



Accountability Lab Independent Review Panel Feedback

**Accountability Report 2021
Review Round March 2023**



Accountability Lab

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round March 2023

3rd April 2023

Dear Blair Glencorse

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the assessment below.

Overall, the Panel found this to be a good report that reflects the priority the organisation places on accountability practices internally and externally. Generally, the report would benefit from further evidence and reflections of impact, especially from stakeholders and the communities that are impacted by Accountability Lab's work.

Areas of strengths in this report are numerous, and especially noteworthy are: mission statement and theory of change (A1), progress and difficulties (A3), sustainability beyond the project cycle (B1), and demonstration of excellence and recognition from peers (C1 and C2).

Some areas can still be strengthened, including internal and external complaint handling (J3 + J4), and ensuring a fair pay scale (G2).

We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us via the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





Accountability Lab

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Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement from Accountability Lab explains the vision and structure of the organisation. It notes how the AL network has grown over the year, with now 11 Labs around the world (Nepal and Liberia (2012), Pakistan (2015), Mali and Nigeria (2017), Niger and South Africa (2018), Mexico (2019), Zimbabwe (2020), DRC, and Somaliland (2021)).

The statement further highlights some of AL's achievements and change over the reporting period, which includes: a focus on the wellbeing of colleagues, citizen feedback on pandemic responses through Civic Action Teams, bottom-up approaches through our Accountability Incubator, pushing reforms through the Integrity Icons programmes and through multilateral approaches.

The Panel notes positively the importance that AL places in terms of ensuring staff well-being during a difficult time such as COVID-19, and hopes that this will become ingrained in the fabric of operations. Additionally, the achievements noted here are very positive.

Cluster A: What We Want to Achieve

A. The Impact We Achieve

A1 ***What are your mission statements and your theory of change? Please provide a brief overview.***

The mission of the organisation is shared, and the response further includes an outline of the organisation's guiding objectives and central vision around why they exist and the current global context.

There is also an explanation of how AL views and approaches a Theory of Action. The Panel finds this approach interesting, and would be glad to learn more about how this approach has supported the Lab's work in practice and how it is being used by the different stakeholders. The Panel further looks forward to learning more

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	<p>about how AL will be re-evaluating the current Theory of Action as part of the 2023-2026 Strategy.</p>	
A2	<p><i>What are your key strategic indicators for success and how do you involve your stakeholders in developing them?</i></p> <p>The report shares the key strategic indicators being used for core areas of focus. It notes that there are specific learning officers responsible for the development of these indicators but that the process is open to all staff for comments. This aspect of the development is well noted.</p> <p>The Panel notes that future actions alludes to small-scale learning reviews with key stakeholders and surveys of training participants and community members; in this light, the Panel would like to encourage AL to share further about how these surveys and reviews are carried out, and what impact might that have on the development of strategic indicators.</p> <p>A great example of how indicators can be co-developed comes from Amnesty International (pg. 3) who used this approach in the development of their process.</p>	3
A3	<p><i>What progress has been achieved and difficulties encountered against these indicators over the reporting period?</i></p> <p>The report shares the progress made in terms of the Integrity Icon programme in Somaliland, Voice2Rep concerts in Liberia, advancing gender equality in Nepal and South Africa, the Accountability Incubator and the Integrity Innovation Hub, and training being expanded for those they work with and for.</p> <p>The Panel further notes positively the successes in terms of influencing policies, advocacy at international and local levels and the engagement of volunteers in Pakistan.</p> <p>Challenges are included, such as : funding challenges and changing priorities during COVID-19, lack of digital equity with weak Internet access, lack of in-person engagement and restrictions of movement. These were accompanied by future actions that aimed to address them.</p> <p>A potential recommendation is to consider how these achievements and challenges can be made even more accessible to those the organisation is working with, so as to encourage and build collective resilience.</p>	4



