PROGRAMME DEVELOMENT POLICY

Aiming Change for Tomorrow

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1 Introduction

ACT-International is a not-for-profit right based national organization focusing on women, youth, children and marginalized segments of society. The organization particularly works with disadvantaged segments of society to empower communities by building peoples engagement, capacity and partnership focusing on women and children for better tomorrow. Organization aims to develop partnerships and innovative programmes with the support of development actors to contribute in the efforts of ***"Aiming Change for Tomorrow".*** ACT-International is registered as a non-profit organization under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860.

2 Vision, Mission, Values

2.1 Vision

Aiming the world of opportunities for a better tomorrow.

2.2 Mission

Empowering communities to recover, progress and advance by building peoples` engagement, capacity and partnership focusing women and children for a better tomorrow.

2.3 We pursue this mission through:

- Grassroots institutional development and networking with local civil society groups and organizations;
- Sustainable economic development that integrates livelihoods, education, health, infrastructure, environment, youth development, social cohesion and local leadership management;
- Child development that integrates child rights, protection and improvement of service provision to reduce neglect, abuse and exploitation;
- Partnerships with civil society and public sector organizations that promote harmony and cohesion amongst development partners, integration of development initiatives and accountability;
- Policy advocacy that integrates evidence based research on socio-economic and political issues which are directly related to sustainable development of marginalized communities especially women and children;
- Emergency relief services and recovery and rehabilitation initiatives that assist people affected by conflict or disaster.

2.4 Our Core Values

- ***Our mission and humanitarian values*** impels us to act for a better tomorrow

- ***Participation*** for attaining ownership that leads to community empowerment
- ***Transparency*** for making humanitarian action accountable to stakeholders
- ***Equality*** for realizing the rights of disadvantaged and discriminated
- ***Innovation*** for achieving excellence to up-bring the lives of marginalized
- ***Responsibility*** for serving the underprivileged voluntarily

3 Programme Components

- Social Mobilization
- Education Programme
- Child Protection Programme
- Health and Nutrition Programme
- Livelihoods Programme
- Community Physical Infrastructure Programme
- Youth Development programme
- Disaster Preparedness Programme
- Governance

4 Objectives of Programme Development

The overall objective is to assist the leadership and senior management of ACT-International to continually improve its programmes by making and implementing decisions and plans that are in line with the organization's programme components, its vision, mission and values. It also intends to provide an in-depth understanding of the working of programme development unit to built strategies for effective decision making and implementation of different projects undertaken by the organization. ACT-International programme development strategy is based on following objectives;

To determine:

- *the ways and means to identify the phenomena of achieving organizations vision;*
- *the feasibility of programme and projects that if the proposed assignment is worth doing, does it come under the scope of organization mission and how much it would add towards organization vision;*
- *the resource allocation including man, money and material to achieve time bound objectives which can ultimately lead towards achieving organization vision;*
- *the risks and their mitigations that transpire during the course of programme execution;*
- *the strategies and devise plans to implement various projects and programmes intended to pursuit the organization vision;*

- *the earned value after implementing any project or programme and the extent to which it adds towards organization vision by measure progress of achieved results;*
- *the communication mechanism for what to communicate to whom and when to disseminate success and lesson learnt;*
- *a future road map for the organization towards realization of its vision while adhering to its mission.*

ACT-International programme development philosophy includes the following major elements.

4.1 Building Partnerships

Developing liaison for building strategic alliances with national and international donors and individual philanthropists is the forte of ACT-International programme development. Besides, initiating partnerships with donor agencies the organization also focuses on building consortiums with other implementing partners to gain competitive advantage through sharing competencies not only during resource mobilization process but also during the process of project implementation.

4.1.1 Donor Liaison

To secure a wide support base for resource mobilization and programme financing for all the thematic components of the organization, donor liaison and donor lobbying is the key to programme strengthening and expansion. The scope of donor liaison phenomenon of ACT-International primarily covers three aspects

i. Long term strategic association with institutional donors for programme expansion and organizational strengthening;

ii. Short and medium term partnership with project based donors for geographical extension and addressing a particular need of any selective niche.

iii. According to the strategic programme development vision of the organization the organization will be registered as a charity in the UK.

The process is initiated by the directives of Chief Executive Officer with the assistance of programme development unit. Before initiating the pre-meditated donor liaison process it has been carefully considered that only those national or international donors must be included in the process which bears same mandate as of ACT-International.

