

CHS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

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A. TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHS ALLIANCE

There are two types of membership

1. Full members, including global networks
2. Associate members

B. ORGANISATIONS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME FULL MEMBERS OF CHS ALLIANCE

Organisations whose core activities, or whose members' core activities, work towards assisting and protecting vulnerable people and crisis-affected communities are eligible for full membership of the CHS Alliance.

Category 1 includes

- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) operating locally, nationally, regionally or internationally
- NGO networks, international secretariats, and consortia
- Multilateral organisations including the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, IFRC secretariat and ICRC, and United Nations organisations.

Category 2: Global networks

- Global network organisations or international NGO families can join on behalf of the international secretariat only or as Global Networks.
- When joining as a Global Network, an organisation is joining on behalf of their affiliates and names them, but only the international entity is considered a member of the CHS Alliance for voting purposes. These affiliates benefit from preferential access and membership discounts to training and events and can join our member-only communities of practice.

C. ORGANISATIONS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF CHS ALLIANCE

Associate members are organisations whose activities and management practices are consistent with and supportive of the mission and objectives CHS Alliance, however they do not meet the eligibility requirements of full membership.

Associate members can be donor agencies, United Nations organisations, National Disaster Management Agencies, Standards Bodies, development and human rights organisations, academic and training institutes, networks, and other types of organisations.

D. CHS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA – FULL MEMBERS

In addition to being an organisation whose core activities (or whose members' activities) work towards assisting and protecting vulnerable people and crisis-affected communities, an organisation applying for Full membership should:

- Be legally registered or recognised as a **not-for-profit organisation** in the country where they have their headquarters.
- Make **no adverse distinction** in its work on the basis of nationality, race, gender, diversity, religious belief, class or political opinion.
- Meet the requirements for **financial accountability** under the laws in the country where it has its headquarters.
- Have a **documented organisational commitment to quality and accountability** in its activities and management practices towards people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty.
- Demonstrate application or commit to applying the **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)** through a process of **verification against the CHS** within 2 years of joining the CHS Alliance. (The three verification options are Self-Assessment, Independent Verification and Certification – [see here for more information on each option.](#))
- Have a written **code of conduct, with specific mention of prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse**
- Have a publicly available **Complaints Response Mechanism** that members of the communities they serve can access

E. CHS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA – ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

An organisation applying for Associate membership of CHS Alliance should be consistent with and supportive of the mission and objectives CHS Alliance, and should:

- Be **recognised or legally registered** in the country where it has its headquarters.
- **Make no adverse distinction** in its work on the basis of nationality, race, gender, diversity, religious belief, class or political opinion.
- Meet the requirements for **financial accountability** under the laws in the country where it has its headquarters.
- Have **documented organisational commitment to quality and accountability** in its activities and management practices towards people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict, or poverty.
- Promote or commit to promoting the **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)**
- Have a written **code of conduct, with specific mention of prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse.**
- Have a publicly available **Complaints Response Mechanism** that members of the communities they serve can access.

F. APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHS ALLIANCE

What Applicants Should Do:

A completed online application form for either Full or Associate membership should be submitted via the CHS Alliance website with the following documents uploaded in English:

- Statutes, constitution, statutes of incorporation, articles of association or similar document
- Copy of organisation's registration document
- Staff Code of Conduct that includes the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse by staff including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers, and consultants*
- Proof of non-governmental and non-profit legal status (full members only)
- Two most recent annual reports and independently audited financial statements, including sources of income and current donors
- Names of board of directors, trustees or equivalent
- CHS Alignment statement or a CHS verification report (full members only)

You must also inform us of:

- Plans to conduct verification (for full member applications only)
- Complaints mechanism link and/or policy**
- Names of two professional referees for the organisation, one of which is from an existing CHS Alliance member.
- Confirmation they commit to cooperating with the CHS Alliance complaints mechanism

**Note new members may be given 6 months to strengthen their Code of Conduct to include PSEA. The CHS Alliance has published a Code of Conduct toolkit to assist organisations in developing this document.*

*** New members without a public facing Complaints Response Mechanism are asked to commit to developing one after joining the CHS Alliance.*

What the CHS Alliance secretariat will do:

Once the application is received, the secretariat will

1. Inform the organisation's focal point that we have received the submission
2. The Director of Membership & Communications and/or the Membership Officer undertake due diligence checks, including reviewing all documents submitted, takes up the references, and ensures that the organisation is not on the UK, US, EU or UN lists of terrorist organisations. It may come back to request additional information.
3. Once satisfied with that the criteria for membership are met, the application is put forward to the Membership & Nominations Committee. The MNC meets four times per year and considers the application, and, if they deem it appropriate, recommends the organisation for membership to the Board.
4. The Board considers the recommendation of the Membership & Nominations Committee and decides whether or not to accept the organisation into membership. (It would be unusual for the Board to reject a positive recommendation from the committee.). The Board meets quarterly.

5. The applicant will be informed by the Secretariat of the Board's decision and, if applicable, the reasons why the application was rejected or deferred.
6. If membership is approved, the Secretariat will send an acknowledgement and an invoice for membership dues, in line with the CHS Alliance membership fee structure and related processes. Once the fees have been received, the member will receive a formal letter, membership certificate and email welcome pack, and have their membership publicly announced, including being featured on the Alliance's website.

G. MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Members of the CHS Alliance receive access to services designed to assist them with applying and measuring their work against the Core Humanitarian Standard, with the aim of improving how well they are delivering on commitments made to people affected by crisis.

