



# Transparency and Open Information Policy

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## **1. Policy objective**

IRW strives to ensure that information related to its operations, decision making, finances, structure, policies, procedures and governance is transparent, accessible and communicated to relevant stakeholders. IRW does so because the organisation believes transparency ensures honesty, accountability and improved performance. Moreover, the organisation believes that it is the right of IRW's beneficiaries, supporters and other stakeholders to be informed and have access to information about IRW's operations and their results as well as the structure and policies IRW employs.

## **2. Policy scope: who does this policy apply to?**

The policy is applicable within the defined parameters of Islamic Relief Worldwide which include the International Office, the SBUs that cover the UK the Middle East, and Emerging Markets. It also covers those offices which it directly manages and funds (including field offices).<sup>1</sup>

In developing a Transparency Policy, Islamic Relief seeks to clarify our transparency obligations in order to strengthen the relationships of trust with all our stakeholders, both within and outside Islamic Relief Worldwide, including:

- The individuals and communities we serve
- Our supporters, partners and funders
- Staff and volunteers who work for the organisation
- The general public

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<sup>1</sup> Once this policy has been endorsed by the IRW Trustees, it will be sent to all other parts of the IRW family, starting a new consultative and development process for a new version that covers a larger part of the organisation.

### 3. Islamic Relief's policy statement on transparency and open information

Transparency has been defined as the 'the provision of accessible and timely information to stakeholders and the opening up of organisational procedures, structures and processes to their assessment' (GAP Framework. 2005 One World Trust)

IRW overall transparency policy statement is:

- IRW believes transparency ensures honesty, accountability and improved performance and has adopted it as one of its core ways of working and integrated it within its code of conduct and operating systems.
- Islamic Relief believes it is the right of our beneficiaries, supporters and other stakeholders to be informed and have access to information about our operations and their results as well as the structure and policies we employ.
- IRW strives to ensure that information related to its operations, decision making, finances, structure, policies, procedures and governance is transparent, accessible and communicated to relevant stakeholders in a timely and appropriate manner.
- IRW achieves this by detailing standards for accessibility and communication of information at all levels (see Appendices 1 and 2) and making staff accountable for adhering to these standards.
- Where necessary IRW will balance the need for providing information with the need to allocate resources reasonably, and the justifiable risks sharing such information may present to the organisation and our staff. In these cases our policy states whose responsibility the risk assessment is and the scrutiny process over justifications made.

In practice this will fall under three main areas

**Transparency surrounding our presence and operations in an area:** In our programming we work towards our Islamic Relief Accountability framework. These commitments to our beneficiaries and guidance can be found in the Islamic Relief Accountability Framework. See appendix 1 of this policy for further details.

**Transparency around our organisation and its decision making, and key documents:**

We will endeavour to publish key organisation data on our website. Other documents, such as internal policies, will be available on request. For this, see appendix 2 of this policy.

**Transparency surrounding our global aid spending:** Islamic Relief has committed to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) for all of our institutionally funded programmes. Islamic Relief commits to publishing our institutionally funded programmes via the IATA website.

In addition, we will publish summary information on all our programmes. See appendix 3 of this policy for further details

## 4. Defining disclosure and limitations

Islamic Relief Worldwide is committed to having an open and transparent disclosure system unless there is good reason why something should remain confidential. The following categories of documents will not be made available to the public and will be subject to limited internal disclosure:

### Those which endanger safety and security:

- a. Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violate his or her rights, or invade his or her privacy;
- b. Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the security of country states and communities or prejudice the security or proper conduct of any operation or activity of Islamic Relief Worldwide, its field offices and partners;

### Those which impact IRW's ability to conduct operations effectively:

- c. Commercial information where disclosure would harm either the financial interests of Islamic Relief Worldwide, its field offices and partners or those of other parties involved;
- d. Information that, if disclosed, in Islamic Relief's view, would seriously undermine the policy dialogue with Governments, sponsors, donors, communities, or implementing partners.

