



Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Act!	Act Change Transform
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
AU	African Union
BBI	Building Bridges Initiative
BDS	Business Development Support
BOD	Board of Directors
CC	Climate Change
CD	Capacity Development
CoK 2010	Constitution of Kenya 2010
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department of Foreign International Development
DHR	Democracy and Human Rights
EAC	East Africa community
ELNRM	Environment, Livelihoods and Natural Resources Management
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRD	Human Resources Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MIS	Management Information System
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSAs	Non-State Actors
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBCT	Peace Building and Conflict Transformation
PCVE	Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
SIDA	Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency
SMART	Specific Measurable Accurate Realistic and Time-bound
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCD	Value Chain Development
VE	Violent Extremism

FOREWORD

Act Change Transform (Act!) is leading Kenyan, non-profit, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The organization was established in September 2001 as Pact Kenya but rebranded in 2011 as Act! a full-fledged local organization. Act! has over the years provided platforms for articulating issues, shared its expertise and best practices within its core areas of focus mainly through Capacity Development and Civil Society Strengthening for Sustainable Environment & Natural Resources Management; Democracy Governance and Human Rights; and Peace Building and Conflicts Transformation.

Act! appreciates the need for regular strategic (re)positioning to enable better align with shifting operational contexts. This Strategic Plan) outlines Act!'s strategic direction for the period 2020 – 2024. This strategy is the outcome of a co-creation process entailing rigorous analysis, consultations and reflections by Act! selected partners, peers and other key stakeholders.

During the strategy development process, Act! reflected on and reviewed its organizational identity; philosophy and theory of change; strategic focus areas and organizational roles; major interventions, goals and strategies for achieving the same.

The Strategic Plan has been aligned with national and regional development priorities as contained in respective blueprints. Additionally, the strategy directly contributes to various global commitments, as contained in documents such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategic plan also seeks to effectively position Act! in the rapidly evolving operational context. The plan is seen as a broad framework document that sets broad parameters to our programs and operations over the plan period.

The Strategic Plan is anchored on four key pillars around which our work will be focused over the plan period. These are Responsive and Accountable Governance; Environment, Livelihoods and Natural Resources Management (ELNRM); Peace Building, Conflict Transformation and Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism; and Organizational Excellence. Three overarching strategies have been adopted, being, Capacity/Organizational Development, Advocacy (Influencing) and Grants Management.

Act! acknowledges and will retain its present commitment towards collaborative approaches. We will thus pursue a system orientation, in which we will work with multiple actors, while pursuing multiple strategies across multiple levels. We will deliberately work with and through local partner organizations besides collaborating with non-traditional allies like the government and private sector.

We are grateful to DANIDA for graciously supporting the development of this strategic plan. We also wish to thank in advance our partners and peers who have and continue to subscribe to our mission by collaborating with us towards actualization of the same. We call upon our valued partners to join hands with us as we venture into this exiting, ambitious and equally challenging phase of our journey.

We believe that with your confidence and support, we shall attain our goals, and make meaningful difference in the quality of life of our constituents.

Mr. Donald Mark Odera
Chairperson, Act! Board of Directors

Mr. Tom Were
Chief Executive Officer, Act!

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Organizational Background

Act! is leading Kenyan, non-profit, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The organization was established in September 2001 as Pact Kenya and rebranded in 2011 as a fully-fledged local organization. Act! focuses on building the capacity and resilience of individuals and communities, thus empowering them to get involved in the decisions and management of their own development.

Act! supports programs in the areas of Democracy, Governance and Human Rights; Peace Building and Conflict Transformation; as well as Environment, Livelihoods and Natural Resources Management. Further, Act! provides platforms for articulating issues and processes, shares her expertise, experiences and best practices related to capacity development, organizational development and grants management.

For more than a decade, Act! has worked with grassroots organizations to make a lasting change to communities in Kenya and neighbouring countries.

1.2 Organizational Identity

Vision Statement: A prosperous, cohesive and resilient society living in dignity.

Mission Statement: To champion lasting positive community transformation.

Values:

1. **Humanity:** We passionately support communities' quest to attain full potential and dignity.
2. **Justice:** We promote impartial access to human rights, resources and opportunities.
3. **Flexibility:** We consistently adapt our engagements to the unique contexts of our constituents.
4. **Integrity:** We commit ourselves to the highest standards of honesty, prudence and uprightness.
5. **Progressive:** We are committed to excellence, professional rigour and continuous improvement.

Philosophy: Act! understands that all human beings are entitled to dignified life. We further believe that people can sustainably free themselves from exclusion and indignity if effectively facilitated. We therefore invest in empowering people, strengthening service delivery systems, and influencing policy and practice as assured ways of accelerating and sustaining human and ecological wellbeing.

1.3 Value Propositions

We propose to add value to our key stakeholders as follows:

Constituency	Value Addition
Civil Society Actors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Champion leveraging of resources for socio-economic development 2. High quality capacity development support services 3. Collaborative leadership towards civil society sector rights, credibility and sustainability. 4. Sharing of knowledge/evidence and innovative technologies, models and best practices. Also, a think tank, research leader and MEL coach.
Private Sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Platforms for enhanced visibility. 2. Use of our infrastructure, systems and expertise for delivering CSI efforts. 3. Complementarity in areas of innovation, research & knowledge management. 4. Potential for new markets/ customers/ contacts and business opportunities.
Authorities / Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributions to State development agenda via various development initiatives. 2. Valuable partner/ contributor to policy and institutional reform processes. 3. Sharing of knowledge/evidence and innovative technologies, models and best practices. 4. Support towards civil society effectiveness, credibility, compliance & self-governance
Development Partners/ Investors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Credible systems and structures for effective accountability & delivery of value for money. 2. Platform for joint research, innovation and knowledge management 3. National partner with strong local presence/ legitimacy, context knowledge and expertise in program focus areas 4. Impeccable track record in grant making, CSO strengthening and partnerships building.