	<p>The future action on creating stories to capture progress over the years is a good step forward, but it would be great to hear about how these stories or other actions will be made accessible and available.</p>	
A4	<p><i>Have there been significant events or changes in your organisation or your sector over the reporting period of relevance to governance and accountability?</i></p> <p>The report shares significant changes in terms of context and sector, both internationally and nationally. While the response shares some impact of these changes on governance and accountability processes at AL (e.g the growth of AL Pakistan), the Panel would like to encourage further reflections on this end. What effects did these contextual shifts have in terms of AL's own governance and accountability processes as a result? Has there been any internal policy changes (i.e a new monitoring mechanism)?</p> <p>From previous sections, the Panel can see that there have been new additions to the AL network, and would like to understand further if this has impacted the organisation's governance. Additionally, in the next report, it would be great to see how country teams have localised the 2022 AL Global Strategy Update and AL's general operational policies, and if that leads to increased accountability.</p>	3
B. Positive Results Are Sustained		
B1	<p><i>What have you done to ensure sustainability of your work beyond the project cycle, as per commitment 4? Is there evidence of success?</i></p> <p>The response indicates that AL achieves sustainability in its work through being people centric and exploring methodology that appeals to its audience (arts, music and film). This is proven through positive post-programme surveys where participants reported increased skills, knowledge, personal growth, and post-programme employment.</p> <p>Not only so, AL continues to maintain its network of Accountpreneurs and Integrity Icons through different activities such as podcasts, continuation of funding, and different programmes to ensure sustainability post-interventions; this is particularly commendable.</p> <p>Future actions also aim to build on current efforts to make accountability and its effects sustainable over time.</p>	4



B2	<p>What lessons have been learned in this period? How have the lessons been transparently shared among internal and external stakeholders? How do you plan to use these lessons to improve your work in the future?</p> <p>The response showcases internal challenges such as difficulties in retaining employees and how the organisation aims to overcome this through continuously supporting their well being.</p> <p>Externally, an overview of key takeaways, challenges, and ideas for improvement are provided by Labs around the world. Learnings from collaborations in Zimbabwe were also included.</p> <p>AL has also gained greater understanding that in challenging times, it is imperative to keep and nurture human resources and talents. Therefore, adaptive learning within the organisation has become central to AL, and are shared internally and externally through a variety of mechanisms, including: visual arts programs, the Accountabili-TEA podcast, monthly open board calls, weekly learning calls, and regular learning reports. These efforts show a serious emphasis on learning and openness. The Panel furthermore considers the learning reports a good practice.</p> <p>Potential recommendations for furthering the learning efforts can be seen in CARE International's Failing Forward podcast.</p>	3
C. We Lead By Example		
C1	<p>How does your organisation demonstrate excellence on your strategic priorities?</p> <p>AL demonstrates leadership through different Lab's participation in panels, blogs, increased media presence and the collaboration between AL South Africa and Tufts University's Corruption, Justice and Legitimacy Program. It has also received praise from the World Bank on its work in Balochistan, Pakistan.</p> <p>AL's open documents, financials, and policies enable its stakeholders to hold AL accountable and to plan their partnership with AL more effectively. Meeting global standards when it comes to financial management, safeguarding, and workplace policies is another proof of excellence at AL.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the report, AL noted that it continues to chair the C20 Anti-Corruption Working Group and input into the Open Government Partnership in the co-creation of goals related to government accountability.</p>	4



