

ACBAR



STATUTES OF OPERATION

Revised and approved by the ACBAR General Assembly on
29 Apr 2025

ACBAR STATUTES OF OPERATION - REVIEW DOCUMENT

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Explanation of Important Terms in ACBAR Statutes

- **Mandatory criteria for membership:** NGO members are obliged to adhere to these criteria
- **Simple majority vote:** the majority of those present in the meeting (50% + 1 of member organizations present)
- **Two-thirds majority vote:** A two-thirds majority of those present in the room must be obtained for certain decisions such as approving changes in the Statutes or closing of ACBAR as an organization.
- **Quorum:** For officially binding decisions, made by the General Assembly, more than half of the current memberships' organizations must be present.
- **Secret ballot:** Members will vote with an individual voting slip and put it in a ballot box
- **Extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly:** A meeting requested by members for a specific reason – there should be more than half of the current member organizations + 1 to request the meeting.
- **Country Director, Deputy Director, Chief of Mission:** This refers to the Director, General Director, or any other senior executive position within the NGO responsible for overall leadership and strategic direction

As amended by a majority vote of ACBAR members at the Annual General Assembly which took place at the ACBAR Kabul office on 29 April 2025, Kabul, Afghanistan.

INTRODUCTION

Name

This body shall be known as the “Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development” (ACBAR).

Prologue

ACBAR was created in Peshawar in August 1988 as a membership organization, in response to the demands from non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian work in Afghanistan and the Afghan refugees in present at the time in Pakistan. During the years of war, when state institutions were not operational, ACBAR served to coordinate humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people. This was done in cooperation with other key stakeholders such as UN Agencies and donors. Since 2001, ACBAR shifted focus to concentrate on facilitating the coordination of its members, advocacy efforts, dissemination of information, and the promotion of ethical standards, vis à vis the Code of Conduct and the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), amongst its members.

Vision

Effective NGOs, Stronger Communities

Mission

To provide an efficient platform for members to carry out effective humanitarian and development activities in Afghanistan.

Core Values

Core Values are to focus on maintaining open communication, efficient processes, and clear professional standards to ensure that its members can work effectively and ethically together, strengthening both the NGOs and the communities they aim to support.

The Code of Conduct (CoC) is a set of shared norms, principles and values that aim to guide the conduct of NGOs in Afghanistan. Below are ACBAR's general principles as promoted by the CoC:

- ✓ We are committed to complying strictly with international humanitarian principles, human rights, and humanitarian laws.
- ✓ Our work is guided by the principle of 'Do No Harm,' ensuring that interventions are conflict-sensitive, inclusive, and responsive to humanitarian needs. We focus on addressing emergencies, chronic vulnerabilities, and the long-term impacts of disasters and climate change."
- ✓ We are accountable to those whom we seek to assist, to those providing resources, and to legal authorities.
- ✓ We are transparent in our dealings with the government and community partners, the public, donors, and other interested parties.
- ✓ We are independent and we strive to maintain our autonomy according to Afghan and international law, and dedicated to operating with integrity, ensuring that our work remains free from undue influence or unethical practices.
- ✓ We will not discriminate against any individual or group on the grounds of gender, political affiliation, ethnic origin, religious belief, or sexual orientation.

The ACBAR Mandate

- a) ACBAR is an independent coordinating body of Afghan and international NGOs that exists to serve and facilitate the work of its NGO members in order to address efficiently and effectively, the humanitarian and development needs of the people of Afghanistan.
- b) All member organizations agree to provide humanitarian and/or development assistance to the Afghan people regardless of ethnic background, political affiliation, or religious belief, or sexual orientation according to the Code of Conduct of NGOs.
- c) Member organizations are independent, neutral, non-partisan, non-proselytizing and do not participate in military activities.
- d) Enhance/strengthen linkages and coordination with the Government and other partners in humanitarian and development sectors.
- e) Support Government and humanitarian partners in emergency monitoring, response and development efforts, according to needs.
- f) Influence policies and practices on the basis of humanitarian and development principles and standards.
- g) Promote good practice and standards and adherence to principles.
- h) Enable joint approaches and responses and shared learning and information.
- i) Provide safety and security analysis of changes to the working environment that may affect the delivery of assistance and advice and support to assist adherence to principles in delivering assistance.

CHAPTER 1. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

ACBAR is comprised of three components:

- A. The General Assembly
- B. The Steering Committee
- C. The Secretariat

1.1. The General Assembly

- a) The General Assembly consists of all the members of ACBAR represented by their Country Directors, Country Representatives, Chiefs-of-Mission or their formal delegates who are authorized to make decisions on their behalf.
- b) The General Assembly shall meet once a year – during the annual General Assembly in April or May. Diversion from the set period is only allowed with the approval of the Steering Committee and needs a proper justification.
- c) The General Assembly is the highest decision-making organ of ACBAR and will approve the annual budget, the annual report, the annual plan, the election of the Chairperson and members of the Steering Committee and may vote for any change or action required by ACBAR, as discussed during the General Assembly meeting.
- d) The most senior management team member of the organization in the country (Country Director/Representative, Deputy Country Director/Representative). members who serve as NGO representatives in other fora are eligible to serve on the ACBAR Steering Committee,. In running for any position, candidates should expect to be present at Steering Committee meetings over the coming 12-month period.
- e) Extraordinary General Assembly can be requested by at least 50%+1 of its members or at the request of the Steering Committee. Members must be notified at least 48 hours in advance by e-mail that the extraordinary meeting will be taking place.

