

Annual Report

Overview 2015 & Outlook 2016



About the Charter

The INGO Accountability Charter is an initiative of international civil society organisations (ICSOs) demonstrating their commitment to transparency, accountability and effectiveness. The Charter provides a global, cross-sectoral, comprehensive accountability framework, signed by most of the largest ICSOs in the world. Its Members agree to ten commitments on issues such as transparency, sound financial management, ensuring impact, working in partnership, respecting human rights and protecting staff and the environment. Members report on these commitments annually and an Independent Review Panel vets the reports. In the past, this has spurred the development of strong accountability systems and supported the public credibility of Charter Members.

The CSOs involved in establishing the Charter conceived it as both a statement of the rights-based values of civil society organisations – freedom of speech and association – and a commitment to excellence. As a sector we are not immune from accountability challenges, whether they be in governance, management or quality of delivery. For this reason we have taken the initiative to self-regulate, aware of the limitations of this, but with a serious intent to build in 'teeth' around compliance with reporting and standards.

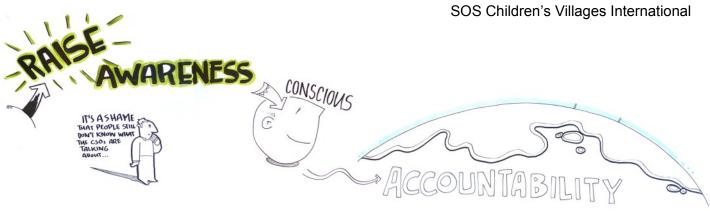
The Charter has been developed by drawing on a wide range of existing codes. It is intended to complement existing codes, and over time, simplify the number of reporting frameworks facing ICSOs by systematic alignment. It is the Charter's aim to help CSOs leverage their impact for people and the environment through intelligent, responsive and systematic work with and not just for stakeholders.

Why Become a Charter Member?

"The INGO Accountability Charter is actually a great fundraising tool. We recently used our membership and annual report to the Charter in negotiations with a multinational company to demonstrate how we set and monitor our standards and how we manage risks. The positive response to it from their compliance team certainly was a key driver to the establishment of a new long-term global partnership."

Roberta Capella, International Director Fund Development and Communications,

SOS Children's Villages International





"The Charter helps improve public confidence in us as we publicly demonstrate our achievements and challenges in our reports to the Charter."



"Direct contact with other Charter Members was hugely helpful to develop a framework for integrated financial reporting across the entire CBM federation."



"As a result of the feedback received from the Charter's Independent Review Panel we have made some significant improvements to our management structures and decision-making processes."



"Being an INGO based in Taiwan, Charter membership will help tell the world that we are accountable and help us gain a global recognition."



"The Charter has helped us in several instances to fend off unfounded external criticism."



"We have highlighted Charter membership in our annual reports to prove we are accountable, as we call for more accountability of others. If the Charter brand was better known this would be even more helpful."

2015 Highlights

Great impact starts with defining what exactly it is you want to achieve. In 2015 we developed the new <u>Charter Strategy</u> to do just that. Three overarching goals emerged in a very consultative process:

- 1. Building Strong Accountability Practice
- 2. Enhancing Public Trust
- 3. Improving Global Collaboration

With significant progress in all areas, we are confident to make a substantial contribution to strengthen our Members' accountability practices and positive impact, enhance their credibility and leverage the sector's voice globally.



A major success was approval by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to fund our project to devise a Global Standard for CSO Accountability. Conceived and driven by the Charter, a group of eight well-established accountability standards from Africa, Asia, Australia, North America and South America have come together to develop a collective *reference* standard. It is intended to guide further developments of all participating codes and serve as a global orientation for other standards, CSO supervisory bodies, governments and media. During the development process we will learn a great deal from one another, develop a truly global perspective on accountability and build a network for further collaboration in the future.

Further initiatives took place in 2015 to strengthen the accountability practice of our Members. One in particular stands out: the <u>Digital Accountability project</u>. Together with ICSOs and online campaign organisations we have started to systematically explore how digital connectivity with our stakeholders can lead to more real-time, two-way communication and ultimately leverage collective impact.



When taking advice for our new Charter Strategy we often heard: "You do great work – but few people know about it." This year we have started to develop a full branding architecture, communication strategy and collecting systematic evidence on how the Charter adds value to specific functions within our Member organisations. Our collective voice has further been strengthened through four new Members: HelpAge International, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Restless Development, and the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (TFCF). Welcome!