C2	<p><i>What evidence is there that your expertise is recognised and welcomed by your peers, partners and other stakeholders?</i></p> <p>Beyond the above, evidence that AL's expertise being recognised and welcomed by peers at different levels is provided. Internationally, it co-chairs the Steering Committee of the Transparency, Accountability, and Participation (TAP) Network, the C20 Anti Corruption Working Group, among others.</p> <p>Nationally, its efforts have been recognised by various public institutions and organisations in Sudan, Pakistan, Mexico, South Africa, and Mali. Staff members are regularly invited to share lessons and insights from AL's activities. AL further takes its growth as evidence that its approach is being recognised by peers, partners and stakeholders.</p>	4
C3	<p><i>How does your organisation practice being inclusive and protecting human rights, including promoting women's rights and gender equality, in accordance with commitments 1-2?</i></p> <p>Internally, the report states that AL fosters an inclusive workplace whereby diversity fosters innovation and progress. Links to guiding policy documents and examples from AL Mexico and AL Pakistan are included.</p> <p>All AL offices prioritise gender equality in their selection and hiring process and AL Network Labs participate in inclusion training on subjects including gender, LGBTQAI+, people with disabilities, etc.</p> <p>Externally, the response highlights AL's efforts to increase gender equity and diverse participation within its programmes such as through the OGP Summit Youth Delegates, the Gov-HER-nance campaign (Nepal), and the YALI Film Fellowship (Mali), and the 2021 Film Fellowship (South Africa). The content of these programmes also support efforts around equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Not only that, AL set up an official website for the Summit for Democracy on behalf of civil society to help coordinate inputs on and resources for the Summit's key themes: defending against authoritarianism, addressing and fighting corruption and promoting respect for human rights.</p>	4
C4	<p><i>How do you minimise your organisation's negative impacts on your stakeholders, especially partners and the people you work for? How does your organisation protect those most susceptible to harassment, abuse, exploitation, or any other type of unacceptable conduct?</i></p>	3



	<p>A link to AL's safeguarding policy is included in this section, and it can be found on their website under Personnel. The policy itself is comprehensive and makes reporting mandatory. All staff members are required to read and agree to abide by the code of conduct, staff handbook, gender and equity policy, and social media policy when they join the organisation, including interns and fellows.</p> <p>The policy is socialised to AL's staff through bi-annual training sessions and a zero tolerance policy. The Panel would like to know whether all AL staff across all Country Labs are required to undergo such training (number of trainings and trainees), and what has been the uptake and feedback on safeguarding trainings provided so far.</p> <p>Not only so, it would be useful to understand if the organisation has processes in place to assess potential negative impacts of programming, and how this may vary across different socio-cultural contexts that each Lab is working in.</p> <p>Potentially, Educo's approach to risk assessment for programmes (which include community level assessments) as detailed in 2020 report (pg.17) may provide some interesting inspiration.</p>	
C5	<p><i>How do you demonstrate responsible stewardship for the environment?</i></p> <p>A range of examples on how different AL offices support the reduction of energy, plastic, and paper usage is provided. The organisation furthermore works with its Integrity Icon to highlight environmental issues.</p> <p>Future actions include the development of a deeper focus on environmental justice throughout programming and scaling up the possibility of sustainability editions of Integrity Icons into more countries. The Panel looks forward to learning about these efforts, and seeing more examples, impacts, and lessons learned in the next report.</p> <p>A useful resource can be found in this cheat sheet, produced by Accountable Now and member MIO-ECSDE. The cheat sheet discusses how organisations can incorporate "Healthy Planet" as a commitment, taking an organisation step by step beyond recycling.</p>	3

Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

D. Key stakeholders are identified with great care



D1	<p>Please list your key stakeholders. What process do you use to identify them?</p> <p>A list of key stakeholders is provided and includes: Programme participants such as Integrity Icons, Accountpreneurs, Voice2Rep Artists, and civil servants (through Innovation Labs), CSOs and those within coalitions, government stakeholders and private sector actors. The response further shares examples of how the Lab collaborates with these different stakeholders.</p> <p>From the response, Accountability Lab states that it prioritises stakeholders in terms of common values. A partnership policy is also attached.</p> <p>A brief description about how stakeholders are identified is included. The Panel would urge Accountability Lab to share more details in their next report, about stakeholder mapping exercises that Network Labs carry out.</p>	4
D2	<p>How do you ensure you reach out to those who are impacted or concerned by your work?</p> <p>A variety of methods used by different Country Labs are included in the response. The Panel notes positively the presence of Community Frontline Associates within CivActs programmes and Inclusion Fellows in Gov-HER-nance programmes as touch points to reach out to those impacted and concerned by the organisation's work. It demonstrates a clear commitment of AL to drive ideas from the ground upwards.</p> <p>While it is great to share what went well, it would be good to include some further reflections and challenges on what may have not gone as well in terms of engagement, including how the organisation overcame or learnt from them.</p>	3
D3	<p>How, specifically, do you maximise coordination with others operating in the same sectoral and geographic space with special reference to national and local actors?</p> <p>Information regarding how the organisation works with partners, including a partnership policy, is shared in section D1 above. The policy consists of criteria for assessment, notably a specific criteria for local knowledge and experience. It would be good in future reports to share about how the organisation identifies these partners.</p> <p>Additionally, the report provides examples of how Network Labs collaborate with different initiatives and coalitions in countries of operation. Here, it would also be great to understand how the organisation ensures that it does not undermine existing local efforts beyond working in partnership and coalitions. Does AL carry</p>	3



