

Accountability and Quality Management Standard Development

Editorial Steering Group (ESC) Planning Meeting

Geneva, Switzerland

14th to 15th December 2006

ESC Management Group		ESC Advisor Group	
Jennifer Birdsall	HAP	Nelly Badaru	Independent
Zia Choudhury	HAP	Salim Bahramand	Independent
Sheryl Haw	HAP	David Bainbridge	Tearfund UK
Andrew Lawday	HAP	Alex Jacobs	MANGO
Emmanuel Minari	HAP	Alison Joyner	SPHERE
Nicholas Stockton	HAP	Christian Hansen	DRC
Guests		Zu Mian	MERCY Malaysia
Monica Blagescu	One World Trust	Branka Mraovic	Independent
Shannon Jaggi	CARE International	Mamadou Ndiaye	OFADEC
Olivier Tayar	Consultant - Auditor	Ivan Scott	Oxfam GB
		Amineh Starvidis	Independent
		Ingvild Solvang	CARE International
		Elena Tiffert-Vaughan	MAP
		Ton van Zutphen	WVI
		Yasamin Yousofzai	Independent
		Apologies	
		Chol Obuongo Giel	Independent
		Majeed Nassar	Independent
		Jonathan Potter	People In Aid
		Robert Schofield	Medair

Executive Summary

The consultation process has not only been the intense recent 18 months, but started back with the ombudsman project, Humanitarian Accountability Project which have all played their part in helping us arrive at where we are today – a Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard.

The initial ESC feedback at the start of the meeting highlighted the areas that needed further work:

Major:

- **Covenant:** Concerns raised with regards to the Humanitarian Principles, partners section and a need to further explain contextual issues:
 - Result: Concerns addressed and section revised. Changes reviewed by ESC and approved
- **Benchmark 4:** Concerns raised with regards to the People In Aid Code and the need to strengthen the benchmark further.
 - Result: Benchmark and requirements revised and strengthened. People In Aid concerns addressed and further discussions to be held regarding audit synergies to be explored.
- **Partnership:** Concerns raised with regards to lack of clarity between covenant and benchmarks and how partners will be involved in audit process. (see summary from partners work group)

- Results: Section 2.5 in covenant revised and strengthened, with benchmarks and requirements adjusted. In particular benchmark 1 and 6 now covering partners.
- Clarity Questions: Many questions were raised that required significant time to explain. The questions ranged from editorial issues to structural issues. Key questions were discussed in a working group and replies feedback to the plenary. This session highlighted a need to have a few more additions to the Q&A section on the HAP web site.

Minor: Queries raised concerning meaning or language.

- Benchmark 1: 5 queries
- Benchmark 2: 5 queries
- Benchmark 3: 8 queries
- Benchmark 5: 2 queries
- Benchmark 6: 2 queries

A small working group was selected to address these queries and to revise the benchmarks and requirements accordingly.

Independent Consultants

Throughout the year HAP has had the privilege of having a number of independent consultants working with us on the development of the Standard. Each person was or currently is a person who has been affected by a disaster and has learnt at first hand what the issues are to be on the receiving end of aid. In light of this experience they have gained significant insight into the real needs of disaster survivors and hence their feedback has been crucial.

Below is a brief summary of the key points brought to the ESC:

Ms Nelly Badaru - Uganda

Review of benchmark one:

- It will have a high impact if implemented and increased benefit if put into practice
- Good Practice can save lives and improve livelihoods
- E.g. Beneficiaries were impressed when they saw that DRC had set up an information board
- Nelly fully supports Benchmark One and recognises that it will change the status quo.

Mrs Amineh Starvidis – Palestine

Review of Benchmark two

- It makes the mission of the organisation very clear to the beneficiaries which is very important to build the trust and confidence between organisation and the community
- Beneficiaries can have a full understanding of the nature of the services, the means in which they will be delivered and the identity of the organisation
- The agency that Amineh now works for (Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association) is committed to accountability and transparency and see this is vital to build trust in the community.