1.2. The Steering Committee

- a) Steering Committee members monitor, inform, guide, direct and assist in the functioning of ACBAR and the Secretariat. This body is composed 15 members (including the Chair) and consist of representatives from seven Afghan NGO members and seven INGO members (Chairperson not included). ACBAR is committed to promoting gender equality to ensure gender-balanced representation within the SC. Additional guidelines may be elaborated by ACBAR in this regard.
- b) The Steering Committee is accountable to ACBAR's membership and must act in the best interests of the organization and its members. The Steering Committee members are responsible for ensuring that ACBAR remains true to its mission, values, and objectives and that its actions and decisions are transparent, effective, and aligned with the needs of its membership.

1.3. The Secretariat

- a) The ACBAR Secretariat was established to deliver ACBAR services on behalf of the membership, to whom it is accountable, through both the Steering Committee and the Chairperson.

CHAPTER 2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1. Members and membership

ACBAR shall be composed of members who are willing to abide by, follow and sign the Code of Conduct for NGOs engaged in Afghanistan, the ACBAR Statutes, and any additional membership criteria as decided by the General Assembly.

2.2. Mandatory criteria for all members

- a) Members must be non-government, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-political, neutral and non-proselytizing organizations that are providing humanitarian or/and development assistance in Afghanistan.
- b) As defined by Afghan NGO legislation, members may not have senior staff of any current Afghan government as their founder, staff members, or on their Board. This includes the President, vice presidents, chairpersons and the members of the National Council, the Chief Justice and members of the Supreme Court, ministers, deputy ministers, members of the leading body of the Attorney General, heads of independent commissions, heads of independent governmental departments, and heads of political parties. The positions named are examples defined by Afghan NGO legislation. The criteria are not based on the position name, but rather level and type of responsibility.
- c) Members must show conclusively that they have been fully operational in Afghanistan as an NGO (as defined by Afghan NGO legislation) for a minimum of 24 months.
- d) A member must provide documentary evidence of registration and timely reporting to the Government of Afghanistan.
- e) Existing members must pay annual membership fees that are calculated based on the organization's previous year's expenditures (as per their annual audit). Membership fees must be paid no later than the end of June each year. If membership fees are not paid by the required term, then the organization's ACBAR membership will lapse and the organization will be required to repeat the entire membership process.

2.3. Associate membership

- a) The Steering Committee of ACBAR may accept organizations as Associate members, which will have no voting power. Associate members can participate in meetings when invited, give presentations, and share their opinions and information in discussions that are relevant to the aims of ACBAR. Associate membership is open to the following groups:
 - ✓ NGOs that have worked less than one year in Afghanistan will be required to pay \$250 during the first year, after which, they will then pay the same fees as members. NGOs eligible for this category of Associate membership require the Steering Committee to review their qualifications against membership criteria and approval. NGOs falling in this category of Associate members may have this status for one year only (i.e., meaning that they will meet membership criteria in their second year and be able to apply for full membership).
 - ✓ Organizations (ex. private sector companies) that support the objectives of ACBAR, are registered with the Ministry of Economy, and have signed the Code of Conduct, but cannot apply

for membership due to restrictions in their mandate. They will be required to pay \$250 per year as associate members.

- ✓ National NGO Networks like AWN, ANCB and SWABAC, will not be required to pay \$250 of membership.

2.4. Observer members

ACBAR may accept Observer Members who are invited to participate in ACBAR activities on an ad-hoc basis, but they shall not have voting rights. Observer Members can participate in meetings when invited, share their insights, and provide relevant information during discussions. The eligibility of Observer Members shall be at the discretion of the Steering Committee. The Director of ACBAR decides on their invitation to participate in specific meetings or events.

Observer Members may include, but are not limited to, the following types of organizations and entities:

- **Humanitarian and Development Organizations** (e.g., MSF, ICRC, INSO)
- **Donor Organizations** (e.g., government and international development agencies)
- **Academic Institutions** (e.g., universities or research organizations)
- **Other entities** that support ACBAR's objectives and whose presence could contribute to the discussions and activities of the organization.

The rights and duties of Observer Members are as follows:

- **No Voting Rights:** Observer Members shall not have any voting rights.
- **Ad-hoc Participation:** Observer Members may be invited to specific meetings or events as deemed relevant by the Director.
- **Engagement:** Observer Members may present at meetings, contribute to discussions, and provide information relevant to the ACBAR's objectives. However, their participation shall be non-binding.

ACBAR Steering Committee reserves the right to limit or withdraw Observer Member invitations based on the relevance and alignment of the observer's activities with the objectives of the organization.