	<p>out mapping exercises prior to implementing its programmes? Are there processes in place to support rather than duplicate?</p> <p>Lastly, it would be great to understand further how AL works with its partners and the nature of collaboration. Some questions for reflection include: What roles does AL take in a particular partnership? Are partners leading within partnerships? Do partners feel that their knowledge and expertise are well-respected?</p>	
E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders		
E1	<p><i>What avenues do you provide your stakeholders to provide feedback to you? What evidence demonstrates that key stakeholder groups acknowledge your organisation is good at listening and acting upon what you heard?</i></p> <p>Some examples of the way the organisation consulted and gathered feedback from stakeholders are already included in the response to D2, including some practical ways that the organisation responded to those feedback.</p> <p>The response to this section further states that the organisation seeks feedback from its partners through post-programme surveys and throughout the entire project cycle. An example from the programme alongside the National Endowment for Democracy is provided.</p> <p>The Panel further found the example from AL South Africa regarding how the organisation reached out to young people during the riots commendable.</p>	3
E2	<p><i>What evidence confirms a high level of stakeholder engagement in your activities and decisions from beginning to end?</i></p> <p>The report expands further on how the translocal structure of Accountability Lab enables stakeholder engagement and bottom up delivery.</p> <p>The response moreover shares how the organisation engages stakeholders throughout the programme cycle. To really enable the Panel to provide clearer suggestions and feedback, it would be good to share about the tools and processes that are used. Not only so, seeing how these engagements and consultations led to changes beyond the programmatic levels would be of great value as well.</p> <p>As one of the future actions states to “embed stakeholder feedback into the program planning process,” AL may want to consider the Road Map Approach from ChildFund New Zealand; while the approach does have a focus on children, its principles and methods in co-designing and co-planning activities with communities and partners may be useful and applicable.</p>	3



E3	<p>Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response</p> <p>A set of feedback from different stakeholders and how the organisation is adapting or continuing accordingly are included in the response. The response further shared areas where organisations were not able to take on board some of its commitments.</p> <p>The report underlines the fact that a small amount of feedback was not implemented due to a misunderstanding in core activities of the Lab. It is interesting to note that AL is taking measures to provide clarity on shared roles with stakeholders.</p> <p>On the latter point, are these areas that the organisation has heard feedback and inputs on, but were unable to follow up due to the constraints listed? If so, how has the organisation communicated this with the relevant stakeholders (Integrity Icons, potential partners, stakeholders, communities, etc)?</p> <p>Future actions for this section illustrates how the organisation aims to address these shortcomings, which it has identified clearly.</p>	3
E4	<p>How do you know that people and partners you worked with have gained capacities, means, self-esteem or institutional strengths that last beyond your immediate intervention? (You may skip this question if you have addressed it in your response to B. 1)</p> <p>The response outlines how AL programmes' focus on building skills, networks and values enables long term sustainability. Examples of how skills such as film making, story-telling, interviewing, public service are passed on to programme participants; seed funding and connections are also made available in certain countries for participants to continue with their pursuits afterwards. AL further maintains a network of past-participants for resource sharing and mobilisation.</p> <p>The Panel suggests AL to consider carrying out evaluations a couple of years after participants have exited the programme. In this way, AL will be able to further learn about how participants are currently doing, what impact the programme had on them in the long run, and extract areas for improvement. This information might be used to inform advocacy and participants to programmes.</p>	4
F. Our advocacy work addresses the root causes of problems		
F1	<p>How do you identify and gather evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address and use this to support your advocacy positions?</p>	4