Following are the main aspects covered while establishing donor liaison.

- Sector wise approaches that help large donor support.
- Getting the knowledge of donor priorities and preferences through desk review of the available secondary data.

- The decision-making process (local/central, influential advisers, review mechanisms).
- Try to get support for priority projects and avoid seeking support for non-priority projects even if funds are available
- Must not build partnerships with those donor agencies or philanthropists which have any agenda of working against the interests of Pakistan or have any depraved interests or otherwise are considered controversial.

Decision to enter into any strategic partnership is carefully examined through preliminary meetings and discussions with the Senior Management Team. The final decision for getting into any partnership is rooted through the Chief Executive Officer.

4.1.2 Consortium Building for Project Implementation

In many cases for project implementation ACT-International can also go for consortium building with one or more than one organizations. In the consortium one of the organizations is designated as a lead agency with the responsibility of programmatic and financial reporting to donors along with implementation of activities and the rest of consortium partners are responsible for execution of activities only. For building a consortium the partner organizations in a project are well known to ACT-International and have same mandate. The consortium building provides the synergy to all the partners to use each other's resources, capabilities and expertise.

4.2 Programme Planning and Designing

ACT-International considers programme planning and designing as a continuous and an ongoing process that helps to manage a series of multiple projects together. Normally, the programme review and planning is done on bi-annual basis. ACT-International adhere Results Based Programme Planning based on logical model to plan any activity for achieving the expected result. During the planning and designing process it is ensured that the planned interventions must not only be necessary, but also sufficient to achieve the expected result. Results Based Programme Management is followed to ensures that all available financial and human resources continue to support the planned results and any diversion of resources (money, time, supplies) away from the planned results can be minimized during the planning process. The agreed programme design and strategies for programme implementation can only be modified through a formal review process or when the programme context changes through rigorous involvement of the senior management team.

ACT-International programme logic model for programme planning and development links outcomes with programme activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the programme. The model facilitates thinking, planning, and communications about objectives and

actual accomplishments. The logical model is adopted for planning and designing as it helps in all three stages including Design and Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.

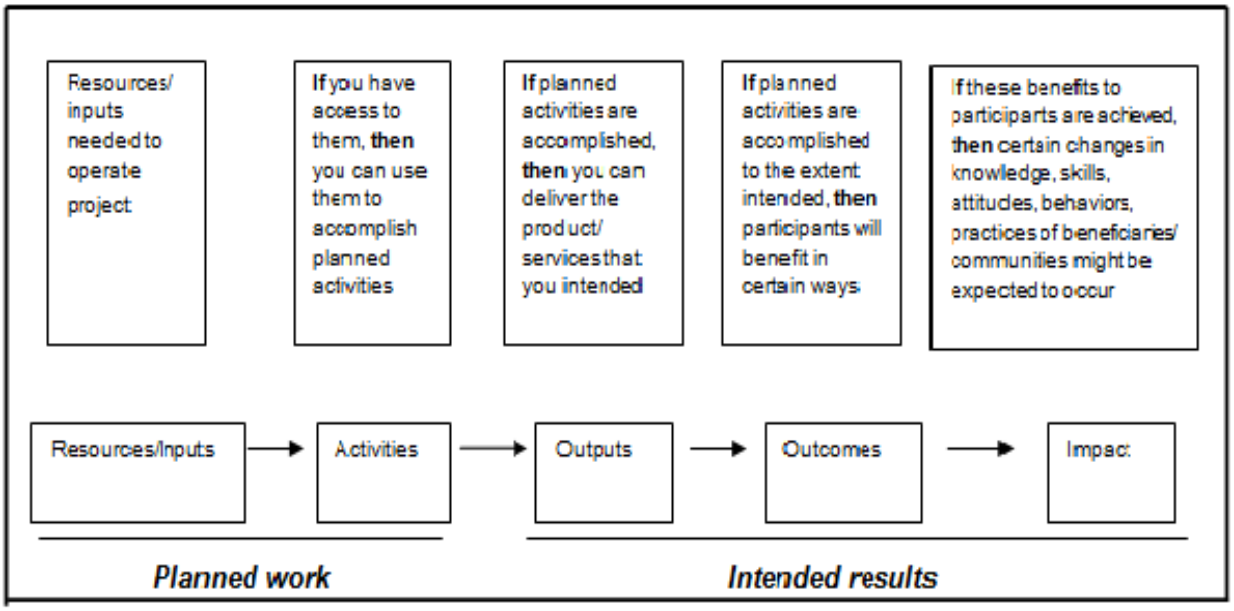
- **Programme Design and Planning** – a logic model serves as a planning tool to develop programme strategy and enhance your ability to clearly explain and illustrate concepts and approaches for key stakeholders.
- **Programme Implementation** – a logic model forms the core for a focused management plan to help identify and collect the data needed to monitor and improve programming.
- **Programme Evaluation** – a logic model presents programme information and progress towards goals in ways that inform programme stakeholders and advocate for a particular programme approach.