2.5. Membership registration process

- a) Prospective members must be sponsored by either the Director or Deputy Director of two existing member organizations, according to the separate guidelines. If one, or both, senior-level sponsors of the prospective member are not present to support the candidate organization at the General Assembly, ACBAR will refer to the endorsee/sponsor letter submitted beforehand and regard that as the required sponsorship.
- b) Each prospective candidate is required to submit a detailed narrative description of the organization, in English, including background, a copy of the annual budget, an audit report by a chartered accountant, audit report of projects currently implemented, planned projects, funding sources, statutes of operation, and organizational structure.
- c) Prospective members must submit an application form to ACBAR, which can be obtained from any ACBAR office or from the ACBAR website. Applications must be submitted to the Secretariat in the ACBAR Head Office in Kabul, which will then confirm that all applications are properly completed and that the minimum ACBAR membership criteria are met. Applicants with incomplete applications will be informed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will forward completed applications for review by the Steering Committee, with onward forwarding to the General Assembly for elections.

Membership applications will be approved by a simple majority of the General Assembly, as long as the quorum is met. The decision of ACBAR shall be made known in writing to the applicant, according to the below procedures:

- ✓ All applications should be submitted using the most recent version of the standard ACBAR application form, together with the requested relevant documents (as mentioned under Section 2.1) to the Secretariat. An application letter should state the aims, objectives, projects, and activities of the applicant organization and proof of their registration (or process) must be attached.
- ✓ On receipt of the application, the Secretariat will complete a verification process of the organization's information provided in the application form.
- ✓ The application letter, and relevant documents (including MoUs, registration certificates, and any additional information gathered by the Secretariat) will be submitted to the Steering Committee for review.
- ✓ The Steering Committee may then make an initial decision to either forward the application to the General Assembly, request further information from the applicant organization, or reject the organization's application, if it feels that the basic criteria are not fulfilled. Applicants may then reapply once the criteria are fulfilled.
- ✓ The full pack of application documents from the candidate organization will be sent to all ACBAR members, three weeks prior to the General Assembly.
- ✓ During the General Assembly, ACBAR members will have the opportunity to consider the prospective organizations' applications. The applicant NGO must send a one-pager presentation of its NGO and its work before the General Assembly and be present at the General Assembly to answer any questions posed by the ACBAR members.
- ✓ The applicant NGO's sponsors should ideally be present in the General Assembly meeting to support and answer questions from the floor regarding the NGO(s) they are sponsoring. However, ACBAR must confirm the endorsee/sponsor letter beforehand so that, in case of sponsors' absence, in the General Assembly there will be no delay to the membership process of the applicant NGO.
- ✓ After the question-answer session, the applicant NGO representative(s) will leave the room while members vote on their membership application. A simple majority vote by secret ballot will confirm membership. The applicant will be informed of its membership or rejection in writing the following week. Any failed applicants will be eligible to make another ACBAR application after a six-month period.
- ✓ If the applicant is a former member and re-applying for membership, they must clear any outstanding previous membership fees, before again seeking ACBAR membership, as per the procedure mentioned above.
- ✓ Once the membership application is approved at the annual General Assembly and membership fees are paid, the organization will receive its ACBAR certificate.

2.6. Membership and registration fees

- a) Prospective ACBAR members must pay a non-refundable \$50 USD registration fee, or its equivalent in Afghanis when submitting their membership application. The registration fee of the successful NGO applicants will be deducted from their first year's membership fee.

- b) Full Members pay an annual membership fee of 0.1% of their annual expenses, with a maximum of \$5,000 USD and a minimum of \$250 USD per year.
- c) Associate members contribute \$250 USD per year.
- d) Membership fees will be collected on an annual basis and latest by the end of June each year.
- e) Notwithstanding (c) above, in special circumstances, a member organization in good standing may request the Steering Committee to approve a staggered payment plan, within a specified time frame.
- f) Once the General Assembly approves the membership of a new applicant, the membership fee must be paid in full within two weeks.

2.7. Commitment to coordination, information sharing, transparency & accountability

- a) Members must commit to being part of coordination efforts, information-sharing, transparency and accountability. Members must provide the required data on activities to ACBAR.
- b) Members must inform ACBAR and the government if they cease operating in Afghanistan.

2.8. ACBAR membership is terminated

- a) When a member organization ceases operations in Afghanistan.
- b) When a member organization notifies ACBAR in writing of its intention to withdraw its membership (there will be no refund of the membership fee).
- c) Even after receiving a warning letter from the Director, if a member organization is in arrears of their annual membership fee by the required term, their membership will be automatically terminated at the end of the year.
- d) If a member organization has been undertaking activities contrary to the aims and values of ACBAR or is acting in contravention to its Guidelines and Codes of Conduct.
 - ✓ The Steering Committee will then verify the information and if suspicions are proven then the organization is suspended until the next General Assembly, at which time a final decision will be made on the member organization's expulsion. The suspension includes stripping of all privileges of membership.
 - ✓ A no-objection of voting members present at the General Assembly which is considering the matter would suffice to eject the member. A member expelled in this manner may re-apply for membership only after twelve months following expulsion if it has taken corrective measures.
 - ✓ The concerned member organization will have the right to present its case to the General Assembly.
- e) If its status as a signatory to the Codes of Conduct is revoked.
- f) Failing to attend two consecutive General Assemblies, without proper cause, may lead to an expulsion from ACBAR.