### Those which are private or confidential:

- e. Information received from or sent to third parties, under an expectation of confidentiality.
- f. Information covered by legal privilege or related to access to internal audit reports.
- g. Internal inter-office or intra-office documents, including e-mails and draft documents;
- h. Any information which contravenes data protection and privacy legislation, such as personal data of staff, beneficiaries or supporters without their consent

### The transparency policy will also not apply under any of the following circumstance:

- i. **Cost:** Where the time or financial cost of fulfilling the request is disproportionately high
- j. **Unreasonable or abusive requests:** Where the person making the request engages in abusive or offensive behaviour, or where the request is unreasonable, frivolous or excessive
- k. **Where Islamic Relief is unable to access the information,** for example in the case of archived or copyrighted material
- l. **Bona fide requests:** Islamic Relief will only reply to bona fide requests, where the contact details of the individual or organisation exist and are verifiable.

## 5. Responsibility to Disclose

If you wish to access information not readily available on the website, you can contact us via the website, or the address below. A response to a request for information will be given within 14 working days of the request if possible. If the request is not met within the 14 working day period stipulated above, contact should be made with [irw@irworldwide.org](mailto:irw@irworldwide.org) or in writing to:-

Internal Communications Coordinator  
Islamic Relief Worldwide  
19 Rea Street South

Birmingham  
B5 6LB

If the request is denied, a justification will be given to the enquirer (see Section 6: Defining disclosure and limitations). Where the enquirer is not satisfied with the response or justification, a complaint or appeal may be sent to [complaints@irworldwide.org](mailto:complaints@irworldwide.org) or in writing to:

Complaints  
Islamic Relief Worldwide  
19 Rea Street South  
Birmingham  
B5 6LB

## **6. Accountability for this policy**

The Board of Directors is responsible for the implementation of and adherence to this policy. IRW's Internal Communication Manager is responsible for making implementation and adherence possible and easy.

### **O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?**

(The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 61 verse 02)

Shakir

## Appendix 1: IRW's existing transparency and accountability commitments

Commitment	Supporting Policy & Procedure
<p>1. IRW has committed itself to ensuring that our offices and staff communicate our mission, strategy, programme, resources we have available and entitlements to the communities we work amongst</p>	<p>IRW Accountability Framework            IR Code of Conduct            IR Quality Management System            Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)            IR Complaints Policy</p>
<p>2. IRW has committed itself to opening up its decision making, information systems, policies, reporting, reward systems and financial management to the maximum possible without incurring unreasonable and unacceptable organisational risks. Where information is not made available openly IRW will state the justification for the lack of disclosure.</p>	<p>Transparency Policy            International Aid Transparency Initiative website (IATI)</p>
<p>3. IRW has committed itself to an impartial and professional complaints system that would encompass complaints around access to information.</p>	<p>IRW Complaints system.</p>

## Appendix 2: Access to Information

<b>Information</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Type of Access</b>
Job Descriptions	HR	1. Organisation	On request
Policy& Procedures	Strategy & Policy	1. Organisation	On request
Salaries and reward systems	HR	1. Organisation	On request
Vision, Mission, Values	CEO	1. Organisation	On request
Recruitment and vacancies	HR	1. Organisation	Website
Trustees and Directors information	CEO	2. Governance & Structure	Website
Strategy Document	Department Managers	2. Governance & Structure	Website
Calls to tender	Procurement Manager	3. Finance	Website
Annual report	Finance	3. Finance	Website
List of Major Institutional Donors	IPD	3. Finance	Website
Evaluation reports	IPD	4. Performance	Website
Programme summary information (see Appendix 3)	Partnerships Manager	4. Performance	Website
Implementing partners	IPD	4. Performance	Website
Humanitarian updates and situation reports	Humanitarian Department	4. Performance	Website

### **Appendix 3: Programme summary information**

Project information: Data to be published annually on programmes on our website.

- PIN Code
- Country
- Project description
- Donor
- Sector
- Project status
- Implementation status
- Implementation period (including start/end dates)
- Direct beneficiaries
- Indirect beneficiaries
- MDG targets