1.4 Looking Back: Track Record and Lessons Learnt

1.4.1 Track Record

1. Act! has to date managed grants amounting to over US\$ 100 million disbursed to over 400 civil society groups and public-sector institutions. These initiatives were supported by amongst others United States Government, USAID, DFID, SIDA, CIDA, EU, and DANIDA.
2. Act! has a wide array of tested mechanisms for effective grant and partner management that have over the years ensured as 99% efficiency rate. These include robust financial, technical program support, grants management, research, monitoring and evaluation systems.
3. Offered contextualized high-quality accompaniment-based capacity development support to over 400 civil society groups and public sector institutions that contributed immensely to the effectiveness of the supported entities.
4. Act! has to date supported projects in all 47 Counties in Kenya, besides the established networks and strategic partnerships with and in the respective counties.
5. Act! has over 20 competitive professional specializations within its staff complement, in addition to a huge portfolio of associates and consultants. We have also over the years offered competitively priced high-quality professional services to dozens of clients within and outside Kenya.
6. Act! has extensively contributed to evidence building, documentation and knowledge generation in the thematic areas of Democracy & Governance, Human Rights, Peace & Conflicts, and ENRM. Such knowledge and data is used for accountability, influencing policy and informing practice.

1.4.2 What We Have Learnt

The following insights from previous work and engagements will underpin our work going forward:

1. *Empowerment is key*: With the right capacity, the citizen/ citizen organizations can play significant roles in bringing about socio-political change. We will thus dedicate resources towards expanding people's capacities to enable them better tap on available resources, opportunities and rights.
2. *Systems orientation is imperative*: No single entity can by itself effectively and sustainably address all developmental challenges. We must thus deliberately promote complementary collaborations, including with State, civil society and private sector.
3. *A conducive operating environment is needed for durable development*: We therefore will invest in addressing structural barriers to human development and inclusion, often in the areas of formal regulations, institutions, social norms and individual or collective capacity constraints.
4. *Innovation, effective positioning, influencing and programming require quality data*: Act! will further strengthen its capacity in the areas of research, documentation, knowledge generation, reflection and learning. This will include building Act!'s institutional capacity, establishing strategic collaborations with knowledge institutions and better tapping on Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
5. *A good balance between the roles of facilitation and direct implementation is needed*: Working THROUGH local actors enables greater trust building, project take-off, acceptance, legitimacy, ownership and sustainability. However, higher level policy influencing, systems strengthening and (inter)national work often require that Act! directly engages. Going forward, Act! will explore more opportunities for working WITH partners as well as strategic/ high level direct implementation work, over and above our current work THROUGH partner organizations.
6. *Heavier focus on WHAT Act!'s does* (capacity building, advocacy, sub-granting) *tends to tilt reporting towards outputs*: We will thus going forward use as an entry point our program/ thematic focus as a basis of enabling greater attention to, and reporting results at outcome and impact level.
7. *Responsible rights-based programming requires attention to both the supply and demand sides*: This necessitates investments in strengthening of duty bearers' capacities, voice and agency of rights holders, as well as facilitation of safe spaces for engagement between the two levels.
8. *There is a growing need to invest more strategically on institutional sustainability*: Granted the growing competition for the dwindling development funding, Act! will review and implement strategies for diversifying and stabilizing its institutional resource. This includes pursuing enterprise/ business approaches and market based or driven programming.

2.0 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 Overview of the Political, Policy and Institutional Contexts

Legal, policy and institutional context: Kenya has made significant political reforms since the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010. These include among others devolution and decentralization; establishment of various independent constitutional commissions; transformation of public sector workforce arrangements; and introduction of results-oriented approaches to budget management. The CoK 2010 further seeks to confer sovereign power back to the people of Kenya by fostering public participation in decision-making at all levels.

The success of these initiatives is however compromised by weak operationalization of the frameworks attributed to insufficient resourcing, weak institutional capacities, political interference, insufficient civic engagement, corruption and impunity¹. The political landscape is equally wrought by impunity and abuse of power that compromises rule of law and respect for human rights².

Devolution: Kenya's development model is anchored on a devolved governance structure, comprising 47 counties. Devolution is considered as one of the key gains of CoK 2010; Kenya is presently implementing the second round of devolved governance. According to World Bank³, good progress has been made by county governments and CSOs in promoting State-Citizen engagement.

Devolution has however not been without challenges. Key concerns include corruption, delayed funding to devolved units, weak capacities, and poor civic engagement. The weak State-Citizen engagement is attributed to uncoordinated civic education, limited access to information, and insufficient political will. Additionally, counties have challenges in developing and or implementing critical regulatory and institutional strengthening frameworks. Development partners such as the World Bank⁴ and USAID⁵ have been providing support to counties to address these concerns.

Elections and transition: Kenya is a presidential representative democratic republic with elections as the main means of transferring political power. Political power transfer is however often sharply acrimonious and violent. The 2017/18 general elections were for instance marred by allegations of election fraud and incidents of unrest. These confrontations led to heightened tensions and narrowing of civic space⁶. This includes brutal crackdown on protesters by the security agents⁷.

President Uhuru Kenyatta and Hon. Raila Odinga pledged in March 2018 to work towards a better political dispensation. This was institutionalized under the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). The BBI has had a (temporary) effect of calming the political temperatures but led to a less critical opposition. There are also current political tensions regarding how to implement the BBI report, spiralling corruption and 2022 succession politics. These discussions also have the risk of overshadowing key national development agenda such as vision 2030, the Big 4 agenda and or reigniting political temperatures.

¹ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVANTICORR/Resources/Kenya_HumanRightsCommission_web.pdf

² <http://www.knchr.org/Portals/0/StateOfHumanRightsReports/4th%20SHR%20Report.pdf>

³ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/04/30/public-participation-central-to-kenyas-ambitious-devolution>

⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/brief/kenyas-devolution>

⁵ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/AHADI_Fact_Sheet_-_Jan._2018_0.pdf

⁶ <https://www.knchr.org/Articles/ArtMID/2432/ArticleID/1028/The-2017-Kenya-General-Elections>

⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/27/kenya-post-election-killings-abuse>

These situations call for continued push towards effective operationalization of CoK 2010 and the supportive regulatory and institutional frameworks. The same needs to be complemented by efforts towards strengthening the voice, agency and self-organizing capacity of civic actors towards better claim making, as well as continued political education/ conscientization.