CHAPTER 3. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

- 3.1.** Member organizations have the right to ask ACBAR for advice in matters concerning relief, development and advocacy. Member organizations are also entitled to receive circulars, annual reports, and all other documents published by ACBAR.

- 3.2.** Member organizations have the right to put forward comments and suggestions to ACBAR on anything concerning the activities, development, and management of ACBAR.
- 3.3.** Active participation by member organizations in ACBAR meetings and activities is expected and encouraged.
- 3.4.** Member organizations must adhere to ACBAR's General Principles.
- 3.5.** The Director or Deputy Director of member organizations must attend the General Assemblies. Failing to attend two consecutive General Assemblies, without proper cause, will lead to an expulsion from ACBAR of the member organization.
- 3.6.** Confidentiality clause (any document branded confidential by ACBAR shall not be shared). Breach of confidentiality will lead to a range of different sanctions from a simple warning, withdrawing voting rights to an expulsion from ACBAR of the member organization, or any other appropriate sanctions. These sanctions are decided by the SC.

CHAPTER 4. FUNCTIONS OF ACBAR COMPONENTS

4.1. The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the governing body of ACBAR and has the power to overrule any decisions made by the Steering Committee or its Sub-Committees.

4.1.1. Dates and attendance at General Assembly meetings

General Assembly meetings are open to all ACBAR members and shall be held as follows:

- ✓ ACBAR annual General Assembly takes place annually in April or May.
- ✓ Invitations to attend the General Assembly can be extended as needed to observer members and to representatives from the government, or the diplomatic and international assistance community.

4.1.2. Procedures for General Assembly meetings

- a) Each member organization may have a total of two senior-level representatives present at General Assembly meetings, but there is only one vote per organization.
- b) Upon arrival, each member organization will sign in and designate their voting representative for the General Assembly; who will also be the only person who can put forward motions on behalf of the member organization. One set of voting cards will be given to each member organization; these must be returned to ACBAR at the end of the meeting.
- c) Voting will be done by raising the respective voting card: a) Yes, for the motion (green card) or, b) No, against the motion (red card). Any member can request a secret ballot for voting if approved by a majority of members present.
- d) The annual General Assembly agenda and papers must be sent to members at least three weeks in advance of the meeting date. For extraordinary General Assembly meetings, this can be sent 48 hours before the General Assembly.
- e) A General Assembly quorum consists of half of the current members, plus one. Motions will be carried by a simple majority vote of members present (or a two-thirds majority of members present – as specified in sections of this document - as long as the quorum is met).

- f) The General Assembly will elect the ACBAR Chairperson and the Steering Committee by a simple majority vote. Seven members of the Steering Committee shall be from Afghan NGOs and seven from INGOs.
- g) In the unusual event that the required 14 Steering Committee members are not elected due to insufficient votes or any other reason, the Steering Committee must operate with a minimum of eight elected members, four of them being Afghan NGOs and four INGOs.
- h) No proxy votes are permitted.
- i) All meetings are to be conducted according to the generally accepted rules of order.
- j) Meetings and written communications of ACBAR are in English. Minutes of the General Assembly are also translated into local language and disseminated to all member organizations.

4.1.3. Annual General Assembly agenda

During annual General Assembly meetings, the following topics will be part of the standard agenda. Member organizations may add any other business to the agenda.

- ✓ A report on ACBAR activities for the previous year.
- ✓ Approval of the audited financial report.
- ✓ Approval of the annual financial narrative reports.
- ✓ Elections of Steering Committee and new ACBAR members.
- ✓ Final approval of plans, priorities and the budget for the forthcoming year.

4.2. The Steering Committee

4.2.1. Candidatures and Elections

- a) Elections will be supervised and carried out by an Election Committee composed of the following three individuals who are responsible for counting the votes: two (2) members chosen by the Steering Committee at the beginning of the General Assembly and the ACBAR Director. The Election Committee should be a mix of national and international organizations, and gender's representation must be ensure.
- b) The Election Committee will be responsible for checking and confirming nominations. This includes: a) obtaining written letters of acceptance from each nominee, b) checking the validity of the ballots, and, c) counting the ballots.
- c) Nominations for Steering Committee members and the Chairperson will be requested from members 4 – 6 weeks prior to the annual General Assembly. Members are able to nominate, through email or letter, or any other platform organised by ACBAR, either themselves or an individual from another member organization. The deadline for the submission of nominations is the day before the date of the General Assembly meeting.
- d) The Chairperson will be directly elected by the General Assembly and must be the CD of an NNGO. To qualify as Chairperson, the candidate must have served as a member of the Steering Committee for at least one term within the previous five years. In the absence of an NNGO candidate, the General Assembly can authorize to have an INGO CD for a maximum period of one year as the chairperson of ACBAR.
- e) Members will cast a secret ballot, with separate lists for national and international NGOs.
- f) The Steering Committee election is determined by:
 - ✓ The 14 members of the Steering Committee will be those individuals with the highest number of votes. NNGOs' and INGOs' lists are kept separate.

