, ActionAid 2009, based on Protection: an ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Agencies, Slim and Bronwick 2005).

**Disability:** People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United National Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability).

**Diversity:** Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. These can be along dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

**Due diligence:** Research and analysis of an organisation done in preparation for a business transaction, prior to signing a contract.

**Efficiency:** Implementation performance against time and budget parameters, value for money, and the quality and professionalism of deliverables (DFAT).

**Effectiveness:** Promoting sustainable change that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty and marginalisation (ACFID, NGO Effectiveness Framework, 2004).

**Emergency:** A threatening condition that requires urgent action (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UN ISDR 2004).

**Ethical:** Being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession.

**Fraud:** Dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means (Fraud Control Framework, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department).

**Fundraising:** The process of gathering voluntary contributions of money or other resources, by requesting donations from individuals, businesses, charitable foundations, or governmental agencies.

## GENERAL DEFINITIONS

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**Gender:** Socially constructed roles and relationships between men and women which affect their ability and incentive to participate in development activities and lead to different project impacts for women and men (Guide to Gender and Development, AusAID, 2007).

**Gender equality:** Equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men, girls and boys (Guide to Gender and Development, AusAID, 2007).

**Good practice:** A technique, methodology or approach that, through experience and research, has proven to work well reliably, produce desirable results and can be recommended.

**Governance:** The way in which an organisation is run, including who makes decisions and how they are made (ACNC).

**Governing body:** The body which makes decisions about how an organisation is run and is responsible for its governance as defined by the governing document (ACNC).

**Guidelines:** Information which outlines an organisation's expectations for a given process; a guide for a course of action or activities that can include rules, checklists, plans, procedures.

**Human rights:** Legal statements by the international community that assert the equality and dignity of all human beings. Includes civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. The core international human rights treaties and their optional protocols are located on the ACFID website.

**Humanitarian response:** Action taken with the objective of saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity during and after human-induced crises and natural disasters, as well as action to prevent and prepare for them (Core Humanitarian Standard).

**Legislation:** Laws made by parliament, also called Acts of Parliament or statute laws (ACNC).

**Local actors:** In-country NGOs, CSOs, Disabled Persons Organisations and other entities involved in the implementation of development and humanitarian initiatives.

**Local people:** The women and men, boys and girls who are participants in, and directly affected by, development and humanitarian initiatives in the geographical area in which the initiative is undertaken. May also be known as beneficiaries or primary stakeholders.

**Marginalised:** A person or group who is isolated, pushed to the edge, treated or considered unimportant, insignificant and powerless.

**Members:** Current formal members of ACFID and signatories to the Code of Conduct.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation are systems or processes used to manage and assess the progress and results of their work. They are conducted in order to provide accountability to affected stakeholders and donors, to improve performance, to enable learning and adaptation, and to communicate information about results and impact. Monitoring refers to the continuous

or ongoing assessment of work over time. Evaluation is the periodic assessment at a specific point in time (Sharpening the Development Process: A Practical Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation, INTRAC Praxis Guide No. 1).

**Non-development activity:** Includes activity undertaken to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.

**Non-government organisations:** Voluntary, not-for-profit, organisations formally registered with government that are run by a governing board that is accountable to its members.

**Not-for-profit (NFP):** An organisation that has rules that do not allow it to distribute profits or assets to its members, the people who run it or their friends or relatives with which it is operating or winding up. An organisation that is not-for-profit does not carry out activities for the benefit of its members (ACNC).

**Participatory:** Affording the opportunity for individual and/or collective participation.

**Partner:** Individuals, groups of people or organisations that collaborate with ACFID's members to achieve mutually agreed objectives in development and humanitarian initiatives. This may include affiliates.

**Partnership:** An ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared (Partnership Brokers Association).

**Policy:** High level principles, rules, and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organisation to guide conduct and reach its long-term goals.

**Primary stakeholders:** The term used in the Code of Conduct to refer to those whom we seek to support, work with and directly benefit through development and humanitarian initiatives. The women and men, boys and girls who are participants in, and are directly affected by, development and humanitarian initiatives. They may also be known as beneficiaries or local people.

**Privacy:** Personal information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably easily identifiable (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner).

**Privacy legislation:** The Australian Commonwealth Government Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) which regulates the handling of personal information about individuals (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner).

**Protocols:** A system of rules that explains the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.

**Psycho-social support:** Any type of local or outside support that aims to promote psychological and social wellbeing and/or to prevent or treat mental disorder.

**Resources:** Stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organisation in order to function effectively.

## GENERAL DEFINITIONS

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**Rights:** See Human rights.

**Sector:** An area of the economy in which businesses share the same or a related product or service. In the context of the Code, this refers to organisations and entities engaged in international development and humanitarian initiatives.

**Staff:** People employed by an organisation.

**Stakeholders:** Individuals and groups that can affect or are affected by an organisation's policies and/or actions (Pathways to Accountability, the GAP Framework One World Trust, 2005).

**Strategic:** Relating to the identification of long-term or overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them.

**Sustainable change:** Change that is lasting and durable.

**Sustainable development:** Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

**Third parties:** May be a contractor, partner or an affiliate of the non-government organisation.

**Transparency:** An organisation's openness about its activities, providing information on what it is doing, where and how this takes place and how it is performing (Pathways to Accountability, the GAP Framework, One World Trust, 2005).

**Volunteer:** A person who willingly gives their time for the common good and without financial gain. Volunteering includes formal volunteering that takes place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way, and informal volunteering, acts that take place outside the context of a formal organisation (Volunteering Australia).

# List of ACFID's Members

## 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  
Ltd

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)

## LIST OF ACFID'S MEMBERS

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Fred Hollows Foundation, The	Islamic Relief Australia	Oxfam Australia
Global Development Group	KTF (Kokoda Track Foundation)	Palmera Projects
Global Mission Partners	Kyeema Foundation	Partner Housing
Good Return	Lasallian Foundation	Partners in Aid
Good Shepherd Services	Leprosy Mission Australia, The	Partners Relief and Development Australia
Grameen Foundation Australia	Live & Learn Environmental Education	People with Disability Australia
Habitat for Humanity Australia	Love Mercy Foundation	PLAN International Australia
Hagar Australia	Mahboba's Promise Australia	Quaker Service Australia
HealthServe Australia	Marie Stopes International Australia	RedR Australia
Heilala	Marist Mission Centre	Reledev Australia
Hope Global	Mary MacKillop International	RESULTS International (Australia)
The Hunger Project Australia	Mary Ward International Australia	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
International Children's Care (Australia)	Mercy Works Ltd.	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
International Christian Aid and Relief Enterprises	Mission World Aid Inc.	Salesian Missions
International Needs Australia	MIT Group Foundation	Salvation Army (NSW Property Trust)
International Nepal Fellowship (Aust) Ltd	Motivation Australia	Save the Children Australia
International RiverFoundation	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	Service Fellowship International Inc.
International Women's Development Agency	MAA International	School for Life Foundation
Interplast Australia & New Zealand	Nusa Tenggara Association Inc.	SeeBeyondBorders
	Oaktree Foundation	Sight For All
	Opportunity International Australia	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



AUSTRALIAN  
COUNCIL  
FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



## 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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