2.2 Peace and Security Situation

Regulatory and institutional frameworks: Kenya has made notable strides towards ensuring national cohesion and peaceful coexistence. These include stipulations of CoK 2010, National Accord and Reconciliation Act 2008, National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, and the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Framework. These legislations and policies have led to the establishment of key institutions, commissions and initiative's such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission; the National Police Service and Internal Affairs Unit, Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission; the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence in Kenya; and the *Nyumba Kumi* Initiative.

The effectiveness of these initiatives are however challenged due to gaps in their operationalisation. This is in addition to weak institutional capacities of key agencies, poor coordination, limited analytical capability, and weak preventive and or disruptive strategies.

Violent Extremism (VE): Kenya's proximity to countries prone to conflict and it's role international geo-politics has left it vulnerable to conflicts and terrorism⁸. Radicalization and recruitment into terrorist and criminal gangs is often driven by socio-economic vulnerabilities; disenfranchisement; and political perceptions of alienation/exclusion; youth unemployment; and religious extremism⁹. Kenya launched its National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism in September 2016, coordinated under the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC). Efforts towards Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) are however impacted negatively by resource challenges, under capacity, mistrust between citizens and enforcement agencies, corruption and mutating nature of terror networks.

Political violence: As alluded earlier, political transitions in Kenya have repeatedly been acrimonious and violent. These are amongst other driven by ethnic tensions that overlaps with underlying alienation, disenfranchisement, distrust in electoral mechanisms and past injustices¹⁰. Some of these issues were contained in the 2013 Truth Justice and Reconciliation Report but have never been implemented. The violence have led to loss of lives and properties, displacements; rise in inter-group tensions and distrust; and destruction of socio-economic infrastructures and processes.

Resource based conflicts: These conflicts are driven by competition over resources such as land, pasture, water, contested boundaries, extractives-discovered minerals. Further, the easy access to illegal small arms has compounded traditional practices such as livestock raiding to the current destructive cattle rustling and banditry. In general, Kenya has witnessed increased activities within the extractives' sector. These are bound to have environmental, social and economic consequences that could disproportionately affect citizens, and may lead to conflicts in some instances. Other new forms of conflicts that are worth noting and addressing include conflicts between people and the environment (including the growing impacts of climate change) as well as those between the people and State.

⁸ https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/country_pdf/KE-04112018.pdf

⁹ https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-04/7.%20CFR_Kenya_Wale_0.pdf

¹⁰ www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-04/7.%20CFR_Kenya_Wale_0.pdf

2.3 Environment, Natural Resource and Climate Change Governance

Kenya is endowed with abundant natural resources that have potential for transformative effects on the economy if well governed. The GoK has established various frameworks to address global warming/Climate Change (CC) concerns. These include the National Climate Change Response Strategy (2012); National Climate Change Action Plan (2013-2017); Environmental Management and Coordination Act (1999); National Environment Policy (2013) among others. The GoK has established the Climate Change Fund, besides plans to mainstream CC in all government programmes.

However, the above initiatives notwithstanding, Kenya has experienced rising loss of vegetation cover, ecological degradation and pollution. Effects of CC in Kenya is for instance evidenced by rising in temperatures, changes in precipitation, extreme weather events such as flooding and rising sea levels. Further population pressure, deforestation, coastal modification, ongoing degradation of eco-systems and unsustainable use of these resources threaten vulnerable habitats, biodiversity, livelihoods and long-term food security for many Kenyans¹¹.

More specifically, CC has exacerbated humanitarian disasters, fuelled conflicts, caused displacement of communities, and made certain areas uninhabitable. The nomadic communities living in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) areas are often the most affected by effects of CC. It is also notable that Kenya also lacks a comprehensive disaster preparedness policy. Sustainable use of environmental resources and a proactive strategy on climate change mitigation is therefore imperative¹².

2.4 Economic and Social Context

Kenya is one of the fastest-growing economies in East and Central Africa. A major aim across Kenya's national development blueprints such as Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation¹³ and Vision 2030 is accelerated economic growth, address of poverty and reduction in regional disparities. Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is projected to be 5.8% in 2019 and 6.0% in 2020¹⁴. The key drivers of Kenya's economy are its youthful population, a dynamic private sector, highly skilled workforce, infrastructure and a progressive CoK 2010.

However, the growth potential is constrained by challenges of poverty, inequality, weak governance, climate change, food insecurity, terrorism and vulnerability to shocks¹⁵. 36% of Kenyans live below the line (US\$1.90 per day), with 60% of the country's wealth being in the hands of about 20% of the population¹⁶. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 35% of Kenya's youth aged 15 to 29 are unemployed¹⁷. Gender inequality is equally prevalent in Kenya, with customary practices playing a major role in restricting women's control or ownership of productive assets. It worth noting that such inequality and exclusion is often a key driver of instability and violence¹⁸.

¹¹ <https://kenya.um.dk/en/danida-en/nrm/>

¹² Hope (2017) Urbanization in Kenya. African Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development.

¹³ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/KENYAEXTN/Resources/ERS.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/overview>

¹⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/overview>

¹⁶ <https://www.knbs.or.ke/download/basic-report-well-kenya-based-201516-kenya-integrated-household-budget-survey-kihbs/>

¹⁷ UNDP Kenya 2016 Annual Report, p.4. See www.ke.undp.org

¹⁸ http://inequalities.sidint.net/kenya/about_us/

2.5 Other Relevant Context Issues

Changing development and funding architecture: There has been major shifts in the development funding arena over the past decade. These include reducing funding levels; shifts from aid to trade diplomacy; preference of direct implementation support over working through intermediaries; as well as a growing push towards multisector cooperation or consortia arrangements. Other trends include growing attention to for enterprise-led livelihoods initiatives; environment and CC; safeguarding; inclusion; and demand for value for money and impact. Locally, there’s been a growing concern about the shrinking of the civic space demonstrated by tighter administrative requirements for CSOs; targeting and or harassment; and reducing democratic space that limits citizen’s ability to organize.