- ✓ In the event of a tied vote for a member, a re-vote will take place.

4.2.2. Terms of office

- a) The term of Chairperson will be 12 months and each elected Chairperson will be limited to two consecutive terms in office (but the individual can stand again for election if the term is not consecutive).
- b) Steering Committee members will likewise serve a term of 12 months. There are no term limits for how many times an individual can serve as a Steering Committee member.
- c) Only the Director or Deputy Director, of a member organization are eligible to be nominated to become a Steering Committee member.
- d) The replacement for a Steering Committee member who resigned/does not attend according to the ToR should be replaced and not wait till the Annual General Assembly. The Chairperson will inform/attest the end of the mandate. The next person in the election who got the highest vote will be introduced in the 24 hours following the chairperson's email, to Steering Committee members for the remaining term of office. In case of the absence of a replacement, the Steering Committee can initiate an ad-hoc election of Steering Committee members. This election can also be held online.
- e) Members are encouraged to vote for a minimum of 30% of previous Steering Committee members to be elected to maintain the institutional memory of the Steering Committee.

4.2.3. Steering Committee role and organisation

- a) The Steering Committee is accountable to the membership. The Steering Committee commits to the following:
 - **Regular Reporting:** The Steering Committee shall provide regular updates to ACBAR members on the decisions made, the implementation of strategic goals, and the progress of key initiatives. This includes annual updates that are shared during General Assembly meetings, as well as regular updates during the Country Directors' meeting.
 - **Transparency:** Steering Committee members will ensure that their decisions are communicated clearly and promptly to all members and that processes involving ACBAR's governance are open and accessible. This includes ensuring that decisions on membership applications, financial matters, and major organizational policies are disclosed to the membership.
 - **Members' Consultation:** The Steering Committee will engage with members when making significant decisions that affect ACBAR's direction, ensuring that the perspectives and interests of all members are considered. This may involve consultations, surveys, or discussions during General Assemblies and other relevant platforms, undertaken by the Secretariat.
 - **Conflict Resolution:** In cases of disputes or grievances involving members or issues that arise within ACBAR, the Steering Committee will act impartially and transparently, working towards fair resolutions and maintaining the credibility and integrity of ACBAR as an organization.
 - To ensure that new members of the Steering Committee are well-equipped to carry out their responsibilities effectively, an **orientation session** will be held for all incoming Steering Committee members, in the following 7 days after their election. This session will focus on providing a comprehensive understanding of ACBAR's structure, operations, and key responsibilities, enabling new members to contribute meaningfully to the governance of the

- organization. It will include: an overview of ACBAR's Mission, Values, and Objectives; an explanation of the roles and Responsibilities; a reminder of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards; a financial oversight and budgeting; as well as any other relevant elements for the new Steering Committee members to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- b) The Steering Committee oversees and supports the ACBAR Secretariat and is accountable to the members. The Steering Committee shall monitor the performance of the Director which must be conducted annually. The Steering Committee monitors ACBAR-initiated Working Groups and Task Forces.
 - c) Steering Committee meetings will convene on a monthly basis. Ad hoc meetings may be called as required. Any three members of the Steering Committee may call for an emergency meeting of the Steering Committee. An extraordinary meeting must be called for by the Chairperson within three days of receiving such a request.
 - d) The Chairperson of ACBAR will chair the meetings of the Steering Committee. In the absence of the Chairperson the Deputy Chair will chair the meeting. In case of absence of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chair, the Steering Committee members can decide either to postpone the meeting or to appoint for this specific meeting a temporary chair.
 - e) The quorum for Steering Committee meetings is 50%+1. The Steering Committee members present in Kabul must attend in person to the Steering Committee meetings unless there is a compelling reason forbidding them from doing so. The Steering Committee members outside of Kabul should join online, if feasible. In case of absence, the Steering Committee members must inform in a timely manner the Chairperson and the Secretariat.
 - f) The Steering Committee in coordination with the Director will participate in strategic planning, programme development and fundraising events that benefit ACBAR.
 - g) The Steering Committee, if necessary and in coordination with the Director will assess members and external needs and environments, and based on these, make recommendations for approval to structure, funding, advocacy and policy issues, to ensure ACBAR has relevant, effective, and long-term strategic planning.
 - h) The Steering Committee will represent ACBAR in coordination with the Director and ensure that information is shared with members in a timely manner, via the Secretariat, and that appropriate actions are taking place, as required.
 - i) The Steering Committee members will be assigned to lead on thematic areas of ACBAR.
 - j) The Steering Committee members should actively lead and contribute to technical working groups.
 - k) On ACBAR's behalf, Steering Committee members, if necessary and in coordination with the Director maintain constructive relationships with government ministries and departments, UN agencies, donors, NGOs and any relevant bodies in order to strengthen coordination and collaboration.
 - l) The Steering Committee members must respect strict confidentiality during and after their tenure period, on any information, written or verbal, shared with them, in their role as Steering Committee members.
 - m) The Steering Committee has the right to establish sub-committees dealing with specific issues, where there is a demand for such, and to dissolve sub-committees upon completion of their tasks.
 - n) The Steering Committee is responsible for addressing complaints from ACBAR staff (according to ACBAR's HR policy), member organizations, and Government counterparts. Any complaints shall

be directed to the People and Culture focal point of the Steering Committee in accordance with ACBAR whistle-blower policy.