Dr Chol Obuongo Giel – Sudan (visa denied so sent presentation)

Review of benchmark three

- Positive impacts:
 - Beneficiaries taking lead in decision making as per priority areas that should be addressed by the project under design
 - Agency sensitivity to the beneficiary's culture and tradition paves the way to mutual openness & trust
 - Beneficiary involvement in all levels of project design strengthens their confidence in the agency & the project

- Some agencies are trying to participate. This is a new strategy they start using after scoring a number of failures in their past projects due to lack of community involvement, participation, ownership & sustainability. It's like repenting old mistakes of the top-down approach
- Some agencies have already realized the sense in empowering communities through their full involvement & participation in the project cycle management such that they can have a say in anything that affects their lives positively or negatively.

Mrs Branka Mraovic - Serbia

Review of benchmark four

- If the HAP Standard had been here before many lives could have been saved / helped
- People (beneficiaries) don't always understand the term "quality management", but once explained they are pleased but want to know who will ensure agencies meet the requirements.
- The most important thing is that people want to be treated with respect and dignity – even if you can't give anything to help.

Dr Yasamin Yousfazai - Afghanistan

Review of benchmark five

- A number of agencies have an option to submit complaints but they have no dangling mechanism – therefore no feedback is given
- The benefits of having a complaints handling procedure is that there will be improved quality and performance
- However, people need to know that they have a right to complain and trust that the process to handle their complaints will be effective – feedback is essential, though not always easy.

Dr Salim Brahamand - Afghanistan

Review of benchmark six

- The absolutely key element of learning is listening and responding appropriately

Dr Majed Nassar for Palestine was again denied permission to leave Palestine to participate in this meeting. He sends his apologies.

Summary of Points to Consider in section 2.5 Working with Partners

- One standard for all (Accountability principle 7)
- Acknowledge our commitments to building national capacity and therefore due consideration to be given to applying the standard to partners (where capacity is limited)
- Avoid carrot and stick mentality – conditional funding etc.
- Expect a commitment of members to lead by example and model, to provide appropriate support and resources to partners to develop capacity in this area
- Member agency needs to provide (justification, rather than be accountable for)
- Drop reference to partners in the benchmarks and requirements and provide context on page 8
- Re consider a benchmark on capacity building and partners
- Define parameters
- Partners responding to disaster.

Result: The Standard has been revised to meet plenary group decision incorporating points where agreed.

Good Practice Section

Objective of Session:

- Introduce first draft (draft 1, version 4 11th December 06)
- Discuss best way forward in the further development of the “good practice guide” section
- Review glossary and outline key words to be in glossary
- Review Quality Initiative Section and advise on presentation options

Results

The original concept of what would constitute the make up of the contents of the overall “Accountability Manual” was:

- The Standard
- Procedures for applying for certification (Certification Process / System)
- The Good Practice Guide (advisory section on good practices)
- Training Materials
- References
- Work plan Guideline
- Standard forms and templates (e.g. registering complaints, reporting, certification, accreditation etc.)

Suggested Draft Outline

1. The Standard:

- a. Foreword
- b. Covenant
- c. Benchmarks
- d. Requirements
- e. Suggested Means of Verification

2. Implementation Guidelines (for the practical implementation of the requirements)

- a. A clear explanation (explication) of achieving compliance with the Standard
- b. Audience: CEOs; Senior Managers and Programme Managers
- c. Size: Does matter, but MUST meet goal.

3. Training Materials

- a. Good Practice for Field Managers

4. References

Further discussion was held regarding the glossary:

- The full list was reviewed and reduced to relevant works linked to the Standard
- A suggestion was made that a page on acronyms was needed
- New words to be added post discussion on the revision of the Covenant and Glossary

Result: Further consultation suggested with members on first draft. Aim to complete by April 07. ESC members requested to feedback initial thoughts.

Draft Certification Process (v05 11 Dec 06)

The first draft to be reviewed was handed out at the ESC meeting with members requested to review and feedback to Sheryl.

Report Drafted by:
Sheryl Haw
HAP Standards Development Manager

21st December 2006