

IFCN CODE OF PRINCIPLES REPORT 2018

Main lessons from the first year of the verification process

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OVERVIEW

In March 2017, the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) launched a process to verify compliance to its code of principles by signatory organizations. This was aimed at ensuring that minimum standards were being promoted among conscientious fact-checkers worldwide. Verified signatories of the IFCN Code of Principles have been evaluated by a journalism expert against twelve different criteria that include having a public methodology, listing funders and sharing sources clearly.

Sixteen months after the establishment of the verification process, being a signatory of the Code of Principles has begun to be considered a badge of greater trustworthiness by audiences, researchers, donors and technology platforms. For instance, Facebook requires its third party fact-checking [partners](#) to be IFCN verified signatories.

At the moment of publication, 58 organizations have obtained the verification at least once and more than 70 organizations have applied.

The process has not been without challenges. Chief among these has been consistency. Our criteria cannot always be applied in the same way across different countries. Transparency obligations for nonprofits are usually more stringent than those for privately owned companies. And while some requirements are very straightforward (“the names of the signatory’s authors and key actors are clearly listed and their bios are available”) others are broad enough to allow different assessors to interpret them differently.

With this document, we are sharing lessons and opportunity areas that have emerged after our first year evaluating applications. We are conscious that many other efforts are underway to whitelist or verify the accuracy and transparency of media outlets. It is not a simple task and we hope our shortcomings can help others do better.

We also reaffirm our openness to amend and improve the different parts of our code and our process. Fact-checking organizations are part of an increasingly complex information ecosystem. They too must be held accountable.

This report contains a criterion-by-criterion evaluation of how the standards have been enforced as well as more general updates that the IFCN will make to improve this process.

This document is one of several actions that we have taken to attempt to make the code a sharper tool to promote excellence in fact-checking. We are also launching (i) a new website that more clearly explains the code and more transparently presents the applications and assessments of each verified signatory (ii) a greatly simplified application experience for aspiring signatories (iii) an explainer video and (iv) revised guidelines for assessors.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

In order to issue the recommendations, suggestions and observations included in this report, IFCN Program Manager Dulce Ramos reviewed the nearly 70 applications to the code of principles received in 2017 and their assessments. Subsequently, the members of the IFCN Advisory Board were consulted. Finally, IFCN Director Alexios Mantzarlis modified and reviewed the report.

The report was completed in March 2018. We delayed publication to make it coincide with the launch of the new website www.ifcncodeofprinciples.poynter.org

The members of the board at that time were:

Angie Holan - Politifact
Baybars Örsek - Doğruluk Payı
Govindraj Ethiraj- Factchecker.in
Glenn Kessler - The Washington Post Fact-Check
Laura Zommer - Chequeado
Peter Cunliffe-Jones - Africa Check
Phoebe Arnold - Full Fact
**Phoebe Arnold left the Advisory Board on July 16 2018.*

THE CODE OF PRINCIPLES VERIFICATION PROCESS

This is the workflow that comes after an organization applies to be a signatory. The redesign seeks to simplify the current experience, and automate some of its steps. A brief explanatory video is also be embedded in the landing page.



ASSESSMENT

For each of the criteria evaluated in the verification process, we have highlighted some best practices, shortcomings and updates we have implemented in the new application and assessment system.

Criterion 1a - Organization

The signatory is a legally registered organization set up exclusively for the purpose of fact-checking or the distinct fact-checking section of a legally registered media outlet or research institution.

Full compliance: The signatory is an established fact-checking organization or section and has provided necessary registration documents or a channel to obtain them. It has produced an average of one fact check per week or more over the past three months.

Best practices: Applicants who shared their legal registration document ([Chequeado](#)) or their tax registration ([Agencia Lupa](#)) provided tangible evidence of their incorporation.

Assessment: The requirements for this criterion have sometimes been more lax for mainstream media than for independent outlets. For instance, while the assessor who evaluated the [AP Fact Check](#) considered that a link to the fact-checking project of this outlet was sufficient the AFP's (1st round) assessor considered that a similar link was not enough to consider them as "compliant".

Updated requirement for compliance: The standard should be applied consistently. The assessors' checklist has been updated to indicate that for all organizations to be rated as compliant they should provide formal registration documents or a channel to obtain them.

Special mention 1 - Verification of regional affiliates

Signatories such as PolitiFact and The Conversation have regional affiliates that are subject to the same methodological principles. Africa Check has different editions of its website in French and English. The code did not spell out whether those affiliates should be considered as verified signatories too. The policy now indicates that if a fact-checking project operates under direct editorial oversight of a signatory, then they are considered verified too. Otherwise, the affiliates must separately apply to the code of principles to be signatories.