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT): Kenya has experienced dramatic advances in internet penetration, increased use of mobile telephony, social media, and other web-based platforms. The GoK has established a digital strategy that includes online platforms such as Huduma, NEMIS and Integrated Finance Management System. However, while these advances provide opportunities for service delivery efficiencies, there are growing risks of data insecurity and invasion of citizen privacy.

2.6 Overview of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

Summary Overview of SWOT

Strengths	Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Credible local institution with good reputation, track record and rich history. 2. Well established strong internal systems & policies. 3. Suitably qualified, versatile & committed staff. 4. Professionally diverse & committed Board. 5. Existence of complementary partnerships & extensive local networks & associations. 6. Presence of broad range of innovative programs and products. 7. Effective integration of Capacity Development and Grants Management. 8. Well established systems for M&E and oversight. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient funding (diversity & stability). 2. Weak reflective and learning culture. 3. Short-term project funding affects staff stability. 4. Inadequate visibility and profiling of Act! and Act!’s work when done through grantees. 5. Inadequate optimization of potentials for program & organizational integration. 6. Not all programs are sufficiently gender sensitive. 7. Inadequate clarity & mechanisms of attribution of results for collaborative programming.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devolution offers opportunities to leverage (local) resources & strategically engage with Counties. 2. Growing number of capable local CSOs are useful for extending reach and scaling impact. 3. Strong track record & affiliations with multilateral donors good basis to expand partnerships. 4. Being Kenyan grants Act! legitimacy over INGOs. 5. Possibilities use some of the current products and services to generate incomes (social enterprise). 6. Act! has established an advisory arm to generate unrestricted income through consultancy. 7. Current push to work in consortia offers platforms to enhance a system orientation. 8. Technological advancements, including growing ICT innovation penetration and adaption 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changing donor priorities & policies & declining funding threaten Act!’s growth & sustainability. 2. Fluid political environment (including potential electoral violence could be disruptive. 3. Reduced civic space, including the possibilities for CSOs like Act! to engage in PCVE work. 4. Changing profiles of radicalization, extremism & organized crime require constant re-strategizing. 5. Increased competition in the grant making and Capacity Development space. 6. Increasing disregard for the law, corruption and bad governance. 7. Capacity constraints within counties.

3.0 STRATEGIC CHOICES

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The review of the external operating environment points to an intricate relationship between poverty, exclusion, weak capacities of people or institutions, and poor governance. This position is affirmed by OECD position that effective governance significantly enhances chances of economic prosperity, social cohesion, poverty reduction, ecological wellbeing and deepened confidence in government¹⁹.

Poverty eradication and facilitation of social and or environmental justice are thus mutually reinforcing actions of immediate relevance to attaining a prosperous, cohesive society with appropriate human-ecological balance²⁰. This integration of socio-political and environmental justice with empowering peoples presents a powerful basis of building resilience and enhancing human and ecological wellbeing²¹. This is a recognition that poverty is linked to abuse of power, often manifested amongst others in undemocratic practices, unaccountable and/or non-responsive leadership.

It is however noteworthy that to attain such change, the above interventions must be complemented with investments in shifting social power relations, influencing regulatory frameworks, developing people's capacities, and changing retrogressive norms and attitudes.

3.2 Theory of Change

Act!'s overall aim is to champion lasting positive transformation of communities and their institutions, enabling people to live in dignity, and to harmoniously coexist with each other and their environment. We recognise that such a status is often inhibited by prevailing exclusion, inequality and capacity limitations, which in turn constrains peoples' choices, voices and ability to effectively tap on existing opportunities or resources.

We recognize poverty as a function of economic growth, benefit distribution, social-political power relations and ecological imbalances. We believe therefore that eliminating poverty requires addressing of the underlying systemic drivers of the same, often in the areas of formal laws, policies and institutions, social norms, and individual or collective capacities.

We therefore invest in empowering people; strengthening service delivery systems; influencing policy, practice and norms; brokering strategic partnerships and knowledge products; as well as leveraging access to productive resources and opportunities. We will equally devote resources towards strengthening our own capacity to deliver on our ambitions and mandates as well as place sufficient focus on our own sustainability.

Our interventions will be concentrated in four strategic focus areas: 1) Responsive and Effective Governance; 2) Environment, Livelihoods and Natural Resources Management; 3) Peace Building and Conflict Transformation; and 4) Organizational Excellence.