- o) The Steering Committee shall exercise overall supervision of the Secretariat in respect of:
 - i. Ensuring the Director fulfils the terms of his/her job description.
 - ii. Being involved in strategic planning, programme development, and fundraising.
 - iii. Providing feedback on the Director's assessment of the needs/interests of members and the external environment.
 - iv. The development of new programs and fundraising opportunities, so that ACBAR is adequately resourced.
 - v. Ensuring that information from sub-committee meetings is fed back to the Steering Committee, Director, and the ACBAR membership, and that appropriate action on recommendations takes place as required.

4.2.4. Resignation/Termination/Continuation of Steering Committee Membership

Steering Committee membership is discontinued under the following circumstances:

- a) By a simple majority vote at a General Assembly meeting or through an ad-hoc vote of the membership.
- b) If the ACBAR membership of the organization has been terminated.
- c) If a Steering Committee member fails to attend without proper justification 2 meetings, or with proper justification 4 meetings.
- d) The elected person resigns as a Steering Committee member.
- e) If the Steering Committee member resigns from its position of legal representative from his/her organisation during its time as an elected member.

4.2.5. Functions and responsibilities of the ACBAR Chairperson

- a) The Chairperson, with the Director, has a representative role of ACBAR for the humanitarian and development community, both in Afghanistan and globally. The Chairperson represents ACBAR at functions and meetings with the Government, UN, donors, and other parties with which ACBAR engages and provides feedback.
- b) The Chairperson leads the monthly Steering Committee meetings.
- c) Has overall responsibility of monitoring, advising, and supervising the Director and provides strategic leadership, in coordination with the Steering Committee.
- d) Seeks members' input in maintaining an effective and responsive Secretariat.
- e) Monitors the utilization of ACBAR funds.
- f) Signs all binding ACBAR documents which have been approved by the Steering Committee and/or the General Assembly.

4.2.6. Functions and responsibilities of the ACBAR Vice-Chairperson

- a) The deputy is elected by the Steering Committee from among its members during the first Steering Committee meeting following the General Assembly.
- b) Deputize for Chairperson as required.
- c) Function as Acting Chairperson until elections are held, if the Chairperson leaves office before the end of his/her term.

- d) The Vice-Chair has a representative role towards the members.
- e) Carry out special assignments as requested by the Chairperson.

4.2.7. Functions and responsibilities of the ACBAR Treasurer

- a) The treasurer is elected by the Steering Committee from among its members during the first Steering Committee meeting following the General Assembly.
- b) Ensure the budget is adhered to.
- c) Ensure that proper ACBAR procurement procedures are being correctly followed.
- d) Track expenditure and income.
- e) Advise the Director in preparation of the annual budget.
- f) Present the annual budget and audit report to the General Assembly.
- g) Provide monthly financial reports to the Steering Committee.
- h) Review the annual audit and auditors' management letters, while coordinating the development of an action plan to address any issues raised.

4.2.8. Functions and responsibilities of the People and Culture focal point

- a) A people and culture focal point is elected by the Steering Committee from among its members during the first Steering Committee meeting following the General Assembly.
- b) The people and culture focal point will be the focal point for any complaints or issues regarding ACBAR staff and will report to the Chairperson.
- c) The people and culture focal point must adhere to a strict confidentiality code.

4.3. The ACBAR Secretariat

4.3.1. Composition of the Secretariat

- a) The ACBAR Secretariat is comprised of the salaried staff of ACBAR, including the ACBAR Director.
- b) The performance and structure of the Secretariat will be reviewed by the Director every year. Changes to the structure and function of the ACBAR Secretariat will take place in accordance with evaluation outcomes and long-term strategic plans. The Steering Committee or the Director can decide on an external review.
- c) Substantial changes in staffing levels and organizational structure require a simple majority vote from the Steering Committee.
- d) The Secretariat is responsible for handling ACBAR finances, including contributions and membership fees, as per donor requirements.
- e) The Secretariat manages expenditures against the approved budget and provides regular updates to the Steering Committee.
- f) The Secretariat will ensure that donor reporting requirements are met.
- g) The Secretariat will provide basic support to taskforces and working groups, as agreed.
- h) Secretariat staff will represent ACBAR as appointed/required and ensure feedback to the membership in a timely manner.
- i) The Secretariat must respect the confidentiality clause.