2015 saw the UN launch a global mission "to leave no-one behind". This will only be achieved by enhanced participation – the hallmark of effective accountability. We greatly look forward to closely working with all our Members in the coming year to further strengthen their accountability, impact and public credibility. The following report will not only give you an indication of what was achieved in 2015, but also what we will focus on in 2016.

Brendan Gormley

Chair

Karenina Schröder
Executive Director

Strategy Beyond 2015



Our Ambition

We have to walk the talk in regard to transparency, accountability and responsiveness to people's needs. Only then, will we deliver optimal impact for people's lives and the environment.

Success of the strategy means:

CSOs committed to the Charter have significantly strengthened their accountability practices. They are trusted by their societies as transparent, effective actors who collaborate closely with their stakeholders to deliver optimal impact for people's lives and the environment. They accomplish this through a truly global understanding of mutual accountability, supported by global CSO solidarity.

Our new <u>Strategy</u> is the outcome of extensive consultations with ICSOs, digital movements, donors, researchers, journalists and other accountability codes from the Global South and North. After approval for the new "strategic direction" was granted at the Charter Members' Annual General Meeting, the board formally adopted it in October 2015.

The Strategy reflects our belief in the integral role of CSOs to support democracy and sustainable development in a rapidly changing world and how we can best support them. Globalisation, digitisation and climate change are some of the key paradigm shifts that re-shape the space in which CSOs work and the role they need to play. The Charter's overarching ambition is to help *leverage CSO impact for people and the environment* through achieving the following goals:

Goal 1: Build Strong Accountability

It is our strategic ambition to significantly strengthen the accountability practice of CSOs and Charter Members in particular. Accountability – understood as practices that ensure CSOs act transparently, effectively and in close collaboration with their key stakeholders – is the key building block for positive impact. We will build and support strong practices as we:

- Make accountability a leadership priority rather than a reporting exercise
- Foster means of in-time, two-way stakeholder engagement in the digital age
- Focus on drivers for organisational development not completeness of reporting

Goal 2: Enhance Public Trust

We aim at significantly strengthening public trust in the legitimacy and credibility of our sector, beginning with our Members. It is pivotal that CSOs have trust within greater society for them to have a positive impact. In order to achieve this goal we will:

- ♦ Improve the Charter brand as a quality stamp
- ♦ Enable our Members to proudly communicate Charter Membership and what it means

Goal 3: Improve Global Collaboration

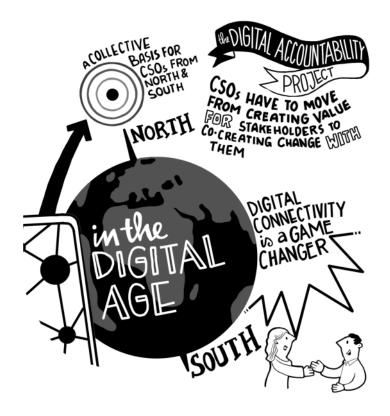
We work to ensure a truly global approach and practice of CSO accountability. A shared understanding of what accountable CSO behaviour looks like and a global network of like-minded peers will help raise our collective voice. In order to achieve this goal we will:

- ♦ Build a Global CSO Accountability Standard
- ♦ Strengthen the Charter's global DNA

Goal 1: Building Strong Accountability

Co-creating Impact in the Digital Age

Digital connectivity is a game changer in the way the world works. And it is the heyday of accountability, since effectiveness in the digital age is best achieved where an organisation optimally connects itself to the stakeholders in the ecosystem around it. To better understand how this can be best achieved we kick-started the CSO Accountability in the Digital Age project. We put together a group of thought leaders from ICSOs such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Oxfam and Transparency International as well as from digital movements such as 350.org, Purpose, 38 Degrees, Jhatkaa and Tactical Technology Collective. Since September 2015 they have started to systematically explore the new terrain and identified key parameters to look at when improving co-creational processes with stakeholders in the digital age. Funding was secured from the Feedback Labs Collaboration Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation.



"Amnesty International is embarking on a new global strategy underpinned by the commitment to support and grow the human rights movement globally and work in flexible, decentralised and enabling ways with our stakeholders in all regions. This project will provide a good space for us and partners to explore what responsible, effective and collaborative advocacy work can look like in

the next few years."