Special mention 2 – Ineligible applicants

In early 2018, an applicant without a distinct fact-checking operation applied to the code of principles. Instead, the submitted information related to the organization's ex ante editorial fact-checking policy. As such, the applicant was rejected because it was

ineligible. The IFCN will not, from now, process similar applications and refund the \$200 fee. The IFCN will not reimburse applications of other organizations that do consider themselves as having a distinct fact-checking operation but do not meet the other criteria and therefore get rejected at the end of the process.

Criterion 1b - Organization

Link to the archive of fact checks published in the previous three months. If you do not collect all fact checks in one place, explain how the fact-checking is conducted by your organization.

Full compliance: The signatory has published an average of at least one fact check per week over the past three months.

Best practice: This criterion is simplest for dedicated fact-checking projects but generalist media organizations that compile all their fact-checking work in a single section easily meet the standard (e.g. [Le Monde](#), [The Washington Post](#), [La Silla Vacía](#)).

Assessment: The standards to assess this criteria can be clearer in two ways:

1) *Rigidity with some applicants:* The case of [Climate Feedback](#) is illustrative. The organization was considered as "partially compliant" on this criterion after the assessor wrote: "There are collections of regular fact checks but the phrasing of the navigation is not based on traditional phrasings of most news organizations. The vagueness of 'Scientific Feedbacks' and 'Blog' leaves the first-visitor wondering where to click. The organization was classified as "partially compliant" by a user experience rather than by the actual content of their website, despite that the assessment form indicates what evidence is required to be "fully compliant".

2) *Debunking or fact-checking?* Snopes' application was rated as "Fully compliant" in the same criteria. Since the task of debunking of hoaxes following a methodology intersects with fact-checking and verification, IFCN accepts applications that hail from organizations dedicated to verify claims ex-post and/or dedicated to verify images, videos or other misleading content popular in the public debate.

Updated requirement for compliance: The IFCN has updated the information in the code of principles landing page to clarify that both fact-checking and verification outfits can be signatories as long as their content results in a traceable compilation of information that allows them to be assessed on the other criteria.

Special mention 3 - Regularity of publications

A North American applicant (the IFCN does not comment on non-compliant organizations or organizations that haven't completed the application process) was not accepted as a signatory because, as it operates with volunteers fact-checkers, it published less regularly than once a week over the past three months. Nevertheless, the organization partially or fully complied with most of the other IFCN criteria. At the end of

2017, another aspiring organization was asked to reapply because it presented a verification project that had not yet launched.

Updated requirement for compliance: None. As per the Board's advice, the IFCN will maintain the requirement on frequency. The consensus view was that both external assessors and the board need an extensive and frequently updated body of work to be able to judge the applicant.

Criterion 2a - Nonpartisanship and fairness

Share links to ten fact checks proving the scope and consistency of your fact-checking, accompanied by a short explanation (200 words max) of how your organization strives to maintain coherent standards across fact checks

Full compliance: The signatory fact-checks claims made by all relevant sides in its chosen topic or field. The assessment of "relevance" takes account of both (a) the significance of the claim for society if it is unchecked, and (b) the reach or potential reach of the claim. It assesses all claims using the same standards.

Best practice: The information provided by [Chequeado](#) for this criterion is a good standard. Not only did the organization provide the links to its fact checks and give an explanation about its practices to keep itself coherent and consistent, but Chequeado also provided a link with further information about their practices regarding this matter. Therefore, they more than met the criterion.

Assessment: Some applicants included the paragraph and others just give general information about the consistency of their fact checks (see [El Objetivo](#)).

Updated requirement for compliance: The IFCN will require applicants to provide a short and public accompanying statement that clearly explains how they strive to maintain coherent standards. Applicants must provide examples of what it is considered a best practice in terms of "non-partisanship" when it comes to the selected claims to check.

Criterion 2b - Nonpartisanship and fairness

Share evidence of your policy preventing staff from direct involvement in political parties and advocacy organizations. Please also indicate the policy your organization has as a whole regarding advocacy and supporting political candidates.

Full compliance: The signatory has not endorsed a candidate, party or policy and it has clear, listed policies preventing on its staff from involvement in advocacy to keep both organization & staff outside active advocacy.

Best practice: In addition to disclosing its non-partisanship policy, [France 24](#) shared a letter from the director of the media group they belong to. The letter attested that all the company's employees should refrain from participating in political activities with reference to founding documents.