	<p>The response states that Accountability Lab's work is "informed primarily by in-person engagement, desk research on publicly available reports, articles, and policy documents, baseline and impact studies".</p> <p>More, it underlines that AL Network Labs teams are local residents who possess contextual knowledge regarding the root causes of the problems we address, and experience working with civil society on governance related problems joining AL.</p> <p>The report further unpacks how the organisation gathers root causes by engaging with communities through Frontline Associates. The Panel commends the two-way communication process, with validated information being disseminated back to communities in accessible ways.</p> <p>Also commendable is the continuous engagement example in Mexico, where team members meet with stakeholders to monitor good governance related policy changes.</p>	
F2	<p><i>How do you ensure that the people you work for support your advocacy work and value the changes achieved by this advocacy?</i></p> <p>The response states that from the onset of advocacy work - that different teams identify stakeholders to build relationships and buy-in. As mentioned in sections D2 and F1, through Civic Action Teams, different Labs in each country institute Community Frontline Associates to support feedback and engagement from the grounds up into its advocacy work.</p> <p>An example from AL Nepal (Policy Parks) further highlights how the organisation creates space for policy and advocacy discussion, and builds on these inputs to approach change. Also, the team translates all written materials and holds events in local languages in Pakistan, to favor inclusion and people's involvement.</p> <p>To strengthen this, it would be good to understand what impact the policies and processes that AL and its partners advocated for, have had on communities, especially from the perspectives of those who were most impacted. An interesting example comes from Transparency International, their approach requires them to validate their impact claims with the communities that they work with.</p>	3
G. We are transparent, invite dialogue & protect stakeholders' safety		
G1	<p><i>Are your annual budgets, policies (especially regarding complaints, governance, staffing/salaries and operations), evaluations, top executive remuneration and vital statistics about the organisation (including number of offices and number of staff/volunteers/partners) easily available on your website in languages accessible</i></p>	3



	<p>by affected key stakeholders? Please provide links, highlight membership in initiatives such as IATI and outline offline efforts to promote transparency.</p> <p>Accountability Lab is a member of IATI and GuideStar. Its policies, annual budgets, evaluations are available online. The Panel commends the IATI membership as it provides another opportunity to foster accountability, by opening data to more people than AL direct stakeholders. The Panel notes that audits are available on the website up to the year 2019, will newer (2020, 2021) audits also be made available? Are Country Labs also undergoing similar audit processes - or are audits only limited to certain parts of the organisation and certain programmes?</p> <p>The Panel notes that making financial information publicly available through an aggregated format is a good step towards transparency and hopes that this practice continues in the future. Tableau tool used by AL allows more visuals and might be extensively used in this regard.</p> <p>As a next step, the organisation should reflect on how it is making this type of information (such as the webpage for financial data) even more accessible to stakeholders and the general public.</p>	
G2	<p>What policies do you have in place to ensure a fair pay scale? Do you measure the gender pay gap in your organisation, and if so what is it? What are the salaries of the five most senior positions in the organisation, and what is the ratio between the top and bottom salaries? If this information cannot be provided or is confidential, please explain why.</p> <p>The response does not share ratios between top and bottom salaries. While the report does not provide links to policy that guides a fair pay scale, the organisation's website includes an Equality and Diversity Policy that does include a commitment to ensuring equity in paternity and maternity leave. However, there's no mention of the scope of applicability (i.e is this applicable for country labs?) for this policy.</p> <p>Future actions allude to a Compensation Policy, however this is not accessible on the organisation's website and were not provided to the Panel. The Panel would recommend making this publicly available (or at least, to prospective employees) to ensure transparency and aligned expectations.</p> <p>The Panel further looks forward to learning about the results and reflections after the pay-equity review as this would be an important step towards strengthening accountability towards staff.</p>	2
G3	<p>How do you ensure privacy rights and protect personal data?</p>	3