Clare Doube, Strategy and Evaluation Director of Amnesty International and Charter Board Director



Building Strong Accountability

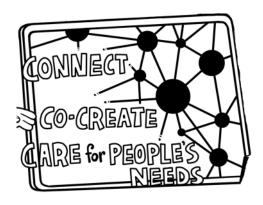


The project was kickstarted by a group of 8 selected thought leaders in September 2015 in Berlin (photo on the left).

They are supported by a larger <u>Reference</u>
<u>Group</u> of additional 18 experts to ensure more diverse expertise is reflected.

Outlook

In 2016 we will turn the results of this mapping exercise into a concrete framework around core principles, models and tools to drive impact with and not for stakeholders. These will be accompanied by case studies from the organisations represented in the working group. Results will be discussed in a lab storm format at a face-to-face meeting in March at the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio (Italy). The result will be a guidance framework for the entire sector, getting the Charter framework better attuned to the digital age and building the foundations of a practitioners' network to drive further developments in the future.



Core Group

350.org
38 Degrees
Amnesty International
Greenpeace International
INGO Accountability Charter
Oxfam International
Purpose Europe
Tactical Technology Collective
Transparency International

Reference Group ActionAid Amnesty International Berkman Center for Internet and Society Harvard University Climate Action Network (CAN) Digital Humanitarian Network Greenpeace International Institute for the Future International Civil Society Centre Jhatkaa (India) Keystone Accountability Making All Voices Count NetHope OPEN (Online Progressive Engagement Network) Restless Development Root Change TechSoup Transparency International Ushahidi

Goal 1: Building Strong Accountability

Making Accountability a Leadership Priority

Accountability has the boring image of bureaucratic report writing. This is a huge missed opportunity! If CSOs are set up to serve people, these people should also be the driving force behind senior leadership decisions. In order to level accountability back up to senior management, the Charter organised and conducted bi-lateral meetings between Charter Member executives and the Independent Review Panel (IRP). While giving senior management the opportunity to better understand the Panel's reasoning behind its report assessment, it also provided an opportunity to link strategic development discussions to the accountability practices that help drive them. Two issues emerged as particularly hot topics:

- What is a good governance model for a global, decentralised ICSO?
- What is their new role and working model in the digital age?

Outlook

In 2016 we will address both of these topics – the latter with a peer-exchange workshop on global governance in September 2016, and the former – by further coordinating Panel / Member bilateral meetings, such as the ones conducted with ActionAid, Amnesty International, CARE, Oxfam, Transparency and World Vision International, to ensure accountability is understood as a leadership tool and not only as a reporting duty.



Better Focused Accountability Reporting

Two issues are important for the further development of our reporting and vetting practice: it must become timelier and more focused. To ensure the former, we introduced a third vetting round in spring to enable the assessment of reports nearer to their submission. Additionally, the Panel started to complement its report review with a quick check on the Member's website and some social media channels. More focus on the important issues has been achieved by giving a number of Charter Members the opportunity to move to a biannual full report with a very succinct interim report, just focusing on three to five issues highlighted in an "Improvement Analysis" as particularly urgent to address.

Outlook

In 2016 we will review the entire reporting process with a view of reducing and reorganising the number of indicators, as well as moving to online report submission in 2017. The reporting and vetting process will be further streamlined and made fit for the digital age as well as providing a baseline level for reporting in smaller national offices.

Capitalising on Peer Knowledge

One of the great advantages of Charter membership is personal access to the expertise already accumulated by leading organisations in our sector. In 2015 our annual workshop provided a good chance for peer exchange on the opportunities and challenges of the digital age for CSOs. It took place in September at the creative office of Greenpeace Netherlands in Amsterdam's harbour docks. Engaging presentations from external speakers, such as Lauren Woodman, the CEO of NetHope, and Catherine Shovlin, UK Director of Synthetron, contributed to a great experience. The outcomes can be found on our website.

Our webinars provided further learning opportunities throughout the year. In our March session on the Global Standard project we discussed how it could help Charter Members to better align accountability practices across the multitude of national entities. In the June webinar Members discussed how to best use the Charter to strengthen accountability practice at the national level. Finally, the August webinar kicked off our branding exercise by asking Members which benefits they get from the Charter, specifically as fundraisers, campaigners, administrators, or programme staff members.