1 B2 / N1 / 2017 / 065

March 10, 2017

Dear Sir/Madam :

This letter is to support the application of the France 24 Observers to become a signatory of the IFCN code of principles. It is a supplement to the application form we have already submitted and the two appended documents:

1. the founding principles ("Cahier des charges") of our parent company France Médias Monde (contained in the document Décret 2012)
2. the Code of Conduct for our journalists (Charte Déontologique)

France 24 is part of the state-owned media group France Médias Monde. We are a French public service broadcaster but we have total editorial independence from the French government.

Regarding nonpartisanship and fairness, our Cahier des Charges engages our journalists to "respect pluralism and ensure balanced representation of different points of view." It goes on: "Treatment of information must be balanced and honest, and bring to bear the same level of scrutiny of different opinions and points of view being expressed on the same topic, in the interest of respect for public interest, individual values and human dignity."

(« Respecter le pluralisme et l'équilibre des points de vue. Le traitement de l'information doit être équilibré, honnête et manifester le même niveau d'exigence et d'attention entre les différentes opinions et points de vue qui peuvent s'exprimer sur une même information dans le cadre du respect de l'ordre public, des valeurs de la personne et de la dignité humaine. »)

Specifically in the France 24 newscast, this means that journalists cannot directly participate in the activities of political parties or advocacy organizations.

Yours,

Marc Sautali
General Director, FRANCE 24

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N° de Reg. 026 026 026

Assessment: There was great variability in the detail provided as evidence for this standard. [Nieuwscheckers](#), for instance, sent a paragraph in their application explaining how they strive to maintain balance in their work. As the paragraph was not public, the

assessor recommended more transparency. Consequently, Nieuwscheckers' published a paragraph that reformulates the language of code's commitment regarding nonpartisanship: "We apply the same standard for each verification of facts and we always follow the same procedure, we base our conclusions on the evidence found, we are not partisan in our factual controls."

While further transparency is worthy of recognition, the IFCN must clarify that applicants are expected to explain what is acceptable and what is not in regarding the political activities of staffers.

Updated requirement for compliance: The requirement for full compliance has been updated to indicate that a specific policy must be shared with both the assessor and the audience that goes beyond a short statement. Organizations will only be considered as "fully compliant" if they share language from contracts or other HR documents explaining established rules for staffers around nonpartisanship.

Special mention 4 - The case of The Weekly Standard's Fact Check

The verification of [The Weekly Standard's Fact Check](#) was met with [criticism](#) from progressive advocacy organizations. These [questioned](#) how a "conservative opinion outlet" was given access to the Facebook third-party fact-checking partnership, which requires IFCN verification as a necessary but not sufficient condition.

Between the organization's first application to the code of principles and the second, a period of approximately five months lapsed. During this period, as the external assessor noted, The Weekly Standard's Fact Check "made several dramatic revisions and improvements." The changes derived from the assessor's recommendations — which include a stronger nonpartisanship policy for its fact-checking operation and a new section to collect the full archive of fact checks— exemplify the purpose of this code. It has been set up for all fact-checking organizations to follow certain rules, not to create clubs of like-minded journalists.

Updated requirement for compliance: IFCN will update the code of principles landing page to clarify that verification is exclusive to the fact-checking unit and not to the entire journalistic project. At the same time, the code will require that the corrections policy apply not just to the project but to its parent organization as well. This is a delicate balance that we are going to keep re-assessing.

Criterion 3 - Transparency of sources

Share a brief explanation (500 words max) of how sources are provided in enough detail that readers could replicate the fact check. If you have a public policy on how you find and use sources for your fact-checking, it should be shared here.

Full compliance: In the signatory's reports, key sources are always clearly referenced and/or linked to in a manner that readers, viewers or listeners can easily understand and replicate the fact check if they wish.

Best Practices: Organizations that compile their sources in databases or that keep a list or screenshot of the sources consulted, as [Teyit](#) or [The Conversation](#).

Assessment: In general, this is one of the clearest and simplest criteria to fulfill. At the same time, there hasn't always been uniformity in evaluating this criterion. The assessors have noted punctually when an article does not have the necessary or satisfactory links to retrace the work of the fact check. The IFCN has also received complaints from readers showing fact checks from signatories that don't include all necessary the links to replicate the work. These have been relayed urgently to signatories and stored for future assessment when the signatories will be up for reverification.


Updated requirement for compliance: IFCN will clearly state that the traceability is fundamental for a signatory to be fully compliant with this criterion.