	<p>It is good to see that data collection processes for certain vulnerable communities are aligned with AL's safeguarding policy. There is a password protected server to store data. The use of KobotoolBox for data collection is a good methodology for a responsible collection and protection of stakeholders data.</p> <p>While the response does not mention it, a standard privacy policy is available on the organisation's website. The policy does mention retention and rights of data owners over the data that the website collects. However, it would also be good to understand if there is an overall policy/guidance for all network labs to provide data owners with control.</p> <p>The Panel would also like to know if training sessions are addressed to staff and partners, especially those who are involved with collecting data from communities. This would help mitigate the risks of data breaches on AL's reputation.</p> <p>A really good example comes from ChildFund Australia where the organisation's consent policy enables children and families to track and follow how their images, stories and information are used. See example here.</p>	
G4	<p><i>Who are the five largest single donors and what is the monetary value of their contribution? Where private individual donors cannot be named due to requested anonymity, please explain what safeguards are in place to ensure that anonymous contributions do not have unfair influence on organisational activities.</i></p> <p>The response provides only the top three biggest donors. Further charts show funding broken down by country and programmes. From the previous report, it is understood that AL Global gives small grants to country teams, the Panel would like to inquire if this is still the case.</p> <p>In the last feedback letter, the Panel suggested for AL to share whether each of their network labs acquire external funding directly; a small explanation on how resource acquisition works overall would provide the Panel with further insights for better feedback. The Panel would like to know if there are anonymous contributions.</p> <p>Additionally, the Panel would recommend to share (confidential is possible) the organisation's donation acceptance policy with the next submission if such a policy is available; in lieu, a description on how Accountability Lab ensures that donations do not have unfair influence is also acceptable. This would really provide us with further information to be able to provide more informed feedback.</p>	3

Cluster C: What We Do Internally

H. Staff and volunteers are enabled to do their best



H1	<p><i>Provide evidence that recruitment and employment is fair and transparent.</i></p> <p>The response states that there is a rigorous hiring process with a high degree of documentation; given how the information is presented, the Panel would like to clarify whether this would apply to different country labs, or if this is only applicable at AL Global?</p> <p>The report states also that the AL team in South Africa uses the AL Global recruitment guidelines. The Panel has not been able to find this document on the website. So, the Panel would like to request further information regarding this process in the next report; this could be done by sharing a policy or providing a short description.</p> <p>In this area, the Panel is looking for further reflections in terms of the organisation's diversity and inclusion - to this end, the response in H3 provides a link to a blog post that outlines how the organisation approaches inclusion. However, it remains important to state what has been codified into policies (and at which level), whether AL currently tracks diversity in different offices or if it has any targets/processes to address (potential) imbalances, and if it has encountered any challenges in doing so.</p>	3
H2	<p><i>What are you doing to invest in staff development? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?</i></p> <p>The Panel is glad to read about the different channels that are available for staff feedback, including an annual survey, conversations with supervisors or Global Directors. These are good ways to gather feedback and understand certain needs from employees. Other developmental opportunities are also available at different country offices. Laudable is the budget being made available for staff development in Pakistan.</p> <p>However, are there formalised processes for these talents development initiatives and appraisals - i.e quarterly or twice a year reviews? What happens if a staff member doesn't take advantage of certification opportunities in Nigeria for example ? These conversations are usually beneficial for both employees and supervisors to receive two way feedback. They are also channels through which goals for staff development can be set, and to identify training needs.</p>	3
H3	<p><i>How does your organisation ensure a safe working environment for everybody, including one free of sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation or any other unacceptable conduct? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?</i></p>	3



