

International Fact Checking Network

<https://www.ifcncodeofprinciples.poynter.org/know-more/the-commitments-of-the-code-of-principles>

The commitments of the code of principles

This code of principles is for organizations that regularly publish non-partisan reports on the accuracy of statements by public figures and prominent institutions and other widely circulated claims related to public interest issues. It is the result of consultations among fact-checkers from around the world.

The commitments that signatory organizations abide by are:

IFCN signatory status may be granted to legally registered organizations set up for the purpose of fact-checking that regularly publish non-partisan reports on the factual accuracy of statements by public figures and prominent institutions and widely circulated claims in text, visual and other formats focused primarily on claims related to public interest issues.

IFCN signatory status may not be granted to organizations whose editorial work is controlled by the state, a political party or politician. It may however be granted to organizations that receive funding from state or political sources to carry out public service journalism if the IFCN assessor determines there is clear and unambiguous separation of editorial control from state or political influence.

Applications are assessed by independent assessors for compliance with 31 criteria. Their assessment is reviewed by the IFCN advisory board to ensure fairness and consistency across the network. Please read all criteria, shown below, before applying.

Signatory organizations fact-check claims using the same standard for every fact check. They do not concentrate their fact-checking on any one side. They follow the same process for every fact check and let the evidence dictate the conclusions. Signatories do not advocate or take policy positions on the issues they fact-check.

Commitment to nonpartisanship fairness

To be compliant on nonpartisanship and fairness, applicants must meet these five criteria

- 2.1 The applicant fact-checks using the same high standards of evidence and judgement for equivalent claims regardless of who made the claim.
- 2.2 The applicant does not unduly concentrate its fact-checking on any one side, considers the reach and importance of claims it selects to check and publishes a short statement on its website to set out how it selects claims to check.

- 2.3 The applicant discloses in its fact checks relevant interests of the sources it quotes where the reader might reasonably conclude those interests could influence the accuracy of the evidence provided. It also discloses in its fact checks any commercial or other such relationships it has that a member of the public might reasonably conclude could influence the findings of the fact check.
 - 2.4 The applicant is not as an organization affiliated with nor declares or shows support for any party, any politician or political candidate, nor does it advocate for or against any policy positions on any issues save for transparency and accuracy in public debate.
 - 2.5 The applicant sets out its policy on non-partisanship for staff on its site. Save for the issues of accuracy and transparency, the applicant's staff do not get involved in advocacy or publicise their views on policy issues the organization might fact check in such a way as might lead a reasonable member of the public to see the organization's work as biased.
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Commitment to Standards and Transparency of Sources

Signatories want their readers to be able to verify findings themselves. Signatories provide all sources in enough detail that readers can replicate their work, except in cases where a source's personal security could be compromised. In such cases, signatories provide as much detail as possible.

To be compliant on sources, applicants must meet these four criteria

- 3.1 The applicant identifies the source of all significant evidence used in their fact checks, providing relevant links where the source is available online, in such a way that users can replicate their work if they wish. In cases where identifying the source would compromise the source's personal security, the applicant provides as much detail as compatible with the source's safety.
 - 3.2 The applicant uses the best available primary, not secondary, sources of evidence wherever suitable primary sources are available. Where suitable primary sources are not available, the applicant explains the use of a secondary source.
 - 3.3 The applicant checks all key elements of claims against more than one named source of evidence save where the one source is the only source relevant on the topic.
 - 3.4 The applicant identifies in its fact checks the relevant interests of the sources it uses where the reader might reasonably conclude those interests could influence the accuracy of the evidence provided.
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A Commitment to Transparency of Funding and Organization

Signatory organizations are transparent about their funding sources. If they accept funding from other organizations, they ensure that funders have no influence over the conclusions the fact-checkers reach in their reports. Signatory organizations detail the professional background of all key figures in the organization and explain the organizational structure and legal status. Signatories clearly indicate a way for readers to communicate with them.

To be compliant on funding and organization, applicants must meet these five criteria

- 4.1 Applicants that are independent organizations have a page on their website detailing each source of funding accounting for 5% or more of total revenue for its previous financial year. This page also sets out the legal form in which the organization is registered (e.g. as a non-profit, as a company etc).
 - 4.2 Applicants that are the fact-checking section or unit of a media house or other parent organization make a statement on ownership.
 - 4.3 A statement on the applicant's website sets out the applicant's organizational structure and makes clear how and by whom editorial control is exercised.
 - 4.4 A page on the applicant's website details the professional biography of all those who, according to the organizational structure and play a significant part in its editorial output.
 - 4.5 The applicant provides easy means on its website and/or via social media for users to communicate with the editorial team.
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TRANSPARENCY OF METHODOLOGY

Signatories explain the methodology they use to select, research, write, edit, publish and correct their fact checks. They encourage readers to send claims to fact-check and are transparent on why and how they fact-check.

To be compliant on methodology, applicants must meet these six criteria

- 5.1 The applicant publishes on its website a statement about the methodology it uses to select, research, write and publish its fact checks.
 - 5.2 The applicant selects claims to check based primarily on the reach and importance of the claims, and where possible explains the reason for choosing the claim to check.
 - 5.3 The applicant sets out in its fact checks relevant evidence that appears to support the claim as well as relevant evidence that appears to undermine it.
 - 5.4 The applicant in its fact checks assesses the merits of the evidence found using the same high standards applied to evidence on equivalent claims, regardless of who made the claim.
 - 5.5 The applicant seeks where possible to contact those who made the claim to seek supporting evidence, noting that (I) this is often not possible with online claims, (II) if the person who makes the claim fails to reply in a timely way this should not impede the fact check, (III) if a speaker adds caveats to the claim, the fact-checker should be free to continue with checking the original claim, (IV) fact-checkers may not wish to contact the person who made the claim for safety or other legitimate reasons.
 - 5.6 The applicant encourages users to send in claims to check, while making it clear what readers can legitimately expect will be fact-checked and what isn't fact-checkable.
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Open and Honest Corrections Policy

Signatories publish their corrections policy and follow it scrupulously. They correct clearly and transparently in line with the corrections policy, seeking so far as possible to ensure that readers see the corrected version.

To be compliant on corrections policy, applicants must meet these five criteria

- 6.1 The applicant has a corrections or complaints policy that is easily visible and accessible on the organization's website or frequently referenced in broadcasts.
- 6.2 The policy sets out clear definitions of what it does and does not cover, how major mistakes, especially those requiring revised conclusions of a fact check, are handled, and the fact that some complaints may justify no response. This policy is adhered to scrupulously.
- 6.3 Where credible evidence is provided that the applicant has made a mistake worthy of correction, the applicant makes a correction openly and transparently, seeking as far as possible to ensure that users of the original see the correction and the corrected version.

- 6.4 The applicant, if an existing signatory, should either on its corrections/complaints page or on the page where it declares itself an IFCN signatory inform users that if they believe the signatory is violating the IFCN Code, they may inform the IFCN, with a link to the IFCN site.
- 6.5 If the applicant is the fact-checking unit of a media company, it is a requirement of signatory status that the parent media company has and adheres to an open and honest corrections policy.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The IFCN badge

Organizations that have obtained IFCN verification are encouraged to publish a badge in their homepage, however, the complete list of signatories is [here](#).

Any other organization that holds the IFCN badge and is not listed is NOT a signatory to the code of principles.