Criterion 4a - Transparency of funding & organization

Link to the section where you publicly list your sources of funding (including, if they exist, any rules around which types of funding you do or don't accept), or a statement on ownership if you are the branch of an established media organization or research institution.

Full compliance: In the case of the fact-checking section of a media house or research organization, the signatory lists its owner and offers details on its funding. In the case of a standalone fact-checking organization, it has a section on its website detailing each source of funding over the past calendar year accounting for 5% or more of total revenue, an overview of spending and the form in which it is registered if this would allow the public to verify certain financial information about it.

Best practice: With a bank account whose every movement is open to the public Demagog.cz, from Czech Republic, sets one of the best practices among verified signatories.


Raiffeisen BANK
Banka inspirovaná klienty


OSOBNÍ FINANCE


PODNIKATELÉ A MALÉ FIRMY
obrat do 50 mil. Kč


FIRMY A KORPORACE
obrat nad 50 mil. Kč


PRIVÁTNÍ BANKOVNICTVÍ


EN




















O NÁS

O společnosti
Kariéra
Kontakty

Majitel transparentního účtu: Demagog.cz, z.s.

Celkový zůstatek na běžném účtu: 275 021,24 CZK

Celkový zůstatek na termínovaných vkladech: 0 CZK


Datum transakce od:

Datum transakce do:

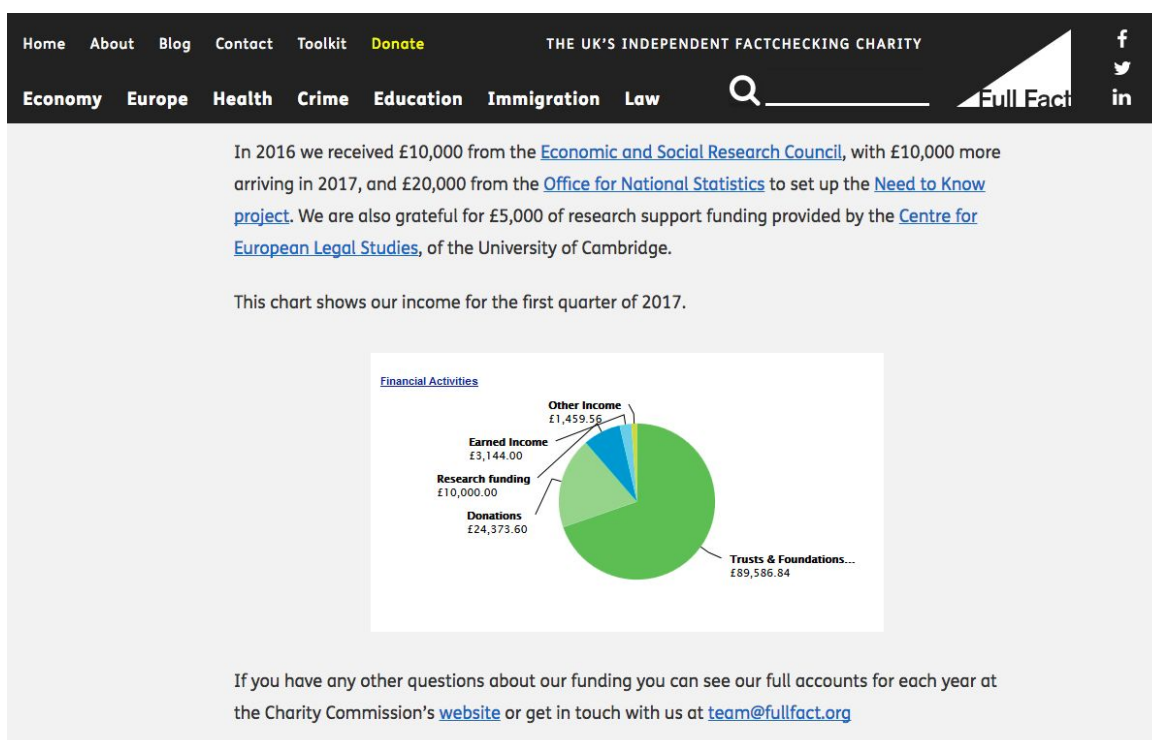
Název účtu / popis / výše transakce:

POHYBY NA ÚČTU 9711283001/5500

Datum Čas	Poznámky Název účtu	Datum odepsání Valuta Typ	Variabilní symbol Konstantní symbol Specifický symbol	Částka	Poplatek Směna Zpráva
05.03.2018 09:05	všechno nejlepší k narozeninám Andrea Felixová	05.03.2018 05.03.2018 Převod		666	


800 900 900
24 hodin denně zdarma

Also, the detail and depth in which [Full Fact](#) discloses its financial information is worthy of being highlighted. Full Fact can be considered as an example in the capacity to balance financial openness with the need to safeguard sensitive data.