	<p>The response states that the organisation is currently working on strengthening their safeguarding (or duty of care). On the safeguarding policy (which was not linked, but is available through the org's website), the Panel has already provided comment for this in area C4 above. It is well noted that some Labs have chosen to align to the Global policy, and that while AL Nigeria does not, it has appointed a lead for safeguarding and harassment. It is also good that plans are in place to provide training on this end.</p> <p>While a staff code of conduct, anti-harassment policy, and whistleblowing policies are not provided within the report, they are available through the organisation's website. The Whistleblowing policy provides a clear channel and guidelines for expectations for reporting malpractice, and has a non-retaliation clause.</p> <p>On this end, the Panel would further want to learn about if the organisation has encountered any challenges ensuring a safe workplace.</p>	
I. Resources are handled effectively for the public good		
11	<p><i>How do you acquire resources in line with your values and globally-accepted standards and without compromising your independence?</i></p> <p>The report states that "Accountability Lab takes into consideration the organisation's mission, values, credibility, and contextual knowledge, focusing on grants that fund work on anti-corruption, good governance, and citizen participation." Teams currently apply caution and AL South Africa sets questions to determine the impact of accepting certain funds. While these are commendable, the Panel would further want to know how the organisation ensures that one donor does not have dominating influence on how the organisation or individual labs works.</p> <p>In the next report, it would be good to receive the global process and policy which sets clear guidance on acquiring resources. The Panel has not been able to find any of such policies on the website.</p>	2
12	<p><i>How is progress continually monitored against strategic objectives, and resources re-allocated to optimise impact?</i></p> <p>The response outlines several ways through which different AL country offices and programmes monitor and evaluate their work. The Panel recommends that in the next report, AL gives more detailed examples regarding what each of these practices entail; for example, what does having its own KPI look like for AL Nigeria?</p>	3



	<p>What stakeholders are involved in setting up these objectives? How have resources been reallocated as programmes evolve?</p> <p>It is good to learn about AL Global's process, and the transparency that comes with publishing annual strategic updates.</p>	
I3	<p>How do you minimise the risk of corruption, bribery or misuse of funds? Which financial controls do you have in place? What do you do when controls fail? Describe relevant situations that occurred in this reporting period.</p> <p>The response shares a set of measures that all offices within the AL network take, alongside different practices adopted by specific country labs to minimise risks. The report also shares an incident through which theft was committed by a temporary staff member.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that AL has globally a computerised accounting system (Quickbook), robust accounting and financial procedures.</p> <p>While the report does not include it, an Anti-Bribery and Anti- Corruption Policy is available on the organisation's website. The policy has clear definitions, guidelines for acceptable behaviours, processes for raising concerns, and outline for socialisation with employees.</p> <p>A future action refers to developing "shared culture, values, and policies for incidents of misuse" - the Panel would like to ask whether this will be a supplement to the above policy or will it include other aspects?</p>	4
J. Governance processes maximise accountability		
J1	<p>What is your governance structure and what policies/practices guide replacing and recruiting new trustees/board members?</p> <p>Each AL Country Lab has its own Board of Director. The process guiding trustee recruitment for AL Global is provided. The described process seems to meet all current standards.</p> <p>It is further good to learn that in diversity and inclusion in terms of Board members are contextualised to different countries. The Panel considers the future action of "Support learning across Lab Boards of Directors through monthly "Open Board Calls" to be a positive step, and looks forward to reflections on this end in future reports.</p>	3



	<p>Additionally, as the IRP has raised in the previous feedback letter, the connection between global and local governance should be further explained. Are country labs (with the exception of AL Zimbabwe) only reporting to their national Boards of Directors? How does the global board connect with country boards? What is the relationship between the Global team and country boards?</p>	
J2	<p><i>How does your board oversee the adherence to policies, resource allocation, potential risks and processes for complaints and grievances?</i></p> <p>The report states that AL Global Board has been involved in the alignment and development of policies, and that Network Lab's boards have been involved in programmes, finances and learnings.</p> <p>Some challenges around engaging board members and actions to overcome them were included. Future actions further seems appropriate, as it is important to have defined committees and regular meetings for each Network Lab's Board.</p> <p>In the next report, the Panel would like to get evidence of future actions implementation, on regularity of board meetings for example.</p>	3
J3	<p><i>What processes and mechanisms does your organisation have in place to handle external complaints, including those relating to unacceptable conduct? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period, how many of those were valid, and of those that were valid, how many were appropriately handled and resolved.</i></p> <p>The response shares how different country labs and AL Global handle complaints, including point(s) of escalation. It further refers to the Whistleblowing Policy, which is available on the organisation's website. The Panel notes that the scope of AL's Whistleblowing policy is only applicable to employees, and would not be sufficient for external complaints. The Panel recommends opening up the scope of this to enable some external parties such as partners to whistleblow as well. This could be done through a specific webpage, aiming to collect anonymous complaints from external stakeholders.</p> <p>AL's External Grievance policy (provided as a confidential annex) outlines the process for handling complaints from participants and others. In case it is useful for the future action of adding a complaints/whistleblowing section to the website, the Panel recommends Accountable Now's guidelines on online complaints mechanisms.</p>	2