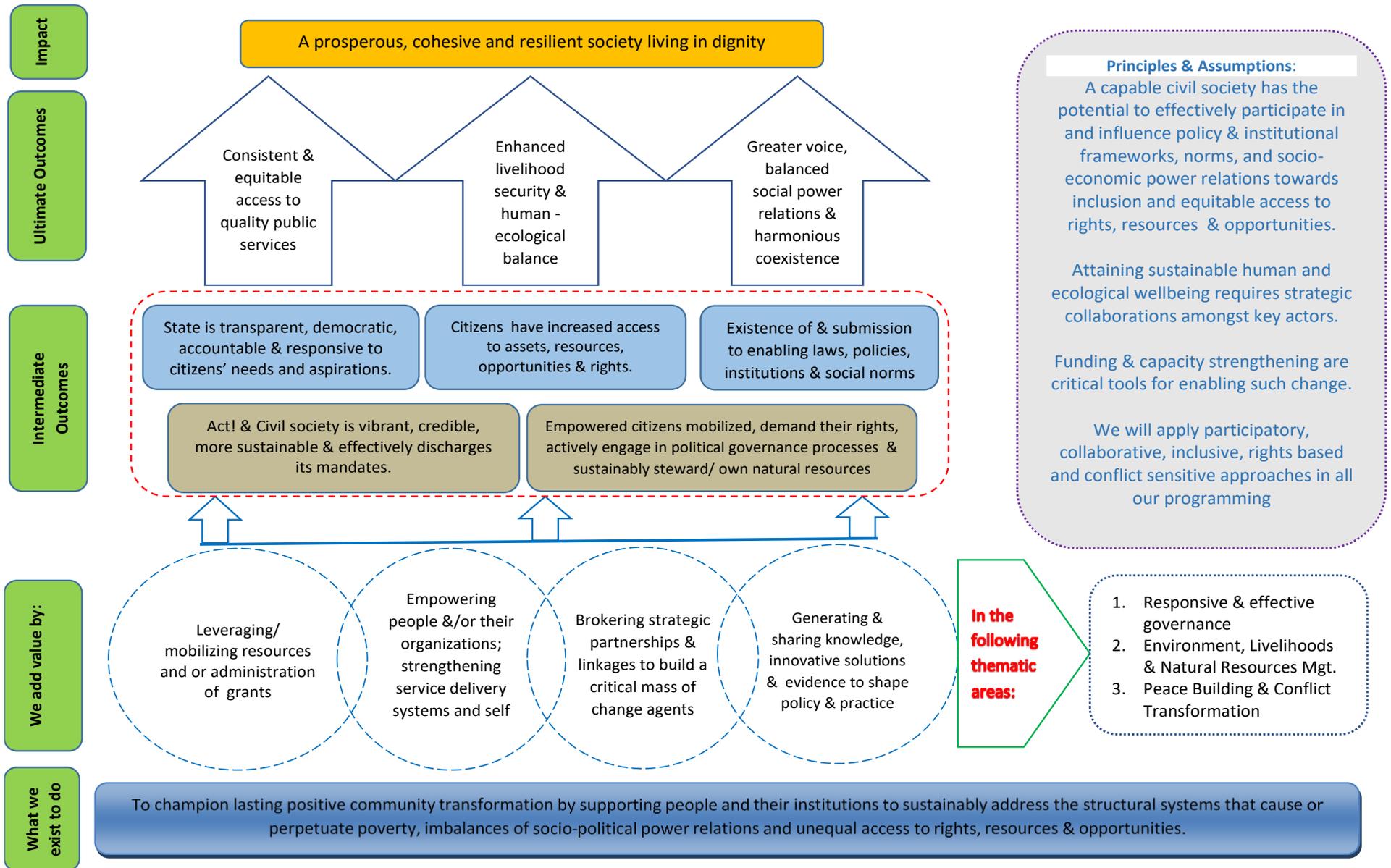
NOTE: A diagrammatic representation of this theory of change is presented in figure 1 below.

¹⁹UNDP - Governance for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development: Issues in Development Co-operation.

²⁰ See United Nations, 2005. Human Rights and Poverty Reduction, A conceptual Framework

²¹Accessed at http://www.sustainable-livelihoods.com/pdf/Governance_for_Poverty_Eradication.pdf

Figure 1: Schematic Presentation of Act! Theory of Change



3.3 Strategic Priority Areas

Based on the Act! mandate, track record as well as outcomes of the context analysis and theory of change, Act! will over the next five years focus on the following strategic areas:

1. *Responsive and Accountable Governance*: This strategic priority area will be concerned with accountable citizen-state relations and interactions, credible and transparent elections as well as civil society governance . The specific sub areas under this pillar shall include:
 - a) Citizen Participation and Engagement
 - b) Political Transitions and Succession
 - c) Effective & Credible Civil Society

2. *Environment, Livelihoods and Natural Resources Management*: This strategic priority area seeks to contribute to ecological wellbeing and economic resilience. The specific sub areas of focus shall include.
 - a) Climate Change Governance and Environmental Justice
 - b) Sustainable Livelihoods Development

3. *Peace Building, Conflict Transformation and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism*: The main aim of this strategic priority area is to contribute to harmonious and peaceful coexistence amongst communities and people groups. Act! will under this pillar focus on:
 - a) Peace Building, Conflict Management and Conflict Transformation
 - b) Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

4. *Organizational Excellence*: This strategic focus area looks at internal organizational wellbeing and seeks to further strengthen Act!'s internal capacity and competence to deliver quality services while assuring its sustainability.
 - a) Human Resources Management & Leadership Development
 - b) Institutional Sustainability & Resources Diversification
 - c) Knowledge Management
 - d) Systems, Policies & Structures

4.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVES, INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

4.1 Overview

This section presents the strategic objectives and broad strategic interventions for the four strategic areas of focus. The section does not go into the detailed activities as these will be elaborated in the detailed implementation plans and or work plans that will be developed annually.

4.1 Strategic Objectives and Interventions

4.1.1 Responsive and Accountable Governance

The **overall objective** of this strategic focus area is 'to contribute to effective, accountable and responsive governance'. To achieve this, Act! will invest in strengthening citizen voice and agency towards effective citizen participation and oversight; support implementation of existing progressive regulatory and institutional frameworks; and build capacity of service delivery systems.

Act! has prioritized three thematic focus areas under this strategic pillar viz. 1) Citizen engagement; 2) Electoral processes and political transitions; and 3) Effective and credible civil society. The specific objectives and interventions under each of these sub pillars are presented below.

4.1.1.1 Citizen Engagement

Overview: A key tenet of democratic governance is effective citizen engagement in applicable governance processes. Effective civic engagement requires that citizens are aware of their rights and obligations, are responsible, have needed capacity to engage, and that the State is responsive. Deliberate efforts will be made to strengthen capacity of marginalized groups to effectively participate in governance and political processes.

Specific Objective: Increased citizen participation in, and oversight of relevant governance processes.

Expected Outcomes

1. Improved capacity of supported citizens/ CSOs to engage in key governance processes, monitor performance and provide oversight of public institutions.
2. Increased citizen driven service delivery in focus locations.
3. At least 5 actions taken annually as a result of advocacy by supported actors.