Assessment: The considerations on this criterion are similar to those of criterion 1a. While the vast majority of independent organizations present a detailed account of their funding, the same evidence has not been demanded to the mainstream media. Assessors have not typically requested more information from the large media groups that have been verified as signatories of the code of principles. (E.g. [El Objetivo](#), [The Washington Post](#).)

Updated requirement for compliance: The language in the assessment guidelines now indicates that a general statement on overall budget, income sources and expenditure is expected from all organizations.

Criterion 4b - Transparency of funding & organization

Link to the section detailing all authors and key actors behind your fact-checking project with their biographies

Full compliance: The names of the signatory's authors are key actors are clearly listed & their bios are available.

Best practice: Both in the organizations dedicated only to fact-checking and in those that produce other types of journalistic content there are examples of good practices. However, [Faktisk](#) stands out in this criterion, as it lists not only the editorial team, but

also its board of directors, administration, former employees and a "panel of experts" that helps fact-checkers in their work.



Faktisk • Arne Næheim, administrerende direktør IBM Norge

Faktiskrådet

Faktiskrådet er et rådgivende organ redaktøren i Faktisk kan benytte seg av. Rådets medlemmer skal bistå redaksjonen i Faktisk med kunnskap og kompetanse, i tillegg til sine nettverk. Formålet er å ha ressurspersoner redaktøren kan rådgi seg med i forbindelse med faktasjekkning. Medlemmene kan komme fra alle fagområder.

Ansvarlig redaktør peker ut medlemmene for en periode på to år. Det ligger ingen begrensninger for hvor mange perioder de kan sitte.

Faktiskrådet består i dag av:

- Bernt Olufsen, tidligere ansvarlig redaktør i VG og redaktør i Schibsted Media Group.
- Bente Kalsnes, førsteamanuensis ved fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap ved Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (HiOA)
- Ingvald Strømmen, dekan ved fakultet for ingeniørvitenskap og teknologi ved Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU)
- Thea Selliaas Thoresen, førsteamanuensis ved det humanistiske fakultet ved Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU)
- Jack Werner, journalist og debattør. Medgrunnlegger av «Viralgranskeren» i Sverige

Assessment: It is an easy criterion to fulfill and it is simple to evaluate. However, there is room for some clarification that may lead to improvements.

Updated requirement for compliance: The external assessors should not take a Twitter list or a Facebook list as a proof of transparency of organization. The key actors should be publicly listed in the organization's website. Guidelines clarify that "key actors" in organizations are editorial staff, senior management and the editorial board, in case it exists.

Criterion 4c - Transparency of funding & organization

Please link to the section where readers can contact the organization.

Full compliance: The signatory actively invites readers to reach out. The medium for doing so is obvious.

Best practice: Including underneath each fact check some mean of contact for the reader, even if it is just a call out and an email address as organizations such as [The Conversation](#) do, is a good standard that prevents the reader from searching the entire website for a way to share opinions. Organizations like [Africa Check](#) stand out in this criterion, since they have a comments section at the end of every article.

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Your name *

Email *

Terms

Africa Check encourages frank, open, inclusive discussion of the topics raised on the website. To ensure the discussion meets these aims we have established some simple House Rules for contributions. Any contributions that violate the rules may be removed by the moderator.

Contributions must:

- Relate to the topic of the report or post

☐ I have read and agree to the House Rules and Terms and Conditions of Use *

Assessment: Organizations should decide what the easiest path for their readers to reach out is. Giving them at least one mean of contact (form, email address) at the end of a fact check and opening the comments are both good practices.

Criterion 5a - Transparency of methodology

Link to a section or article detailing the methodology of your fact-checking work. If you don't have a link, explain.

Full compliance: The signatory's website provides a step-by-step explanation of its methodology.

Best practice: A practice worthy of recognition is the video with which the [Agencia Lupa](#) team explains their work process, as it briefly communicates the work of a fact-checker.



AS DEZ PERGUNTAS MAIS FREQUENTES

1. O que é a Agência Lupa?

Conheça aqui a primeira empresa especializada em fact-checking do Brasil

seções

SAÚDE

#LUPAAQUI

ESPORTE

ELEIÇÕES 2016 - RJ

ARTIGOS

ELEIÇÕES 2016 - BH

BLACK FRIDAY

ESTADOS

Assessment: Defining a methodology is usually the starting point for any fact-checking project, so assessors should not show flexibility on this criterion, as it is essential that anyone can “check the checker”. So far, all assessors have been coherent and consistent in evaluating this point and almost all verified applicants made their step-by-step methodology public since its first application, which shows that the expectations are clear for every person involved in the process.