	<p>Some further questions for reflection include: How are we making complaints policies and mechanisms known and accessible for the people who we work with (communities and programme participants)? Are we explaining our processes in easy-to-understand manner?</p> <p>Additionally, the response should further entail the overall number of complaints received, how many of these were deemed valid, and whether AL deemed their handling appropriate. If this information cannot be communicated (potentially due to breach of confidentiality or legal requirements), please state so.</p>	
J4	<p><i>How are internal complaints handled? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period, how many of those were valid, and of those that were valid, how many were appropriately handled and resolved.</i></p> <p>The Global Grievance Policy (provided as confidential annex) guides staff on where their complaints should be directed. To strengthen the Global Grievance Policy, the Panel suggests that other points of contact should be provided beyond the supervisor/department heads, to support cases where the employee is in dispute with those who are in their line of supervision.</p> <p>The report further states that AL Global supports mediation when complaints cannot be solved at country level. A good example of an internal complaints policy comes from Transparency International's Integrity System.</p> <p>While the response to this particular question does not mention it, the Panel notes that AL has a clear Whistleblowing policy in place that supports internal complaints. The policy further states that "the Director is required to report, with suitable anonymity, to the Board on all instances of whistleblowing and their resolution". It is also possible to provide a specific webpage, to collect anonymous complaints from staff and other internal stakeholders.</p>	2
J5	<p><i>How do you make decisions about the need for confidentiality and protecting the anonymity of those involved?</i></p> <p>The response states that the complaints policy mandates discretion and assurance of anonymity if requested. While not mentioned in the response, the Whistleblowing Policy also has a clause for confidentiality, including what steps the organisation will take to ensure that identities will remain confidential and the processes for disclosure.</p>	3



	<p>For the Global Grievance Policy for staff, no such clause is mentioned and multiple people are involved in the process. The Panel would recommend modifying this to enhance privacy.</p> <p>From the previous report, the Panel notes that AL recognises that it does not have an anonymised complaints mechanism. Is this still the case ?</p>	
K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments		
K1	<p><i>How is the governing body and management held accountable for fulfilling their strategic promises, including accountability?</i></p> <p>The AL Global Board has an annual self-assessment through which priorities for the coming year are developed. The process is vertically inclusive for the whole organisation. An example from AL Nepal shows how it has developed a Matrix to evaluate both expertise and interest in engaging on good governance topics. These are definitely commendable practices.</p> <p>The Panel also welcomes the fact that Network Lab Directors, as well as Board members at country and global levels are involved in the Accountable Now reporting process.</p>	4
K2	<p><i>What steps have you taken to ensure that staff are included in discussing progress toward commitments to organisational accountability?</i></p> <p>The response outlines how collaboration agreements are made between country labs and AL Global. Additionally, examples of how AL Nepal team is horizontal to enable for all to learn across different organisational areas, and how different AL Network Labs have weekly meetings in place to enable staff to participate are included.</p> <p>Additionally, it would be good to learn about how the learnings or feedback from the Accountable Now reporting process is shared back with the different teams.</p>	3
K3	<p><i>What is your accountability report's scope of coverage? (i.e. are you reporting for the whole organisation or just the international secretariat?) What authority or influence do you have over national entities and how, specifically, are you using it to ensure compliance with the accountability commitments and to drive the overall accountability agenda?</i></p>	4



The report covers the entire organisation, with the Accountable Now reporting process written into collaboration agreements between each Network Labs and AL Global.

The Panel commends this formal commitment on AN reporting process.