In light of the new challenges the digital age brings, a new **Peer Advice Group** (PAG) formed on **Data Protection & Privacy** with representatives from ActionAid, Amnesty International, CBM, IPPF, Plan, Sightsavers, SOS, and World Vision. The group aims to benchmark



each other's organisations, stay on top of current developments and updates, and develop best practice guidelines for data protection and privacy. The PAG will continue working throughout 2016 and will present their findings and outcomes in a webinar at the end of the year.

Outlook

Next year learning opportunities will include a workshop on *Global* governance: What has and has not worked? and webinars on:

- Digital connectivity as a game changer
- ♦ How to use the Charter for fundraising purposes
- Charter Members' accountability practice in comparison to other peers from the sector
- How to protect our data and privacy in the digital space

Goal 2: Enhancing Public Trust

Communicating that We are Accountable

Only if Charter Member commitments are well known to the public, can our Members be held accountable to them. And only if the ambitious and strict Charter practices are better known, will they enhance the public credibility of our Members. Investment into building our brand and public recognition was thus a strategic priority for 2015. Communications Directors from Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Transparency International, and World Vision as well as branding specialists from Oxfam helped pave the way. We started by systematically asking our Members what adds the greatest value to their daily work in managing, programming, fundraising, campaigns, communication etc. On this we built a systematic branding architecture that captures, in very succinct terms, what we promise and how we deliver. Most importantly, it became clear that the greatest lever for promoting the Charter was with our Members. If they proudly declared and explained their Charter membership in all functions and regions, this would yield the greatest benefits to improving public recognition of the Charter.

Outlook

In 2016 we will develop a strapline and set of brief texts to describe the Charter's value proposition, building on the new branding architecture. We will also revise all the Charter's visual graphics including the logo. We will further revise our communications strategy to reflect the new model of promoting our brand through our Members and develop a toolkit to help achieve this, as well as an implementation strategy.

"A research study from 2014 aimed at identifying the practices adopted by large international NGOs operating in the humanitarian and development areas for the management and reporting of their environmental impacts. The research sample of 50 NGOs showed that environmental recording was only included in seven of them. Five of these seven NGOs are Charter Members and submit annual accountability reports based on the GRI framework. This can be seen as one of the few good practices of the overall research studv."

Paolo Ferrari, The University of Bath, 2014





Proving We Walk Our Talk

To further underpin public trust in CSOs, we have developed a comparative study on CSO accountability performance together with the <u>direct impact group</u>. All full Charter Members as well as 20 relevant peer organisations will be compared in regard to their level of transparency, participatory work approach, impact focus, responsible advocacy and sound financial management.

Outlook

In 2016 the *direct impact group* will conduct desktop research, systematic interviews and reality checks. Results will be anonymised and presented at the Annual General Meeting in April in London to show where we are doing well and which areas need further improvement.

A Growing Family Allows for a Stronger Public Voice

Last, but not least, the Charter Board and Secretariat are proud to have HelpAge International, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Restless Development and the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families on board as new Members of the Charter. We welcome them as strong voices in a vivid community of practice dedicated to fostering CSOs' commitment to transparency, accountability and ultimately greater impact for people and the environment.

"We were excited to join the Charter because it represents a standard for accountability, a space to learn from our partners, and a challenge that will help us to continually improve. We are keen to help drive the discourse on transparency beyond simple, defensive compliance and toward the positive action of turning our agency inside-out for young people and for those with whom we work. We see the Charter as a vital partner in that journey."

Perry Maddox, Chief Operating Officer, Restless Development

Goal 3: Improving Global Collaboration

Building a Global CSO Accountability Standard

Hard and systematic work did bear fruit: in 2015 Sida agreed to fund our project of developing a Global Standard for CSO Accountability.

Collaboration with eight well-established civil society accountability networks from Africa, Asia, Australia, North America and South America is well under way. We are already seeing that the overlap of core provisions for good CSO accountability is high – no matter if codes have been developed in the North or the South, several decades or just some years ago. This is great news, as it will allow us to collectively strengthen our profile and voice.

While our current codes mostly take administrative indicators for good governance, management, etc. as the starting point, the new Standard will be organised around some characteristics of accountable CSOs such as being transparent, independent, collaborative, and responsible followed by very clear commitments to its various stakeholder groups. Behind each of these promises, as for instance – to the people we serve, supporters, donors, staff and the public – we will list what it takes in regard to e.g. governance, management, and programmes, to fulfil these promises. Currently, all eight networks – including the Charter – are working hard on finalising a Global Standard's zero draft.