Criterion 5b - Transparency of methodology

Please link to the page or process through which readers can submit claims to fact-check. If you do not allow this, please briefly explain why.

Full compliance: The signatory’s website provides a dedicated section/call for action that explains to readers how to send claims and which claims can be fact-checked.

Best practice: [La Silla Vacía](#) was a pioneer in taking the fact-checking work beyond a web page. It took advantage of its prestige and credibility and find a way to be “invited” into private conversations on WhatsApp. While it should not be mandatory to offer this service to readers, it is worth asking which channels is the audience using to talk, so organizations can build a community through those platforms. Today, in some countries, it is WhatsApp, in the future it may be another.



Recommendation: TheJournal.ie claims that between February and December 2016, 37% of its fact checks emanated from reader's submissions and it was, by far, the largest single source. IFCN will update the language in the assessors' guidelines to encourage organizations to report the percentage of fact checks that have emerged from readers' suggestions in the last three months of operation, with the intention of knowing how much the organizations' work is linked to audience interests.

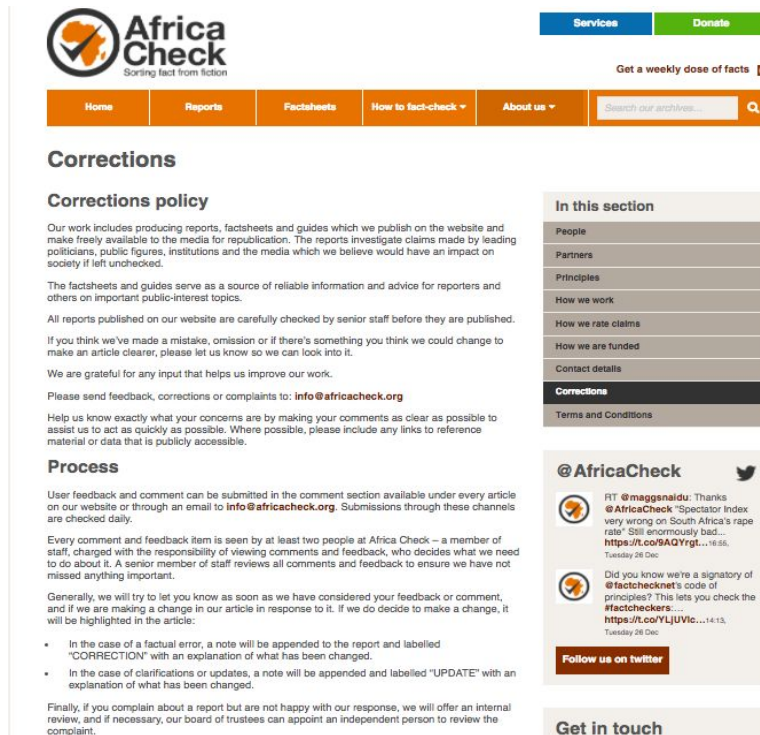
Criterion 6a - Open & honest corrections policy

Please link to the page with your corrections policy. If this is not public please share your organization's handbook by email to factchecknet@poynter.org

Full compliance: The signatory's website has a clear, transparent step-by-step explanation of its corrections policy. Examples of its implementation are provided in the application.

Best practice: The policy of Africa Check stands out for the detailed explanation about the process they follow to give a way to corrections. Not only does Africa Check give the reader the tools to send an observation or complaint (comments at the end of the articles, email address) but it also states that those means of contact are reviewed daily. In addition, they inform about how they will proceed in case a reader is not satisfied with the response or correction.

"If you complain about a report but are not happy with our response, we will offer an internal review, and if necessary, our board of trustees can appoint an independent person to review the complaint."



The screenshot shows the Africa Check website. At the top, there is a logo with the text "Africa Check" and the tagline "Sorting fact from fiction". Navigation links include "Home", "Reports", "Factsheets", "How to fact-check", and "About us". A search bar is also present. The main heading is "Corrections". Below it, the "Corrections policy" section explains the organization's commitment to accuracy and provides a feedback mechanism. The "Process" section details how feedback is handled, including a list of actions taken based on the type of error. On the right, there is a sidebar with a table of contents for the "In this section" part, including links to "People", "Partners", "Principles", "How we work", "How we rate claims", "How we are funded", "Contact details", "Corrections", and "Terms and Conditions". Below this is a Twitter feed showing a tweet from @AfricaCheck and a link to follow them.