While planning the logic model programme planning and designing following planning issues are considered:

- Cataloguing of the resources and actions needed to reach intended results;
- Documenting connections among available resources, planned activities and expected results;
- Describing the results aimed for in terms of specific, measurable, action-orientated, realistic and timed outcomes.

Following figure depicts the programme planning and designing model followed by ACT-International.

ACT-International Programme Planning and Designing Model



While formulating any new development intervention the ME&R Unit, as part of its working approach carries out the Pre-KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices), need assessment

exercises, and Baseline surveys to access the existing situation of the programmatic outreach. These surveys provide information for benchmarking in order to develop appropriate monitoring indicators to pragmatically gauge the efficacy of various inputs and the extent to which the anticipated outcomes are accomplished. Based on these benchmarking exercises, the programme development unit initiates the proposal formulation exercise. The proposal for any project is developed in such a manner that it must include all the desired information and must be in accordance with the guidelines of respective donor. The project proposal is deemed to be a detailed project document inculcating the minutiae related to every aspect of the project including the project overview (background / situation analysis / context), problem statement, project justification, feasibility and rationale, organizations capacity and relevance to achieve the deliverables, project detail including defining impact, outcomes, outputs and activities/inputs, implementation strategy and methodology, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism, communication and dissemination strategy, defining exit strategy, means of attaining sustainability and way forward, detailed financial budget with activity breakdown cost and budget notes and appendices which include logical framework matrix, work breakdown structure, detailed work plan, detailed monitoring plan, detailed communication dissemination plan and staff details to be involved in the project. Once the project document is ready it is shared with the project review committee headed by the CEO and involving programme development, M&E, Finance and Operations heads with sector specific experts of respective regions in which the project is to be implemented for review. The final project document is submitted through programme development unit or through respective regional programme heads to the respective client.

4.3 Project Formulation / Proposal Development Process

The Programme Development Unit (PDU) of ACT-International leads the process of project/proposal formulation. The projects/proposals are developed for solicited Requests for Proposals (RFP) as well for unsolicited grants. The following steps constitute the proposal/project formulation process of ACT-International.

- For both RFP/Call for Proposals and unsolicited proposals, PDU initiates a request for approval to CEO or manager programmes.
- Once approved the brief note/RFP guidelines/ToRs or any other plan describing the required course of action to fulfill the request is shared with concerned sector heads/coordinators. A subsequent meeting is held between PDU team and concerned sector managers to devise a plan of action for getting the project/proposal formulation done.
- Once the plan of action is finalized a coordination meeting is planned, headed by Manager Programme Development with Manager Finance, Manager HR, concerned Sector

manager/coordinators and the Regional Programme Manager of the respective region. Assignments regarding the proposal/project development are designated to the relevant official.

- After the development of project/proposal and relevant documents, these are shared with the SMT (Senior Management Team). If all the members of SMT are not available at one place, Manger Programme Development will initiate a conference call to share the document for review, input, finalization and subsequent approval for submission.

4.4 Programme Monitoring and Evaluation

In the programme planning setting of ACT-International the ultimate objective of Monitoring & Evaluation process is to provide facilitation and guidance in improving the implementation process of the projects and to keep the projects on the right track. Additionally the M&E Unit of ACT-International also helps identify any learning during the implementation and making relevant changes in the strategies and design of programme development. ACT-International follows both internal monitoring and external monitoring mechanisms for its programme M&E. Internal monitoring is done by the ACT-International Monitoring and Evaluation Unit while external monitoring is done by the donor of a particular grant or any external agency/consultant/independent third party as identified by the donor. ACT-International also involves the beneficiaries into its monitoring and evaluation process to further bolster the findings. ACT-International carries out monitoring at three levels based on the logical model.