To better appreciate how this project can optimally help Charter Members, our Executive Director visited the national offices of Oxfam, Transparency and World Vision in Cambodia to also understand how it will add value at the national level. The Charter has also started first consultations with some Charter Members to understand how the Global Standard can best complement their work. We have also mapped the Charter's reporting framework against the first draft of the Global Standard and found that most of it is already covered. When discussing the Global Standard with our Independent Review Panel, they highlighted that this opportunity must be used to further strengthen our provisions of accountability at the local level.



All project partners met in October 2015 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



Project Partners:

- Australian Council for International Development
- ♦ Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
- ♦ INGO Accountability Charter
- ♦ InterAction, USA
- NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism, Uganda
- Rendir Cuentas, Latin America
- Viwango, Kenya
- Voluntary Action Network India

Implementing Partner:

International Civil Society Centre

Improving Global Collaboration

Strengthening the Charter's Global DNA

Going global requires the Charter to ensure wider outreach to partners beyond the Global North. We have therefore translated our Charter Strategy into French and Spanish. Going global is also reflected in the recruitment of Mahmoud Farag from Egypt to work in the Charter team. Mahmoud just completed his MA in Development and Governance in Germany and previously worked on improving CSO accountability in the Arab World, such as with the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the Arab World. He liaises between Charter Members and the Global Standard project and helps run the Digital Accountability project. Our Board and Independent Review Panel, with members coming and working from South Africa, Colombia, Kenya, Australia, Cambodia and Europe, ensures we further develop into an organisation with a truly global understanding and reach.



Outlook

In 2016 we want to finalise the Global Standard text. Building on the overlap of the eight current standards and building in further collective ambitions, this will serve as a global reference standard. It is intended to guide future developments of our codes and serve as a global orientation for other standards, CSO peak bodies, governments and media. In due course, this is also likely to be reflected in the Charter Reporting Guidelines.

We will boost face-to-face and online consultations with our Charter Members around the drafts of the Global Standard and reach out to consultative partners in the sector to ensure the Standard provides a sector-wide answer to CSO accountability. Translation of key Charter documents into more languages and attracting thought-leaders from across the world onto our Board, Panel and into our working groups will underpin a more global strategy.

"India has a long history of active voluntary development organisations contributing to improve the quality of life of marginalised communities. In the quest for further improved internal accountability and transparency methods and mechanisms this project will provide a very beneficial opportunity to strengthen our current voluntary code and the accountability of numerous voluntary development organisations active in the remotest locations of India."

Harsh Jaitli, Chief Executive Officer, VANI (India)

Governance

The Secretariat would like to greatly thank all **Charter Board Directors** who provided excellent strategic and operational supervision throughout the year. The Board's self-evaluation for 2015 demonstrated a shared assessment of strengths and weaknesses among Board Directors. Good decisions on the strategic direction were made based on solid information and Board Directors felt confident in having a determined vision, and strategic objectives and policies in 2015. According to the self-evaluation, the most important Board decisions in the past year included the new strategy, the Global Standard project and developing the Charter brand. Have a look at the current composition of the Board below.



Brendan Gormley Board Chair



Janet Dalziell
Global HR Director,
Greenpeace International



Bettie van Straaten Board Treasurer CFO Director: Operations, CIVICUS



Janet Naumi Mawiyoo CEO, Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF); Chair, Viwango



Caroline Harper Board Vice Chair CEO Sightsavers International



Miklos MarschallDeputy Managing Director,
Transparency International



Clare Doube Director of Strategy and Evaluation, Amnesty International



Perry Maddox COO, Restless Development



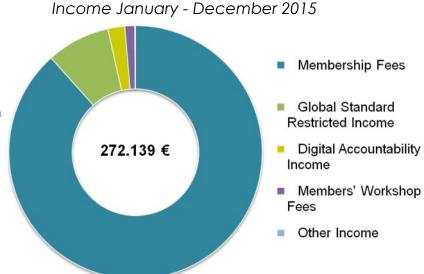
Emmanuel Isch Partnership Leader for PAIR Group, World Vision International

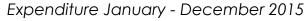


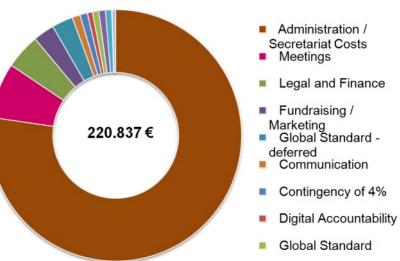
Rosa Inés Ospina Co-Director, Rendir Cuentas; National Director, Red de ONG por la Transparencia