Corrections

Corrections policy

Our work includes producing reports, factsheets and guides which we publish on the website and make freely available to the media for republication. The reports investigate claims made by leading politicians, public figures, institutions and the media which we believe would have an impact on society if left unchecked.

The factsheets and guides serve as a source of reliable information and advice for reporters and others on important public-interest topics.

All reports published on our website are carefully checked by senior staff before they are published.

If you think we've made a mistake, omission or if there's something you think we could change to make an article clearer, please let us know so we can look into it.

We are grateful for any input that helps us improve our work.

Please send feedback, corrections or complaints to: info@afriacheck.org

Help us know exactly what your concerns are by making your comments as clear as possible to assist us to act as quickly as possible. Where possible, please include any links to reference material or data that is publicly accessible.

Process

User feedback and comment can be submitted in the comment section available under every article on our website or through an email to info@afriacheck.org. Submissions through these channels are checked daily.

Every comment and feedback item is seen by at least two people at Africa Check – a member of staff, charged with the responsibility of viewing comments and feedback, who decides what we need to do about it. A senior member of staff reviews all comments and feedback to ensure we have not missed anything important.

Generally, we will try to let you know as soon as we have considered your feedback or comment, and if we are making a change in our article in response to it. If we do decide to make a change, it will be highlighted in the article:

- In the case of a factual error, a note will be appended to the report and labelled "CORRECTION" with an explanation of what has been changed.
- In the case of clarifications or updates, a note will be appended and labelled "UPDATE" with an explanation of what has been changed.

Finally, if you complain about a report but are not happy with our response, we will offer an internal review, and if necessary, our board of trustees can appoint an independent person to review the complaint.

In this section

People
Partners
Principles
How we work
How we rate claims
How we are funded
Contact details
Corrections
Terms and Conditions

@AfricaCheck

RT @maggensidu: Thanks @AfricaCheck "Spectator Index very wrong on South Africa's rape rate" Still enormously bad... <https://it.co/8ADYrgt...> 16:55, Tuesday 26 Dec

Did you know we're a signatory of @factchecknet's code of principles? This lets you check the [factcheckers](https://it.co/YLJUvic...)... <https://it.co/YLJUvic...> 14:13, Tuesday 26 Dec

Follow us on twitter

Get in touch

Another organization that stands out for its corrections policy is [Pagella Politica](#), since it brings together, in a single section linked on its homepage, all the articles that have been subjected to review.

Assessment: The work of the assessors to evaluate this criterion has been mostly consistent. However, some applicants were required to publish their corrections policy on their website ([El Objetivo](#)) while others were verified even when a link to verify the policy was not provided ([France 24](#)).

It should be noted that, sporadically, the IFCN has received emails from readers who take a fact check from a certain organization and comment on their disagreements. In some cases, readers emphasize that organizations do not process complaints as expected.

Updated Recommendation/Updated requirement for compliance: The assessor's guidelines have also been updated to clearly explain that a public "step by step" approach to corrections will be required and that it should apply across the organization and not just to the fact-checking operation. The IFCN has also issued and shared a new complaints policy (see topline recommendations below).

Criterion 6b - Open & honest corrections policy

Please provide two examples of a correction made, or correction requests handled, in the past year. This must pertain to your fact-checking work.

Full compliance: Examples of the implementation of this policy are provided in the application.

Best practice: The way in which [Faktisk](#) presents the fact checks - in a sort of log (see the categories in the left column of the image) that describes each part of the process, supports the notion that transparency of methodology and the acknowledgement of errors is fundamental in this work. With this format, the commitment to transparency is much more evident.

In fact, completely wrong .

AMENDMENTS

February 5, 2018 at. 16.47
Removes the following sentence from the review: "Facts.com has asked [Professor Terje Tvedt](#) at the University of Bergen about the source of the allegations, but he has not answered. " Tvedt did not reply to documentation before the fact check was completed, but answered when he was presented with the final conclusion.

PUBLISHED

February 5, 2018 at. 16.14 - *Last updated:* February 5, 2018 at. 16.48

FACT CHECKED BY

Tore Bergsaker

EMBED

Size: Large ▾

<div class="faktisk-embed" id="faktisk-embed-factcheck-LkN" data-type="factcheck" data-id="LkN" data-version="large"></div>

arrow_back

MORE FACT CHECK, THANKS!