4.4.1 Process Monitoring

The process level monitoring refers to monitor the activities while they are happening. Process is an important part of any activity/project because it is the process which lays grounds and leads towards achievement of output and outcome. A poor process mechanism leads to poor results and vice versa. Hence, it is important to monitor the process because it would facilitate in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the process leadings towards framing the mechanism for improvement of the process. The sample selection also depends on the volume of activities and number of beneficiaries. Sample may be varying in all components but at least 60% activities to be monitored and reported.

4.4.2 Output Level Monitoring

The output level monitoring is carried out to assess the achievement of the outputs which were planned and/or agreed. The output level monitoring helps in assess the achievements and variances, which can be negative and positive, against the agreed outputs and the quality of the outputs produced. ACT-International monitors this aspect through review of the secondary data and information to be provided by the field teams to Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. These

secondary data and information sources include various means of verification including attendance sheets, narrative reports, activity reports, periodic reports and photographs/ videos.

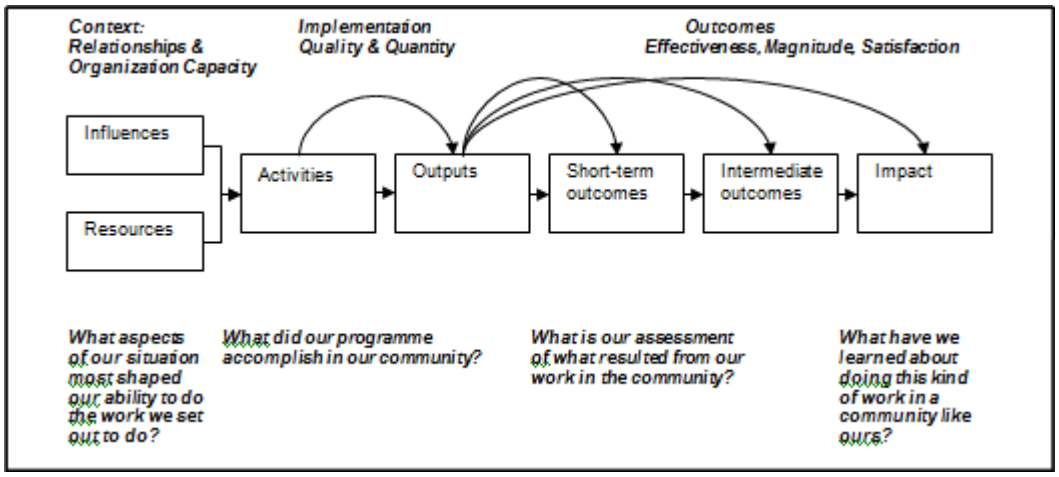
At the output level monitoring the quantitative and qualitative data is considered for assessing the success of any endeavor.

4.4.3 Outcome level Monitoring

This is the impact level monitoring and evaluation normally done once the project period is over. For the impact level monitoring normally an end of project evaluation is recommended. This evaluation is carried out either by ACT-International or by the donor or any external agency/consultant/independent third party. Final evaluation is proposed for assembling the learning derived from the project and setting right directions for future programme planning and designing.

Following diagram illustrates the programme monitoring and evaluation model adopted by ACT-International.

ACT-International - Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Model



5 Programme Budgeting

Programme development process of ACT-International also includes assisting the Finance department to plan the budgetary side of the organization. ACT-International programme budgeting is a thorough process of describing and detailing costs of every cost driver over a specific period of time that falls in direct programme cost, operations cost, programme support cost and human resource cost. Objectives, outputs and expected results are described fully against their necessary resource costs. The annual financial projections and budget costing is based on precise estimates keeping in view the market competitiveness and price inflation. The

accumulative programme cost constitutes the annual budget of the organization and is reviewed on bi-annual basis along with the bi-annual programme review. Thus, by looking at annual organizational budget it becomes easy to find out what precisely will be carried out, at what cost and with what expected results in considerable details.