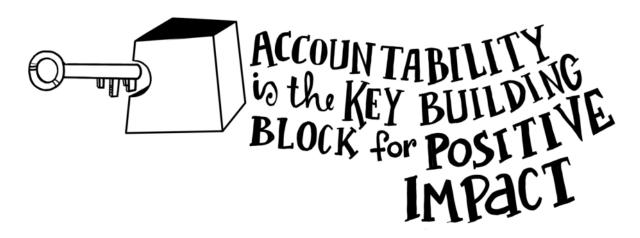
A considerable increase in income due to the external funding we received for both the Global Standard and the Digital Accountability projects (27.951 €) strengthened the financial growth of the Charter in 2015. This was further reinforced by the admission of four new Charter Members. While this also triggered extra costs for personnel, the Charter Secretariat managed resources very diligently and ended the year with a comfortable surplus of 51.302 €.

This year all Charter funds were transferred to a sustainable ethical bank, thus closing our former bank account in September. With the help of an external consultant and our treasurer, in November the Charter started working on migrating all financial data kept on Excel worksheets to more professional and user-friendly accounting software. This migration was successfully finalised with the preparation of our year-end accounts. Huge thanks for CIVICUS for the support!









Members

Charter Membership in 2015

Charter Members are at the heart of everything the Charter does. Here we share an overview of our Membership, consisting of 24 CSOs as of December 2015.

Since 2012, organisations approved for Charter Membership are first granted an Affiliate Membership status and become Full Members after the Independent Review Panel has approved their first accountability report.

Full Members:





































Affiliate Members:





















The Charter has received a lot of valuable support in 2015. It wishes to express its deepest gratitude to all Board Directors and the Independent Review Panel who have put in substantial pro bono work throughout the year. Insights from participants from the strategy consultations were also greatly appreciated as well as the following support from:

- Accenture for hosting our Panel Meeting.
- Amnesty International Secretariat for hosting our Annual General Meeting and Board meeting as well as the Digital Accountability project meeting.
- **Amnesty International** for reviewing and editing the new Strategy Beyond 2015.
- Amnesty International, Transparency International and World Vision
 International for providing a group of Communications Directors who came together to work on a plan to strengthen the Charter brand.
- Birgit Kuchta from CBM for the technical moderation of webinars.
- Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) for hosting a project partner meeting in Phnom Penh.
- Feedback Labs Collaboration Grant / Global Giving for co-funding our Digital Accountability project.
- Greenpeace Netherlands for hosting our Annual Members' Workshop.
- **Lisa Reichmann** for background research on the Digital Accountability project.
- Markus Hesse and his team from the direct impact group, for conducting numerous interviews with national CEOs of Charter Members to feed into the new strategy, for compiling the Charter's / Centre's first carbon footprint report and for developing the impact study which will be completed in 2016.
- Oxfam and in particular Gilles Van Handenhove and Tim Van Der Veer for developing and implementing the plan to strengthen the Charter brand.
- **Sida** for funding our initiative of a Global Standard for CSO Accountability.
- Translators without Borders for translating the Charter Commitments and Strategy Beyond 2015.
- Last, but not least: our sincerest thanks also go to Members for their proactive engagement with the Charter!



Independent Review Panel & Secretariat



The Panel, from left to right:

Louise James, Global Programmes Director for Accenture Development Partnerships Saroeun Soeung, Executive Director of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) Rhonda Chapman, independent consultant specialising in the review, assessment and capacity building of civil society organisations

John Clark, Chair of the international anti-corruption NGO, Partnership for Transparency Fund, on the supervisory board of the European Center for Not-for-profit Law and on the advisory Council for the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

Jane Kiragu, human rights lawyer and Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and Managing Director of Satima Consultants Ltd.

Michael Roeskau, former Director of Development Co-operation at OECD/DAC, retired from Federal Ministry of Finance, Germany

Carbon Footprint Report

In line with our new Environmental Policy, *direct impact group* compiled a pro bono <u>Carbon Footprint</u> <u>Report</u> for the year 2014, which was shared with Charter stakeholders.





The INGO Accountability Charter Secretariat is hosted by the <u>International Civil Society Centre</u>. The Centre is the global action platform for the world's leading civil society organisations and owned by a number of the leading INGOs.

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