SUPPORT US

arrow_forward

Assessment: There have been organizations that, by the application date, report not to have had to resort to correcting their work. Although that is great, those must commit to send correction examples as soon as they get them.

Recommendation: Applicants that do not report corrections by the time they submit their application will be required to send examples as soon as they deal with one correction request. The language in the guidelines has been updated.

TOP LINE RECOMMENDATIONS

Besides the individual level updates to the code explained above, we will also pursue the following overall changes to the process:

1. Increase clarity for applicants and transparency for the audience:

- We have redesigned the code of principles application and vetting process on the backend and, crucially, on the frontend. It should be easier for aspiring signatories to figure out what is required of them when applying. And it is a much better experience for frontend users to see what individual signatories submitted as evidence for compliance and how assessors evaluated them by visiting individual profiles.
- We updated the guidelines for our pool of assessors.
- We launched a [video explainer](#) summarizing the process.
- We will translate the Code into French and Spanish to better serve the applicants and the international mission of the IFCN.
- Encourage signatories to include in their website a brief explanation, criterion by criterion, explaining how they comply with the Code's principles in a way that may be more helpful for their audience.

2. Require reachability of all links from the signatory's website. We will require publicity to always mean that something can be reached by a reader directly from the fact-checkers' website rather than through our assessment .

3. Monitor the consistency of the assessments:

- Prepare a checklist for the Program Manager to guarantee that compliance was consistent with other cases.
- Determine which criteria are fundamental as "full" compliance and which can be "partial" compliance without affecting the basic transparency requirements for an organization to be a signatory.

○

4. Complaints policy. At the link:

<https://ifcncodeofprinciples.poynter.org/complaints-policy>, the public can express their concerns about verified signatories. The IFCN is neither capable nor interested to continuously monitor each and every fact check published by a verified signatory; but it does wish to offer a channel for complaints and monitor potentially significant violations.

- The IFCN will not respond to complaints about individual fact checks produced by any signatory organization. Unless they relate to a blatant contravention of our code (see below) complaints about single fact checks will be forwarded to the interested fact-checker for resolution through their complaints mechanism.

- Complaints about violation of one of the specific criteria of verification will be accepted through [this form](#). Claimants will have to clearly stipulate what breach of the Code the signatory is culpable of. The signatory will have 28 days to answer the complaint or correct the lapse. If complaint is neither resolved or addressed, the IFCN board will be notified.
- The IFCN Director and Program Manager will take action on gross violations of the code (e.g. complete lack of sourcing; fabrication of content; open advocacy for a political cause). This will include direct conversation with the organization, request for changes and with the board's approval possible suspension from the list.
- All complaints will be filed for evaluation from the external assessor when the interested organization reapplies for verification.

APPENDIX: THE CODE OF PRINCIPLES

The [International Fact-Checking Network \(IFCN\)](#) at Poynter is committed to promoting excellence in fact-checking.

We believe nonpartisan and transparent fact-checking can be a powerful instrument of accountability journalism; conversely, unsourced or biased fact-checking can increase distrust in the media and experts while polluting public understanding.

This code of principles is for organizations that regularly publish nonpartisan reports on the accuracy of statements by public figures, major institutions, and other widely circulated claims of interest to society. It is the result of consultations among fact-checkers from around the world and offers conscientious practitioners principles to aspire to in their everyday work.

1. **A COMMITMENT TO NONPARTISANSHIP AND FAIRNESS** We fact-check claims using the same standard for every fact check. We do not concentrate our fact-checking on any one side. We follow the same process for every fact check and let the evidence dictate our conclusions. We do not advocate or take policy positions on the issues we fact-check.
2. **A COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY OF SOURCES** We want our readers to be able to verify our findings themselves. We provide all sources in enough detail that readers can replicate our work, except in cases where a source's personal security could be compromised. In such cases, we provide as much detail as possible.
3. **A COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY OF FUNDING & ORGANIZATION** We are transparent about our funding sources. If we accept funding from other organizations, we ensure that funders have no influence over the conclusions we reach in our reports. We detail the professional background of all key figures in our organization and explain our organizational structure and legal status. We clearly indicate a way for readers to communicate with us.
4. **A COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY OF METHODOLOGY** We explain the methodology we use to select, research, write, edit, publish and correct our fact checks. We encourage readers to send us claims to fact-check and are transparent on why and how we fact-check.
5. **A COMMITMENT TO OPEN AND HONEST CORRECTIONS** We publish our corrections policy and follow it scrupulously. We correct clearly and transparently in line with our corrections policy, seeking so far as possible to ensure that readers see the corrected version.