4.3.2. The ACBAR Director

- a) A Director will be employed to manage the day-to-day activities of ACBAR in accordance with the Statutes, the position's job description, and ACBAR's strategic plans.
- b) The Director is accountable to the membership and reports to the Chairperson.
- c) The Director is responsible for and shall manage all ACBAR Secretariat staff.
- d) Secretariat staff members will all have dedicated job descriptions, which are approved by the Steering Committee.
- e) The Director is the secretary of the Steering Committee. The Director calls the meetings (including agenda and supporting documents) with at least one week's notice. While the Director is present during Steering Committee meetings, s/he does not have voting rights.
- f) The Director, in collaboration with Secretariat staff, prepares annual work plans and budgets for review and approval by the Steering Committee. These are then presented at the annual General Assembly.
- g) The Steering Committee confers authority to the Director to take responsibility for all of the day-to-day operational aspects of the Secretariat.
- h) The Director shall ensure that the minutes of all meetings, such as the AAHF, ADF and other meetings held by ACBAR, are distributed to members within five working days after the meetings have been held.

CHAPTER 5. FINANCE

- 5.1. The fiscal year of ACBAR is from 01 January to 31 December.
- 5.2. During the fiscal year, no revision may be made to the current year's approved budget without prior approval by the Steering Committee. Within the budget, however, savings in one budget line may be transferred by the Director to another budget line, provided this is in accordance with donor regulations and endorsed by the Treasurer.
- 5.3. If the transfer of savings in certain budgeted expenditure components would augment or decrease any other budgeted expenditure component by more than 15%, prior approval must be obtained from the Steering Committee.
- 5.4. The expenses of the ACBAR Secretariat shall be financed from yearly membership fees and/or from other funding sources.
- 5.5. The Steering Committee will propose the changes to the required membership fees and will present this amount for approval at a General Assembly meeting.
- 5.6. The Director and the Steering Committee are responsible for soliciting funds from as wide a donor base as possible and ensuring the neutrality of the organization.
- 5.7. The ACBAR Secretariat shall prepare monthly financial reports, which will meet the requirements of budgeting and cash accounting.
- 5.8. Copies of monthly financial reports will be distributed to Steering Committee members.
- 5.9. Annual ACBAR financial accounts must be audited every year by an external auditing firm approved by the General Assembly.
- 5.10. The audited report is approved by the General Assembly.

CHAPTER 6. PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENTS

- 6.1. In undertaking advocacy work on behalf of its members, ACBAR may, from time to time, issue public statements, and press releases, hold press conferences, or issue public comments.
- 6.2. Important written public statements on issues which are not covered by guiding documents, or which have not been discussed in the Steering Committee, shall be approved by the Steering Committee in advance of publication.
- 6.3. When ACBAR issues a statement on a matter that is endorsed by a majority vote of the members, the Director and the Chairperson are then empowered to speak and issue comments as representatives of all ACBAR members.
- 6.4. Such statements will note that this is a corporate initiative, rather than expressing the views of individual members. Spokespersons will only be ACBAR members, or executive officers officially appointed as such.
- 6.5. After statements are approved, they will then be circulated to the Steering Committee and all ACBAR members.

CHAPTER 7. WORKING GROUPS

- 7.1. ACBAR may establish two types of groups:
 - a) ad hoc task forces, which can be constituted as and when necessary to deal with specific short-term issues or tasks; and,
 - b) working groups which are formed on the basis of its basic mandate and strategic objectives.
- 7.2. Working groups and task forces can be formed at the request of the General Assembly or by a decision of the Steering Committee or by the Secretariat.
- 7.3. Task forces can be formed to lobby and advocate on specific issues of humanitarian/development concern, coordinate specific activities of the fora, manage specific projects on behalf of the fora, act as a platform, etc.
- 7.4. The Steering Committee will agree on the work plan and terms of reference of each created working group or task force and will ensure the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the agreed work plan.
- 7.5. Working groups formed on the basis of ACBAR's mandate will comprise of at least one serving member of the Steering Committee and one staff member of the Secretariat, in order to facilitate the support and liaison of the working group.
- 7.6. The working group or task force will elect its own chair and a person who reports to the Secretariat, General Assembly, and/or Steering Committee.
- 7.7. The Secretariat shall review working groups and task forces every year and will inform the Steering Committee which may discontinue them if the assigned task is completed or the relevance of the group is no longer necessary.
- 7.8. The members of the working groups and task forces will determine the frequency of their meetings and report back to the Steering Committee on a regular basis.
- 7.9. Minutes from each working group meeting will be provided to the Director, who will include a summary in his/her monthly update to the Steering Committee and the members.