6 Programme Communications and Documentation

Programme communication and documentation is the most important component within the programme development strategy of ACT-International. The success of most projects handled by a dedicated project team is disseminated by adopting the state of art communication techniques and virtuoso communication skills. ACT-International emphasizes on both internal and external communication. During the internal communication process it is ensured that the information should be communicated through a well defined channel to achieve balance and to avoid any hampering or miscommunication during the communication process. Similarly for external communication the organization is very careful in choosing the medium of communication and its target audience. ACT-International external communication process is deemed to facilitate all stockholders and keep them informed regarding every activity executed by the organization. The communication strategy also intends to present a favorable image of the organization and its services to potential and existing donors, individual philanthropists and to society at large. ACT-International uses a variety of channels for its external communication, including face-to-face meetings, print or broadcast media including, information communication dissemination and behavioral change communication material, flyers, broachers, manuals, press releases, policy briefs, radio and TV programs and electronic communication technologies such as the internet, various electronic forums and its official website. Similarly by following a systematic documentation process of developing and printing periodic reports, end of project reports, project evaluation reports, project success stories and human interest stories and organizational annual report ACT-International reaches to all relevant stakeholders including donor agencies, government departments, social and community groups, media personnel and community in general.

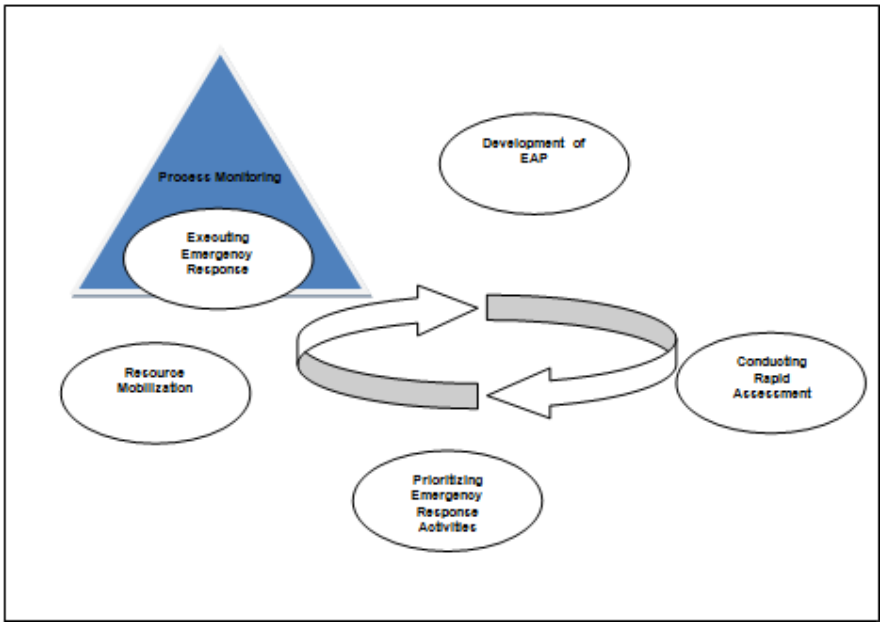
7 Responding to Emergencies

ACT-International programme development approach also focuses on responding to manmade or natural disasters. Before responding to any emergency ACT-International devise an EAP (Emergency Action Plan) keeping in view the nature and scale of disaster and the dimensions of the geographical outreach. The first step of every emergency response is to develop a team of professionals having extensive experience of initiating emergency response and early recovery interventions. As ACT-International emerged from one of the largest emergency response

initiatives in the history so it bears quiet an adequate human resource within its existing team which is capable of executing emergency response of any scale under any circumstances. ACT-International EAP follows a very direct approach of reaching to the affected community. The EAP intends to secure and address the needs of affected communities after prioritization. This prioritization is normally done through reviewing secondary data or by undertaking an integrated rapid assessment. Based on data the activities are prioritized and incorporated in the EAP and are executed by directly reaching to the beneficiaries. The organization emphasizes on process monitoring during any emergency response as it immediately provides the success of any activity and the extent to which the activity addresses the community need.

The following diagram depicts the key steps of ACT-International emergency response process:

Emergency Response Process



HAP Statement of ACT-International

ACT-International during all its policies implementation and procedures will adhere to HAP Principles of Accountability which includes:

1. Commitment to humanitarian standards and rights
2. Setting standards and building capacity
3. Communication
4. Participation in programmes
5. Monitoring and reporting on compliance
6. Addressing complaints
7. Implementing Partners

Duly signed by Board of Directors

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