Strategic Interventions

1. Strengthen state and or civil society systems, spaces and capacities for civic engagement.
2. Support initiatives that strengthen open, accountable and ethical public financial management and citizen driven social accountability especially by counties; establish county engagement strategy.
3. Advocate or reform and or implementation of applicable legal, policy and institutional frameworks for effective citizen engagement; also, champion changing of regressive norms, cultures & attitudes.
4. Support further strengthening of devolution to achieve greater state responsiveness, inter-governmental relations, and effective & consistent service delivery.

4.1.1.2 Electoral Processes and Political Transitions

Overview: Credible elections must be done through secret ballot and be free from intimidation, violence and improper influence, besides being inclusive, neutral, efficient, accurate and accountable²². Further, electoral institutions must be independent, while participating leaders must abide by the principles of leadership and integrity contained in Article 73 of the CoK 2010.

Specific Objective: To facilitate citizens and civil society to engage in, and promote transparent, peaceful and credible elections.

Expected Outcomes

1. Increase in number of supported citizens who participate/engage in peaceful and transparent electoral processes.
2. Strengthened (strong) electoral institutions that deliver/ facilitate credible, transparent and peaceful elections & transitions.
3. Elected leaders meet the leadership and integrity principles contained in the CoK 2010.

Strategic Interventions

1. Support civic awareness initiatives, especially among the youth, women and marginalized groups.
2. Contribute to strengthening quality of electoral institutions and processes.
3. Support actions that enhance political justice and or cement national cohesion and integration.
4. Undertake regular political economy analysis and context monitoring and disseminate outcomes.

4.1.1.3 Effective and Credible Civil Society

Overview: CSOs play a critical role in facilitating community development and holding the State and private sector accountable. This includes empowering communities towards effective participation in and oversight of governance processes. While previous efforts at CSO strengthening have born fruits, more is needed to further consolidate CSO's effectiveness, sustainability, legitimacy and credibility.

Specific Objective: To contribute to improved civil society credibility, organisation, sustainability and effectiveness.

Expected Outcomes

1. Existence and adherence to applicable CSO regulatory and institutional frameworks.
2. Supported CSOs demonstrate enhanced independence and sustainability.
3. Enhanced quality of strategy, policy environment, systems and leadership within CSOs.
4. CSOs are well connected, coordinated, cohesive and vibrant.

Strategic Interventions

1. Support establishment and or use of regulatory frameworks and practices that enhance civic space.
2. Support initiatives that help CSOs strengthen their sustainability and general institutional capacities.
3. Promote mechanisms for effective CSO administration, oversight, compliance and profiling.
4. Promote strategic collaborations among CSOs as well as with both State and NSAs (e.g. leveraging resources, joint programming, knowledge sharing etc.)

²² Article 81(e) of CoK 2010

4.1.2 Environment, Livelihoods and Natural Resources Management

The **overall objective** of this strategic focus area is to enhance human and ecological wellbeing. We will dedicate resources towards building communities' resilience, as well as supporting communities and relevant institutions to responsibly and sustainably manage natural resources within ecological limits.

Act! has prioritised two sub themes under this strategic focus area, being: 1) climate change governance and environmental justice; and 2) sustainable livelihood development. The specific objectives, expected outcomes, and respective interventions for these two areas are discussed below.

4.1.2.1 Climate Change Governance and Environmental Justice

Overview: Kenya remains very vulnerable to CC as exhibited by the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events. These situations pose challenges for food security, water availability and safety. Act! will thus invest in sound management/ conservation of natural resources and mitigation of negative CC impacts. We will especially promote innovation and use of enterprise approaches that integrate CC mitigation with livelihoods. We will make deliberate efforts to ensure youth, women and other vulnerable groups are adequately considered in the interventions under this focus area.

Specific Objective: To enhance ecological wellbeing and community resilience to the socio-economic shocks resulting from CC and ecological degradation.

Expected Outcomes

1. Natural resources are responsibly managed and sustainably used within ecological limits.
2. Community resilience (adaptation and mitigation) to effects of climate variability is strengthened.
3. Benefits from natural resources are transparently and equitably shared.

Strategic Interventions

1. Promote enterprise driven climate SMART initiatives (e.g. renewable energy, agro ecology, and circular economy) to enhance CC resilience among vulnerable communities.
2. Support development of appropriate solutions for addressing CC vulnerabilities across social, market and political ecosystems.
3. Support domestication and application of (inter)national strategies, protocols, regulatory and institutional frameworks for CC adaptation and mitigation at both national and county levels.
4. Support advocacy towards accountability/oversight for effective environmental protection and natural resources management, including actions to minimize human-environmental conflict.
5. Promote extractives' sector transparency and accountability including for instance environmental wellbeing, equitable benefit sharing, conflict sensitivity etc.
6. Support initiatives that enhance access to land rights and land sector reforms.

4.1.2.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Development

Overview: A livelihood is regarded as sustainable when it can cope with or recover from various stresses and shocks. Most vulnerable communities have limited access to resources and/or skills to cope, adapt or mitigate against livelihood shocks and stresses. Act! will in this regard support socio-economic

initiatives that enhance communities' productivity, self-reliance and resilience. We will leverage technology, promote private sector linkages and integrate livelihood development with CC and NRM.

Specific Objective: To enhance communities' socio-economic resilience through promotion of diverse and appropriate sustainable livelihood options.

Expected Outcomes

1. Increase in disposable household incomes and/or savings from supported enterprise activities.
2. Increased access to gainful employment and access diversified livelihood resources/ opportunities.
3. Increased access to markets and fair-trade terms by supported enterprise groups.

Strategic Interventions

1. Support market access and fair-trade facilitation (e.g. cross-border trade, VCD, social enterprise promotion etc.) among prioritised groups.
2. Support programs that enhance wealth sovereignty, equitable access to productive resources & socio-economic opportunities for vulnerable groups.
3. Promote a facilitative regulatory environment for enterprises development for vulnerable groups.
4. Strengthen capacity of supported groups towards enhanced productivity and business success.
5. Broker access to relevant BDS services e.g. financing, technical support, insurance etc.