Specifically, as a member, you will receive a membership logo and certificate to use publicly and receive support to:

COMMIT to a movement demanding accountability

ASSESS how your organisation meets the CHS

IMPROVE by accessing support for meeting the CHS Commitments

COLLABORATE and share your learning with peers

H. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are an important source of income which enable the CHS Alliance to support members to apply the Core Humanitarian Standard and deliver quality and accountability for people affected by crisis.

Calculating the annual fee

The membership fee structure has been determined by the CHS Alliance Board. Membership fees are calculated based on the annual income (size) and location of the organisation. Reduced and minimum rates are available for full members headquartered in countries ranked as 'Medium' and 'Low' respectively in UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI). [See the fee table here](#). Annual membership fees are payable at the start of each calendar year.

Organisations joining partway through the year will be issued a pro rate invoice for the year i.e. If a member is approved by the Board in June, then they will pay 50% of the annual fee for July- December for example.

At the end of each year, in December, invoices for the annual fees for the following year will be sent out to all members.

- Members' fees will be due within eight weeks following receipt of invoice.

Solidarity fund

In 2024, the CHS Alliance is pleased to offer members the opportunity to apply for support to cover their membership fees and/or access support in meeting the CHS Commitments (for example to attend training courses). Organisations can contact the membership team for more information about the fund criteria and to request a form, which they must complete and submit. This cover why they are requesting the assistance, how much they can contribute towards the annual fee, and if they can contribute non-financially. Each request will be assessed by a small internal secretariat working group and a decision taken at their discretion.

Failure to pay membership fees

Members must have paid their annual membership fees to be able to both nominate a candidate to stand for the CHS Alliance Board, and to vote in the elections.

Members who fall into annual arrears will have access to training discounted revoked and may have other services suspended.

Members that have not paid their annual fees for more than two years will be presented to the Board for removal. Pending this formal process, access to services will be suspended and the organisation will be removed from the CHS Alliance website.

Fee payment status, once org is approved by Board	Access to services & COPs	Published on website	Training discounts	Attend GA	Vote in elections (full members)
Current year PAID	√	√	√	√	√
Current year UNPAID (previous year paid)	√	√	√	√	X
New member approved by Board NOT YET PAID	X	X	√	√	X
Current year and 1 previous year UNPAID	√	√	X	√	X
Current year and 2 previous years UNPAID*	X	X	X	X	X

I. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As defined by the CHS Alliance's Statutes, the General Assembly is the CHS Alliance's highest governance authority. Through the Statutes, the General Assembly delegates and empowers the Board and the Secretariat to work towards meeting the organisation's vision, mission, and objectives.

The General Assembly is composed of all full and associate members and may take place as a physical meeting or a virtual meeting.

A meeting of the General Assembly of the membership will take place at least once every three years. Virtual extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly shall be held when needed, such as for Board elections or when a Board decision needs approval.

J. MEMBERS VOTING RIGHTS

Only full members have voting rights at the General Assembly. There is one vote for each full member at the General Assembly, via a designated voting focal point.

Full members can nominate one representative from its employees, Board or trustees for election to the Board by the General Assembly. Full members (Global Networks) may formally appoint an employee, board member or trustee from one of its affiliates to represent it with respect to exercising its rights as a full member.

Full and associate members may nominate one independent representative for election to the Board by the General Assembly.

To vote, a member must be in good standing with the membership fees i.e have paid the year's annual fees in full.

K. LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

There are three ways an organisation can lose its membership.

- Resigning
- Being excluded by the Board for just cause
- Failure to pay membership fees for more than two years.

Written resignation to the Board

We ask all organisations that wish to resign to inform the membership team in writing, who will liaise with the Board. The focal point will be asked to undertake an exit interview or complete a short exit survey, or both. This is important for our organisational commitment to learn and improve.

Exclusion by the Board

If the Board deems there is just cause to exclude a member, it may act to do so. A member would have 30 days right to appeal to the General Assembly.

Failure to pay membership fees

See section H above in this document.

In all instances, no refund of membership fees will be made.

L. CHS ALLIANCE COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

We welcome feedback or complaints against CHS Alliance members and about the work of the CHS Alliance secretariat or its staff.

Complaints against CHS Alliance member organisations

The CHS Alliance's complaints mechanism exists to improve complaints handling by its members to meet CHS Commitment 5's Quality Criterion: "Complaints are welcomed and addressed."

The mechanism allows people to raise complaints when a CHS Alliance member's handling of a complaint, and its subsequent appeal, was unsatisfactory, unsafe and/or not in line with CHS Commitment 5.

The mechanism is designed for the Alliance to work with the complainant and the member organisation to assess the complaints handling process and make recommendations for how the organisation could make improvements.

Under the policy, we accept the following complaints:

- 1. Unsatisfactory complaints *process*:** Complaints regarding a completed internal complaints *process* that was viewed as inadequate for the communities or people affected by crisis, which were the focus of the complaint. Complaints must have already been filed and addressed through the CHS Alliance member organisation, in line with their complaints policy.
- 2. Inadequate follow-up/*process*:** Complaints regarding sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment, or other abuses of power against a person or persons affected by crisis where the complainant found the case management by a CHS Alliance member did not adequately follow the organisation's adopted policy.

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- 3. Well-founded fear of retaliation:** Complaints regarding sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) or other abuses of power against a person(s) affected by crisis where a complainant has a well-founded fear of retaliation by the CHS Alliance member organisation.
 - 4. No complaints mechanism in place:** Complaints about a CHS Alliance member or their staff only when that member does not yet have in place a complaints mechanism that is accessible for communities and people affected by crisis.

For further information, please read the [Complaints Policy](#) and its accompanying [procedures](#)

This guidance is written in accordance with Articles 6, 7, 8, 10,11 and 13 of the CHS Alliance Statutes.

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Contact: membership@chsalliance.org
Website: www.chsalliance.org