CHAPTER 8. REGIONAL OFFICES

- 8.1. ACBAR may establish regular and ad hoc regional offices, or regional or provincial focal points, to enhance the scope and impact of its work.
- 8.2. Regional offices will help strengthen ACBAR's presence and outreach by facilitating coordination, communication, and engagement with local members, donors, and other key actors. The geographic coverage of these offices will be determined based on need, resource availability, and strategic priorities, ensuring that ACBAR is present in the regions where it can have the greatest impact.
- 8.3. Regional Office Operations: The regional office will act as the operational arm of ACBAR in the designated region. Its responsibilities include:
- **Providing administrative support** to ACBAR members in the region.
 - **Facilitating coordination and collaboration** between members, donors, and other key stakeholders at the regional level.
 - Assisting in the implementation of ACBAR's programs, projects, and initiatives within the region.
 - Managing regional logistics, communications, and reporting.
 - Serving as the point of contact for regional inquiries and feedback related to ACBAR's activities.
- 8.4. The establishment and closure of regional offices, whether regular or ad-hoc, must be approved by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will review proposals for regional offices based on their alignment with ACBAR's overall strategic goals, available resources, and the perceived impact in the respective region.
- 8.5. Each regional office will be staffed by a regional manager who is an ACBAR employee. The regional manager will be responsible for the overall operation of the office, including implementing ACBAR's policies, managing the office's staff, and coordinating activities within the region. The regional manager will act as a liaison between the central office and the regional office, ensuring that information flows smoothly and that regional concerns and feedback are communicated to ACBAR's leadership.
- 8.6. In addition to the regional manager, members located within the region will elect a Regional Advisory Board during the regional coordination meeting. This board will consist of:
- **Chairperson:** Elected from among the regional members to provide leadership and represent the interests of the region within ACBAR's governance structure.
 - **Three Advisory Board Members:** Elected by regional members to assist the Chairperson in overseeing the region's activities and ensuring that they align with ACBAR's policies and objectives.
- 8.7. The role of these advisory boards is to plan and coordinate activities at the regional or provincial levels, in accordance with ACBAR policies and other guiding documents approved by the General Assembly and/or Steering Committee. The Regional Advisory Board will provide guidance and leadership in the following areas:
- **Regional Coordination:** Ensuring that the activities of regional members align with ACBAR's overarching mission and strategic objectives.

- **Activity Planning:** Assisting in the planning and coordination of regional programs, events, and initiatives, in line with ACBAR's policies and the priorities of the regional members.
 - **Advocacy and Representation:** Representing the region's concerns and priorities at the central level. The Regional Advisory Board will act as an intermediary between the regional members and the central office, bringing forward issues that require attention, such as regional needs, challenges, and opportunities.
 - **Monitoring and Reporting:** Supporting the regional office in monitoring and evaluating regional activities, ensuring that all operations are carried out effectively, transparently, and in accordance with ACBAR's guidelines. The board will also help compile reports on regional activities for submission to the central office and the Steering Committee.
- 8.8. Alignment with ACBAR Policies:** All activities and initiatives carried out by the regional offices and advisory boards must adhere to ACBAR's established policies, including but not limited to the ACBAR Code of Conduct, financial management procedures, and any regional-specific guidelines or directives approved by the General Assembly or Steering Committee. Regional offices must ensure that their activities contribute to ACBAR's overall goals and that they operate in a manner that is consistent with ACBAR's mission of promoting humanitarian and development coordination in Afghanistan.
- 8.9. Connection Between Regional and Central Offices:** effective communication and coordination between regional offices and the central office in Kabul are essential for the smooth functioning of ACBAR as a whole. To ensure proper integration:
- **Regular Communication:** The regional manager will maintain regular communication with the central office, providing updates on regional activities, challenges, and successes. This will allow for real-time feedback and the resolution of any issues that arise.
 - **Central Office Support:** The central office will provide strategic direction, technical support, and resources to regional offices as needed. This includes ensuring that regional offices have access to ACBAR's tools, training materials, and policy updates to carry out their work effectively.
 - **Information Sharing:** Both regional offices and the central office will maintain systems for sharing information, such as reports, project updates, and data, to ensure that all members of ACBAR have access to the latest developments across the organization.
 - **Regional Feedback to Steering Committee:** The Regional Advisory Boards will serve as a mechanism for gathering feedback from regional members and providing it to the Steering Committee, ensuring that regional voices are represented in the decision-making processes of the central body.
- 8.10. Evaluation of Regional Offices:** to ensure that regional offices are fulfilling their intended roles and contributing effectively to ACBAR's overall goals, regular evaluations by the Director will be conducted. These evaluations will assess:
- The impact of regional activities on local coordination efforts.
 - The efficiency and effectiveness of communication between the regional and central offices.
 - The alignment of regional initiatives with ACBAR's strategic priorities.

CHAPTER 9. AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES AND LIQUIDATION

- 9.1.** Changes to the Statutes of Operation can be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the quorum of the membership that is present at the General Assembly meeting.
- 9.2.** The Statutes of Operation become effective the day a two-thirds majority vote of members attending the General Assembly approves them.
- 9.3.** In the event that ACBAR is dissolved, or is liquidated for any reason whatsoever, the General Assembly will determine how the funds of ACBAR will be settled, in line with Afghan NGO legislation and donor regulations.
- 9.4.** In order to dissolve ACBAR as an organisation, the General Assembly is required to make this decision by a two-thirds majority vote at two consecutive General Assembly meetings, of which the second will be extraordinary and must take place not later than two weeks after the first meeting.

Revised by ACBAR Steering Committee

Presented at the General Assembly on 29th of April 2025

Approved by:
SC Chair Person,

Approved by:
ACBAR Director,