4.1.3 Peace Building, Conflict Transformation and Preventing Extremism

Kenya has continued to witness increased cases of resource-based conflicts or tensions, radicalization and Violent Extremism, gang violence as well as Citizen-State conflicts. There is therefore a need to better manage national diversity and inclusion, build capacity to mitigate disputes; and develop governance mechanisms to support reconciliation and harmonious co-existence.

The **overall objective** of this result area is to contribute to harmonious and peaceful co-existence amongst communities and various people groups. The specific objectives, expected outcomes, and interventions for the sub themes under this pillar are discussed in detail here below.

4.1.3.1 Peace Building and Conflict Transformation

Overview: Conflicts often have serious physical, economic and psychologically consequences, besides destroying people's livelihoods. Act! will continue to champion dialogue as a key dispute resolution mechanism. We will equally prioritise women and youth engagement, with special attention to vulnerable/at-risk and disadvantaged groups in conflict transformation processes.

Specific objective: To help target communities resolve their differences using non-violent means.

Expected Outcomes

1. Supported actors use non-violent means (e.g. dialogue & mediation) to prevent or resolve conflicts.
2. Supported communities are accommodative, share scarce resources and harmoniously coexist, (includes cross-border collaboration and peaceful coexistence, reduced tensions & or violence).
3. At least 30% of conflict management and peace building structures are led by women.
4. Regulatory frameworks that are conducive to addressing root causes of conflict enacted & applied.

Strategic Interventions

1. Support intercommunity/ cross-border dialogue, mediation and reconciliation, including conflict resolution efforts of key actors, including media, State and NSAs.
2. Strengthen capacities of selected applicable formal & informal systems for peacebuilding and conflict transformation.
3. Promote reform and or operationalization of institutions, laws, policies, norms and practices that enhance peaceful coexistence/ conflict management.
4. Support initiatives that address key drivers of conflict²³.
5. Promote strategies and mechanisms to prevent and mitigate all forms of conflict (human-wildlife conflict, politically motivated conflicts, extractives and other resource-based conflicts etc.)
6. Undertake/ support regular conflict analysis, PEA and research and information sharing amongst others to build an evidence base and inform early warning and responses.
7. Promote equitable participation of women in peace building and policing structures to engender conflict management and peace building; Also, identify and promote male gender champions.

4.1.3.2 Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism (VE)

Overview: Violent Extremism in Kenya has gained significant ground with worrying levels of intolerance, deaths and destruction of property. Previous attempts to confront the challenge have realized limited success. This situation calls for greater creativity and strategy in addressing the challenge, as well as honest dialogue around the underlying issues, including appropriateness of policies, strategies and responses.

Specific Objective: To contribute to existence of a peaceful, inclusive and violent free society.

Expected Outcomes

1. Effective cooperation between State and NSAs in tackling radicalisation and VE.
2. 30% of reformed youth and other capacitated actors become ambassadors of peace and security.
3. Policies & laws conducive for addressing causes of radicalization and VE enacted and implemented.
4. Improved police performance in providing human rights-based approaches to security.
5. 30% of PCVE structures at the local levels are led by women, with women equitably participating in PCVE efforts.

Strategic Interventions

1. Promote positive appreciation of diversity and appreciation of importance of peaceful coexistence.
2. Collaborate with relevant actors to address underlying drivers of insecurity, radicalization and VE.
3. Strengthen institutional capacities, trust and coordination among actors involved in PCVE.
4. Develop, strengthen or promote models/ innovative solutions for PCVE, including Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems.
5. Generate data and evidence for decision making, informing practice and influencing policy.
6. Support review and or implementation on PCVE focused policy, legal & institutional frameworks.
7. Support engendering of PCVE initiatives and regulatory frameworks.

²³ These include for instance exclusion, discrimination, structural inequalities, imbalances of power relations, feelings of disenfranchisement, retrogressive attitudes/ perceptions, communication patterns, access to arms etc.

4.1.4 Organizational Excellence

This strategic pillar focuses on strengthening Act! to enable it effectively deliver its mission and vision. Act! will continue building on its existing capacities, systems and processes to address emerging needs while ensuring the sustainability of its operations.

The **overall objective** of the focus area is to enable Act! effectively and sustainably discharge its mandate. The priority elements of attention include human resources and leadership development; institutional sustainability; knowledge management; and improving systems, policies and structures.

Expected Outcomes

1. Act! consistently delivering high quality services.
2. The organization has a diverse and stable resource portfolio.
3. Act! applies strong systems of internal controls, oversight and quality assurance.

The specific objectives and interventions of the sub areas under this are elaborated hereunder.

4.1.4.1 Human Resources and Leadership Development

Specific Objectives: To attract and retain optimal numbers of quality staff and ensure effective leadership.

Expected Outcomes

1. Act! acquires and retains an optimal number of quality staff.
2. Staff are highly productive, motivated and committed.
3. Act!'s leadership is effective, sustainable and has defined transition and succession planning.

Strategic Interventions

1. Enforce HR administration mechanisms that assure a conducive work environment, effective performance management, and leaner more efficient multi-skilled workforce.
2. Establish and enforce a Human Resource Development (HRD) plan for staff.
3. Invest in regular leadership/ board (governance) development or strengthening.
4. Consolidate an open organizational culture which espouses freedom of expression, respects staff views, enables free flowing internal communication and institutionalizes internal integration.

4.1.4.2 Institutional Sustainability

Objective: To generate, leverage and reserve sufficient resources to assure growth and continuity of Act!'s services and operations into the foreseeable future.

Expected Outcomes

1. 50% growth in funding in 2020 and 2021, and 20% annual growth thereafter.
2. 20% annual growth in own generated (unrestricted) funds (via Tenda Advisory Limited).
3. Acquisition of at least 2 new/ alternative funding streams per annum.
4. Grow unrestricted incomes (savings, general reserves etc.) to at least 15% of total funding by 2024.

Interventions:

1. Review, update and operationalize the Act! resource mobilization strategy, policy and plan. This will focus on generating additional resources while enhancing internal efficacies and instituting a saving culture.
2. Further strengthen relations with existing/potential funders, diversify funding portfolio among existing donors, negotiate for institutional funding, seek partnerships with State programs that are donor funded, and position Act! as a brave and creative entity that dares dream and is willing to challenge the norm and venture into uncharted territories.
3. Invest in assets building, investments and enterprises through Tenda Sasa Trust; Transit Tenda Advisory Ltd. into an effective vehicle for generation of unrestricted resources.
4. Revamp and fully operationalize Act! communications strategy to enhance profiling and visibility; Also, further strengthen Act!'s social media and digital communication channels.
5. Review Act!'s roles to include not just facilitation, but also selective direct implementation.
6. Develop, test and scale NGO sustainability models once proved effective.

4.1.4.3 Knowledge Management

Objective: To generate, analyse and share quality data for improving program delivery, learning, decision making and accountability.

Expected Outcomes

1. Optimised and functional Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) system and capacity in place and in use.
2. Strengthened generation, repacking and sharing of knowledge, innovation and quality data.
3. Strengthened knowledge management tools/ accountability frameworks, systems & mechanisms.

Interventions

1. Systematically capture, (re)package and share information to meet internal and external needs. Seek ways to commercialize data.
2. Undertake regular learning, reflection and work improvement/ adaptation. This includes midterm strategic plan review, project evaluations and post project engagements.
3. Review and implement knowledge management strategy and institutionalize knowledge management. This includes growing Act!'s internal research, learning and innovation capacity.
4. Establish partnerships with institutions of higher learning or research.
5. Integrate research, evidence building, documentation and meta-analysis in programming; establish/ profile Act! as a leader in knowledge incubation in respective strategic pillars.

4.1.4.4 Systems, Policies and Structures

Objective: To assure integrity of internal processes for effective stewardship of Act! resources.

Expected Outcomes

1. Transparent management and accounting of all resources.
2. Complete adherence to all applicable compliance requirements.
3. Existence and use of a robust, secure and interactive Management Information System (MIS).
4. Comprehensive up to date policies, procedures & structures that promote business excellence.

Interventions:

1. Establish and continually improve automated systems.
2. Develop and or regularly review institutional, financial and governance systems.
3. Enforce appropriate internal controls/ oversight and compliance mechanisms.
4. Ensure accurate accounting records management and further strengthen assurance practices.
5. Establish or further strengthen business continuity strategies for better risk management.

4.2 Lessons, Overarching Strategies and Approaches

Drawing from its past experiences and strategic analysis, several **overarching strategies** and or approaches will be applied by Act! in the course of this strategic plan. These include the following:

1. Review of current approaches to advocacy to establishment an optimal balance between constructive engagement and agitative approaches to advocacy. Additionally, we will develop a good balance between high-level advocacy engagements and bottom-up initiatives. The latter shall include strengthening citizen movements such as people's parliaments, social justice networks as a way of stimulating change from below; emphasize conscientization rather than just awareness.
2. Adoption of a sector approach that pays attention to governance within sectors of interest for instance focusing environmental governance, education or health sector governance etc.
3. Focusing more on the systemic issues that perpetuate poor governance - such as tribalism, weak capacities, impunity, exclusion, norms etc. – rather than focusing solely to the attendant symptoms.
4. Establishment of strategic complementary partnerships. In particular, we will adopt market driven approaches, including private sector engagements to livelihoods development and youth empowerment. The portfolio of downstream partners should be that which directly supports Act!'s strategic focus areas.
5. Proactively brokering multi-sector strategic collaborative arrangements over and above consortia set up in response to calls for specific proposals - these could be for learning/ information sharing purposes and when opportunities arise, pursue joint resource mobilization
6. Establishing strategic engagements with selected counties guided by documented county engagement strategy. We will for instance focus on piloting, documenting best practices or models that can then me scaled up by counties, besides pushing for entrenchment of these into policy. We will seek, as a minimum, to double the number of counties where we operate. Linked to this, Act! aspires to also expand its engagement into neighbouring countries, besides working with relevant regional and continental bodies such as the EAC and the AU.
7. Establish and sustain structured internal synergy and integration across Act! units. This will be achieved e.g. by greater harmonization of work plans and use of an integrated MIS. Act! will also review its human resourcing arrangements to better accommodate fluctuations in funding levels. This will be achieved by varying the contact terms, aligning contracts to project periods, as well as working more with volunteers, associates and or interns.
8. Reviewing the operational structure to establish a critical mix of direct implementation and grants making roles. We will thus integration our work with our implementing partners with emphasis on working WITH and not purely working THROUGH them. We will also establish a clear positioning of where we will directly implement and where we will work WITH and or THROUGH our partners.
9. Strategic tapping of ICT & media to meet growing demand for innovative solutions; explore ICT as a basis of ensuring efficiency, security and innovation; this includes looking into possibilities of ICT aided work (online learning, work flow systems, online tracking of results etc.); GIS assisted data

collection; and online partner reporting systems. ICT will also be explored as a basis of extending reach/ presence, instead of physical offices.

- Concerning positioning, Act! will engage directly at the national, regional and international levels, whereas grantees will be supported to work at the local level. However, Act! will also engage in direct implementation where these are regarded as innovative and strategic. As far as is possible, implementation will be done WITH, and not necessarily THROUGH grantees.

4.3 Governance and Management

4.3.1 Act! Board and Management

Act! is governed by a Board of Directors, a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 11 members drawn from diverse competencies such as finance and grants management, legal, policy research and training, capacity development and civil society sector expertise. The main roles of the BOD include overall institutional oversight, policy guidance and offering strategic direction. The Board is supported by a management team that is responsible for the day to day running of the operations of Act! The management team is responsible for implementing the Act! strategy and Board directives, besides programme implementation and financial and management.

4.3.2 Act! Organizational Structure

Act!’s organisational structure is presented thus:

