

## **Accountability Work Plan: Requirements and Guidelines**

**July 2009<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The HAP General Assembly approved the Accountability Work Plan Requirements in December 2003. While these remain in force and are reproduced in this document, subsequent developments in policy, services and products have required that the Accountability Work Plan Guidelines be updated.

## Summary of Accountability Work Plan Requirements

(i) **Period covered**

At least two years

(ii) **Four focus areas**

- Institutional commitment (Accountability Principles 1, 2 and 7)
- Accountability in the field (Principles 3, 4, 6 and 7)
- Monitoring and Evaluation (Principle 5)
- Addressing complaints (Principle 6)

Each focus area must have at least one related accountability goal.

(iii) **Compliance Assessment**

The workplan submitted to HAP International must also include either:

**Option (a):**

- The findings of an accountability self-assessment exercise, with notes for clarification if necessary.
- Goal sheets that set out activities the member agency will undertake in order to address the four focus areas, plus indicators and time-table
- Date for progress report to HAP International: one year after submission of the accountability work plan

**Option (b):**

- Agreed date for HAP Standard Baseline Analysis

In either case, the written endorsement of the accountability work plan by the Chief Executive Officer is required.

(iv) **Reporting Progress**

Annual progress report must be submitted to the HAP General Assembly

(v) **Independent Monitoring**

Implementation of the workplan must be externally verified through at least one method of independent monitoring. The options are:

- Peer Review – as agreed with the HAP Board
- Direct monitoring by the HAP Secretariat
- Certification against the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management

# 1. Introduction

The founders of HAP-International envisaged a humanitarian system “with a trusted and widely accepted accountability framework, that is transparent and accessible to all relevant parties<sup>2</sup>”. HAP was set up in 2003 as an independent not-for profit association, “to promote the highest standards of accountability through self-regulation by members linked by common respect for the rights and dignity of beneficiaries<sup>3</sup>”.

HAP-International pursues this vision and mission through five strategic objectives:

- 1) *To develop and maintain principles of accountability to beneficiaries through research, consultation, and collaboration.*
- 2) *To support members and potential members of HAP International in adhering to the principles of accountability to beneficiaries by providing training and advice.*
- 3) *To communicate, advocate, promote, and report on principles of accountability.*
- 4) *To monitor and report on implementation of HAP International’s principles of accountability to beneficiaries and to accredit its members accordingly.*
- 5) *To assist members in finding solutions where concerns or complaints are raised about them.<sup>4</sup>*

Full members of HAP International agree to be bound in general by the **requirements of membership** and in particular to act in accordance with HAP-International’s **Principles of Accountability** (Annex 1).

## **(a) Obligations of full-members of HAP International**

Full-members of HAP International are required to take five basic steps in meeting their membership obligations:

1. Commit to the HAP Principles of Accountability – the head of the agency will have made this pledge when applying for full membership of HAP.
2. Apply the HAP Principles of Accountability – this step is achieved through the design and implementation of a two-year Accountability Work Plan. This should be submitted to the HAP Secretariat within three months of full membership of HAP being approved.
3. Report on progress achieved in applying the HAP Principles of Accountability – full-members are required to submit an annual Accountability Work Plan implementation report to HAP’s General Assembly, usually held in April.
4. Demonstrate compliance with the HAP Principles of Accountability – this step can be taken through one of three options:
  - a) Peer review, as agreed with the HAP Board.
  - b) Direct monitoring by the HAP International Secretariat.
  - c) Certification against the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management<sup>5</sup>.
5. Review complaints concerning non-compliance with the HAP Principles of Accountability. Member agencies are required to report on the use of their complaints-handling systems to HAP International and, where appropriate, to use HAP International’s complaints handling procedure.

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<sup>2</sup> Article 3 HAP Statutes of Association – December 2003 - Vision

<sup>3</sup> Article 4 HAP Statutes of Association – December 2003 - Purpose

<sup>4</sup> Article 5 HAP Statutes of Association – December 2003 - Objectives

<sup>5</sup> Adopted by the HAP Board (January 2007) and General Assembly (April 2007)

## (b) What is the Accountability Work Plan?

- The Accountability Work Plan shows how a full-member intends to apply HAP's Principles of Accountability in its work.
- The Accountability Work Plan should be the product of thinking strategically, holistically, and in operational detail.
- The Accountability Work Plan should detail the accountability commitments the member intends to implement over the next two years, what it hopes to achieve in that time, and how it intends to monitor and report on progress towards its accountability targets.
- The Accountability Work Plan is also a key membership document, through which the agency communicates its accountability objectives, progress indicators and means of compliance verification.

## (c) Planning assumptions

- The guidance offered below is based upon the assumption that the Accountability Work Plan is an integrated element of the member's organisational quality management system. The way in which this integration is achieved should be made explicit both in the Accountability Work Plan and in the member's strategic plan.
- The Accountability Work Plan should be prepared within the member's overall planning procedure and fully integrated into its programme management procedures. If this is not the case, there is very little chance that humanitarian accountability will become a core part of the agency's organisational culture, and by extension, no real prospect that the agency will meet the obligations of its membership of HAP International.
- The process is as important as the document itself and, in line with HAP's philosophy, it should involve meaningful consultation with all key stakeholders, including the agency's humanitarian beneficiaries. If the agency's existing planning process does not involve such stakeholder consultation, it is very unlikely that an *ad hoc* humanitarian accountability work-planning process will be able to compensate for this general consultative deficit.
- Because every member agency is different, no two workplans will be the same. HAP does not prescribe a detailed planning procedure or format, although the HAP Secretariat and many of HAP's members can provide advice and support on known good practices.

## 2. Minimum Requirements

### (a) Period covered by the Accountability Work Plan

- The initial Accountability Work Plan must cover a period of **two years**.
- The Accountability Work Plan should be submitted to the Regulatory Services Director of the HAP Secretariat within three months of full-membership being approved, unless an extension of the deadline has been agreed.
- Towards the end of the first planning period, HAP-International will assess whether the member needs to prepare a follow-on Accountability Work Plan, for a further one or two year period.
  - A second Accountability Work Plan will not be requested from members that achieve HAP certification within the initial 2 year workplan, as the mid-term audit and re-certification audit processes provide sufficient independent verification of compliance with the agency's accountability and quality management improvement targets.
  - A second one or two-year Accountability Work Plan will normally be requested from agencies that choose to have their Accountability Work Plan monitored by peer review or by the HAP Secretariat.

## (b) Four focus areas

HAP International specifies **four focus areas**, which must be addressed in each workplan:

### 1. Institutional commitment to accountability (Accountability Principles 1, 2 and 7)

The Accountability Work Plan must specify goal(s) and activities that address the need for internal and institutional ownership of accountability and commitment to it.

### 2. Accountability in the field (Accountability Principles 3, 4, 6 and 7)

The Accountability Work Plan must specify field-based goal(s) and activities in one or more countries, or a region or sector, such as health, food, shelter etc. and/or in specific field projects.

### 3. Monitoring and evaluation (Accountability Principle 5)

The Accountability Work Plan must specify goal(s) and activities which ensure that monitoring and evaluation exercises include listening to and reporting back to beneficiaries.

### 4. Addressing complaints (Accountability Principle 6)

The Accountability Work Plan must specify field-based goal(s) and activities that give beneficiaries access to safe means of voicing any complaints they may have about the agency's work.

## (c) A minimum of one accountability goal per focus area

- Each member must set itself a minimum of one accountability goal plus associated activities for each of the four key areas.
- HAP will look for evidence in the Accountability Work Plan that members explicitly address the four key areas.
- While this constitutes a minimum requirement, HAP recommends that all the Principles of Accountability should be the object of one specific goal with related activities.

## (d) Compliance Assessment

HAP International requires members to submit an Accountability Work Plan within three months of their membership being approved. The workplan submitted to HAP International must also include:

### Either Option A:

- (1) The findings of the member agency's **accountability self-assessment**, with notes for clarification if necessary.
- (2) Any **indicators** for activities proposed: how will the member agency measure whether these activities have been undertaken and have had the impact it desired? (See Annex 5 for suggestions.)
- (3) The **timetable** for implementation of the Accountability Work Plan.
- (4) The **reporting date** by which the member will inform HAP International of its progress in meeting the goals set (this will normally be one year after submission of the initial Accountability Work Plan).

### Or Option B

- (1) Date of enrolment in the HAP certification scheme
- (2) Date agreed with the HAP Secretariat for the HAP Standard Baseline Analysis
- (3) Tentative date for HAP Standard Certification Audit

In either case, formal endorsement of the Accountability Work Plan by the member agency's Chief Executive Officer or equivalent is required.

## (f) Reporting Progress

Full-members commit to reporting progress achieved in the implementation of their Accountability Work Plan.

- Full-members of HAP International are required to submit an annual Accountability Work Plan implementation report to the HAP Secretariat, and expected to present this to the HAP General Assembly.
- Members can choose to report either against the accountability goals set out in their Accountability Work Plan or against the six benchmarks of the HAP Standard.
- Members are expected to share examples of good practice and challenges encountered in their application of the Principles of Accountability.
- The submission date for the annual accountability report is usually in February in order that it can be included in the annual Humanitarian Accountability Report for presentation to the HAP General Assembly, normally held in April.
- Specific submission deadlines and reporting formats are communicated to members by the HAP Secretariat each year.

## (g) Monitoring implementation

HAP International's distinctiveness and legitimacy derives in large part from the commitment made by all full members to allow external monitoring of their efforts to comply with the HAP Principles of Accountability. The development of the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management was undertaken to provide a single tool for assessing compliance with the HAP Principles of Accountability; and the HAP certification scheme was designed to provide independent compliance verification against the standard. However, while HAP International does not oblige full members to enrol in the certification scheme, it does require that at least one of the three means of external compliance verification recognised by HAP is undertaken at some time during the initial two-year Accountability Work Plan implementation period. The options are:

1. Peer review: Full-members that wish to undertake Accountability Work Plan compliance verification through a process of peer review may do so subject to approval of the terms of reference by the HAP Board.
2. Direct monitoring by the HAP Secretariat: Full-members that wish to make special arrangements for monitoring progress against their Accountability Work Plan may do so subject to an agreement with the HAP Secretariat on the approach to be used.
3. Certification against the HAP Standard: Full-members that opt for compliance verification against the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management may enrol in the HAP certification scheme. Enrolment itself involves a simple on-line registration of commitment to pursue certification. The next step is to arrange for a HAP Standard Baseline Analysis with the HAP Secretariat, during which the agency will agree an organisational development plan for achieving compliance with the HAP Standard, and a timetable for the certification audit.

The Accountability Work Plan should indicate which method of monitoring and compliance verification has been chosen. Agencies are advised to consult the HAP Secretariat and other HAP members on the respective advantages and disadvantages of these options.

### 3. Guidelines

#### (a) Who should be involved in developing the Accountability Work Plan?

In general, the member's own circumstances will determine who needs to be involved in developing the Accountability Work Plan. The suggestions below draw on examples of successful planning and strategic change in the sector.

- The member agency's Chief Executive Officer or equivalent, should retain overall responsibility for commissioning and approving the Accountability Work Plan.

In some agencies the Chief Executive Officer will also play an active part in developing it. Whether or not that is the case, the CEO must formally authorise and sanction the Accountability Work Plan. This ensures that the significance of humanitarian accountability and of being a member of HAP International is communicated within the agency and to its stakeholders.

- Development of the workplan should also involve other senior managers. This may mean, for example, those previously involved with HAP, and managers responsible for emergency planning and management, programmes, policy, monitoring/evaluation, personnel, training or communications.
- Field staff, national and international, should be involved in the process.

HAP International considers it essential to involve one or more national or regional managers in developing the workplan. Eventually, all the agency's field programmes will incorporate humanitarian accountability.

- Beneficiaries/affected persons or their representatives should be directly engaged in developing the workplan wherever possible. In the rare cases where this is not possible, the workplan should draw on the lessons of previous programme monitoring, participatory evaluation or stakeholder reviews. It should seek to involve beneficiaries in the assessment and revision of the workplan.

An outsider, for example, a consultant, may be useful in bringing together different points of view in the organisation while acting as a "neutral" broker between different interests.

- Other member agencies or staff from the HAP International Secretariat can advise the group developing the Accountability Work Plan and, in some cases, take part in the process. However, the member agency retains responsibility for drawing up the plan.
- Both **women and men** should be involved in developing the workplan.

#### (b) How much will it cost?

Costs and budgeting processes differ from agency to agency thus it is impossible to make a generally applicable estimate of costs. The scope of the workplan will be a major factor in determining how much development and implementation will cost.

**Direct costs** could include: travel to meetings by staff based in different parts of the world; a day added to a regional workshop in order to present accountability to field staff; cost of staff hired expressly to work on accountability or local consultants called on to assess beneficiaries' views of the agency; developing website links to accountability initiatives; holding a workshop with partners in the field.

**Indirect costs** could include a proportion of salaries for staff seconded to work on accountability and the workplan; a proportion of communication, office and other overheads.

Member agencies can **share costs** through collaboration and inter-agency work. For example, member agencies working together to implement an Accountability Work Plan in a single country or region could share the costs of a workshop or of consultation with beneficiaries.

## (c) How long will it take to develop the Accountability Work Plan?

Those developing and implementing the workplan need adequate time to do the job properly. HAP International anticipates that development of the workplan will take up to three months and therefore the agency needs to be prepared to begin the process almost as soon as its membership application has been approved. The Accountability Work Plan will require regular review during that time and afterwards it should remain a “living” document and an ongoing process that is useful to the agency in improving its humanitarian accountability.

## (d) Steps in developing the Accountability Work Plan

Most members of HAP International will already have experience of adopting new internal or sectoral initiatives. HAP International recommends that the process by which the workplan is adopted includes the following steps.

### Step 1

Bring together an accountability **workgroup** representing those described above in 3 (a) in order to start the process. One person should be designated with the responsibility for leading preparation of the workplan and for liaison with HAP International. Ensure that this group includes a person with designated responsibility for leading, facilitating or managing the member’s organisation-wide planning process.

### Step 2

Ensure the accountability workgroup shares a **common frame of reference**: organise one or more discussion sessions with the workgroup to reach a common understanding of concepts used within HAP International, such as *accountability, self-regulation, certification etc.* The Guide to the HAP Standard includes a helpful glossary.

### Step 3

**Assess** what the agency is already doing in terms of accountability, particularly to beneficiaries. The member will almost certainly be implementing existing goals and activities related to accountability. The Accountability Work Plan can include, build on and reinforce other existing goals and activities related to accountability, whether these are specific to your organisation or part of your organisation commitment to inter-agency initiatives.

HAP International suggests a tool that can help members assess what they are already doing in terms of accountability. See Annexes 2 for suggestions on self-assessment. A SWOT analysis may also be used as an alternative or in addition to the self-assessment, to identify accountability strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### Step 4

On the basis of the self-assessment, set accountability **goals** for your organisation that will help it act in accordance with the HAP International Principles of Accountability and address the four key areas (see page 5). If the result is too many goals, decide what the priorities should be. See Annex 3 for suggestions on setting and prioritising goals.

### Step 5

Specify the **activities**, both at head office and with beneficiaries in the field that the agency will conduct to meet its accountability goals. Communicate these activities internally and externally as necessary in order to secure wide commitment. See Annex 4 for suggestions on activities.

### Step 6

Consider the **resources** that the agency will need to deliver its workplan. These will include personnel, time, money, and support from HAP International (see examples of HAP International support below).

### Step 7

Set **reporting dates** for the accountability workgroup to review progress internally, including to the Chief Executive Officer.

### Step 8

**Share** the Accountability Work Plan widely with colleagues for information and/or comments and reactions.

### Step 9

Secure endorsement and **authorisation** of the Accountability Work Plan from the Chief Executive Officer or Chair and send a copy of the workplan to HAP International within three months of joining.

## (e) Support from the Secretariat

The Secretariat of HAP-International offers a range of services to members on a preferential cost-sharing basis. Details of the purpose, format and charges for the following services are available on the HAP website at <http://www.hapinternational.org/projects.aspx>.

- (1) Introduction to Humanitarian Accountability
- (2) New Member's Induction
- (3) [Developing an Accountability Work Plan](#)
- (4) Designing a Humanitarian Accountability Framework
- (5) HAP Standard Baseline Analysis
- (6) HAP Standard Guided Self-assessment
- (7) HAP Standard Certification Audit
- (8) HAP Standard Certification Mid-Term Monitoring Audit
- (9) Workshop on Developing Complaints and Response Mechanisms
- (10) Workshop on Management of Complaints and Investigation Mechanisms
- (11) Building Safer Organisations Investigation Learning Programme

While many of these services may be useful for members in designing and implementing their Accountability Work Plan, item (3) offers specialised support for senior staff with designated responsibility for preparing their agency's Accountability Work Plan. This service consists of a 2-3 hour briefing session at the headquarters provided by staff from the Secretariat and subsequent feedback on the draft Accountability Work Plan.

# ANNEXES

# ANNEX 1

## HAP International Principles of Accountability

### **1) Commitment to humanitarian standards and rights**

Members state their commitment to respect and foster humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries

### **2) Setting standards and building capacity**

Members set a framework of accountability<sup>6</sup> to their stakeholders

Members set and periodically review their standards and performance indicators, and revise them if necessary.

Members provide appropriate training in the use and implementation of standards.

### **3) Communication**

Members inform, and consult with, stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries and staff, about the standards adopted, programmes to be undertaken and mechanisms available for addressing concerns.

### **4) Participation in programmes**

Members involve beneficiaries in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and report to them on progress, subject only to serious operational constraints.

### **5) Monitoring and reporting on compliance**

Members involve beneficiaries and staff when they monitor and revise standards.

Members regularly monitor and evaluate compliance with standards, using robust processes.

Members report at least annually to stakeholders, including beneficiaries, on compliance with standards. Reporting may take a variety of forms.

### **6) Addressing complaints**

Members enable beneficiaries and staff to report complaints and seek redress safely.

### **7) Implementing partners**

Members are committed to the implementation of these principles if and when working through implementation partners.

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<sup>6</sup> Framework of accountability includes standards, quality standards, principles, policies, guidelines, training and other capacity-building work, etc. The framework must include measurable performance indicators. Standards may be internal to the organisation or they may be collective, e.g. Sphere or People in Aid.

## ANNEX 2

### Organisational Self-assessment (Step 3)

Before implementing any kind of plan, it is necessary to understand where we are now and the situation in which we have to work. This is crucial in identifying the accountability goals we need to address.

Members of HAP International may already be implementing goals and activities related to accountability. For instance, they may have begun to adopt the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, the People In Aid Code, Sphere Standards, or ALNAP recommendations. The Accountability Work Plan should include, build on, and reinforce other accountability goals and activities, whether these are specific to a single organisation or part of a commitment to inter-agency initiatives.

Below is a possible checklist for use in a self-assessment. The checklist is intended to promote discussion and to help the agency to understand their current status against the HAP Accountability Principles, rather than to provide a detailed quantitative analysis. Additional questions for consideration are suggested for each of the Accountability Principles. All members of the workgroup should be involved in answering the questions, then comparing and discussing the answers. Conclusions on status (weaknesses, areas of improvement, etc) and notes of clarification should be recorded for each Accountability Principle before setting and prioritising accountability goals (Step 4, see Annex 3).

#### I. Accountability Principle One

Members state their commitment to respect and foster humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>No/Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Yes/Always</b>

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Do we have clear, written mission and/or vision statements that reflect and promote the rights of the people we serve?					
Do our written mission and/or vision statements reflect and promote accountability towards the people we serve?					
Do our written mission and/or vision statements, and/or policies commit the agency to respect and promote international humanitarian principles, such as impartiality and neutrality?					
Do we communicate our organisational mission, principles and commitment to accountability to staff at all levels?					
Do we communicate our organisational mission, principles and commitment to accountability to our beneficiaries?					
Do we communicate organisational mission, principles and commitment to accountability to other stakeholders?					
Do our staff uphold the commitment to accountability reflected in our mission statement, goals and principles?					
Is a commitment to accountability reflected in the day-to-day activities of our staff?					
Do we actively incorporate a rights-based approach in designing and implementing humanitarian programmes?					

## **Additional questions**

1. What is your mission statement? When did you last review it? How?
2. How does your mission statement express organisational accountability?
3. What are the core principles and values your organisation nurtures and promotes?
4. How often do you discuss these principles and values? Where and how?
5. To what extent do you feel these values and principles influence the behaviour of staff in their work?
6. What are your organisation's affiliations with other networks or national bodies (e.g. Interaction, ACFID, etc.)?

## **II. Accountability Principle Two**

Members set a framework of accountability to their stakeholders. Members set and periodically review standards and performance indicators, and revise them if necessary. Members provide appropriate training in the use and implementation of standards.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
**No/Never**              **Rarely**                      **Sometimes**              **Often**                      **Yes/Always**

### **Quality standards**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does our organisation have clear programme standards, its own or inter-agency ones?					
Are these standards, their current status and relevant indicators clearly stated in a framework of accountability?					
Do we periodically monitor, review and revise the implementation of these standards?					
Does our organisation have established guidelines and criteria on selection and distribution of relief goods and services?					
Are copies of our organisation's standards and policies available to all staff, in all programme locations?					
Are our staff trained in the use and implementation of standards and indicators?					
Do we take active measures to monitor compliance with our standards?					
Are our partner agencies informed about the organisation's policies and standards?					
Do our partner agencies receive copies of the organisation's policies and standards?					
Are our partner agencies trained in the use and implementation of our standards and policies?					

### **Additional questions**

1. What accountability commitments (agency-specific of inter-agency) has the agency made?
2. Who has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of each of these commitments?
3. What are your different stakeholder groups and how do your accountability commitments relate to each of these groups?
4. What resources do you allocate to implement your standards?

### **Human Resources**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does our organisation have clear systems in place to hold staff accountable for their areas of responsibility?					
Do we openly share information, experience and concerns in staff meetings?					
Do we maintain a transparent and fair staff selection process?					
Do all newly recruited staff receive induction training in organisational principles, policies and procedures?					
Does the organisation have a code of conduct for staff?					
Does the organisation provide guidance on standards of staff behaviour towards beneficiaries, including children and women?					
Does the organisation's code of conduct prohibit sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries?					
Are the consequences of breaching the code clear and linked to disciplinary procedures?					
Do agreements with partner agencies include a clear requirement for compliance with our organisation's codes and policies?					

### **Additional questions**

1. How many field staff, expatriate and host country staff, have you trained in the last 12 months? What percentage of your field staff does this represent?
2. What was the focus of training? Where did training take place?
3. In the last 12 months, how many staff have been recruited into the organisation? How were recruitment and induction processes organised?
4. To what extent does the staff training and development programme improve accountability to the organisation's stakeholders?
5. Are there clear lines of accountability (individual, group, and organizational)?
6. Does the workforce reflect equitable gender and diversity policies?
7. Is fairness evident in selection and promotion?

### **III. Accountability Principle Three**

Members inform and consult with all stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries and staff, about the standards adopted, programmes to be undertaken and mechanisms available for addressing concerns.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>No/Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Yes/Always</b>

QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
Do we inform beneficiary communities and other stakeholders of our objectives, plans and the implementation process?					
Do we inform our stakeholders about our accountability commitments?					
Do we communicate objectives, plans and implementation process to all members of the community, not just its representatives?					
Do we inform communities about their rights and entitlements in a language and format that they understand?					
Do we have an established system and process in place to listen to the ideas and concerns of communities with whom we work?					
Do we always select project beneficiaries on the basis of a transparent process?					
Do we clarify our mutual roles and responsibilities with other project stakeholders?					
Is the beneficiary selection process communicated and well understood by all members of the community?					
Do we regularly consult, coordinate and work in partnership with other agencies to ensure effective distribution of relief materials?					
Do we regularly share the knowledge gained through our humanitarian programme with colleagues from other organisations?					
Does our organisation involve local authorities in designing and implementing the programme?					
Do our programme implementation strategies ensure adequate ownership by beneficiaries of the programme?					
Do we facilitate the raising of questions, concerns and complaints by beneficiaries and their leaders throughout the project cycle?					
Does our organisation actively inform the general public about its programmes and services?					

### **Additional questions**

1. Who are the most important stakeholders of your humanitarian programme? How do you interact with them?
2. How do your stakeholders, particularly the beneficiary community, gain ownership and control of the project?
3. What further steps can you take to enhance community ownership of the programme?

### **IV. Accountability Principle Four**

Members involve beneficiaries in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and report to them on progress, subject only to serious operational constraints.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

**1**                                      **2**                                      **3**                                      **4**                                      **5**  
**No/Never**                              **Rarely**                                      **Sometimes**                                      **Often**                                      **Yes/Always**

QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
Does our organisation have clear policies and standards on participation by beneficiaries in humanitarian programmes?					
Do we have a clear procedure for the identification and selection of beneficiary and of their representatives?					

QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
Do beneficiaries participate in the planning or design of our field activities?					
Do beneficiaries participate in the implementation of our field activities?					
Do beneficiaries participate in the monitoring of our field activities?					
Do beneficiaries participate in the evaluation of our field activities?					
Do women derive equitable benefit from our activities?					
Do children derive equitable benefit from our activities?					
Do disabled people derive equitable benefit from our activities?					
Has our organisation taken steps to increase participation by beneficiaries?					
Do other stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in programme development?					

## V. Accountability Principle Five

Members involve beneficiaries and staff when they monitor and revise standards. Members regularly monitor and evaluate compliance with standards, using robust processes. Members report at least annually to stakeholders, including beneficiaries, on compliance with standards. Reporting may take a variety of forms.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
**No/Never**              **Rarely**                      **Sometimes**              **Often**                      **Yes/Always**

QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
Does our organisation have policies or standards on evaluation that include a strict requirement to seek the views of beneficiaries?					
Does our organization solicit input from the community to evaluate whether its mission and activities provide benefit to the community?					
Do we have well-defined indicators to assess the impact of our humanitarian programme?					
Do we measure the impact of our programme and services at community level?					
Are arrangements in place in all field offices to monitor compliance with the organisation's policies and standards?					
Do we share the findings of monitoring and evaluation with all staff?					
Do we share the findings of monitoring and evaluation with beneficiaries?					
Do we modify the way we work depending on findings of data collection, evaluation and analysis?					
Does our organisation have a disclosure policy where external evaluations are concerned?					
Are our evaluations placed in the public domain?					

### Additional questions

1. What are the important characteristics of a good monitoring system?
2. How do you monitor and evaluate your humanitarian programme?
3. Which areas do you need to improve? Why?
4. What monitoring tools can you use to improve your organisation's accountability?

## VI. Accountability Principle Six

Members enable beneficiaries and staff to report complaints and seek redress safely.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

**1**                                      **2**                                      **3**                                      **4**                                      **5**  
**No/Never**                              **Rarely**                                      **Sometimes**                                      **Often**                                      **Yes/Always**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Do we have a clear, formal and transparent system in place to handle beneficiaries' complaints and concerns?					
Do we consult with stakeholders about what is the most appreciate ways for them to raise their complaints and concerns?					
Do our beneficiaries know about our complaint handling system and procedures?					
Do we have a clear, formal and transparent system in place to handle staff complaints and concerns?					
Does our organisation have a whistle-blower protection policy?					
Do staff know about the complaint handling system and the whistle-blower policy?					
Do we have any informal systems in place to handle beneficiary and staff complaints?					
Do we respond in a timely manner to complaints and concerns raised?					
Do we have the expertise to investigate allegations of abuse, including sexual abuse, and corruption?					
Do we have a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions and comments from all staff members?					
Are there clear procedures in place to address allegations of abuse?					
Are there designated persons in all field offices and at head office whose role and responsibilities clearly include complaints handling?					
Are beneficiaries provided with information on where to go if they suffer sexual abuse?					
Are all complaints recorded and responses monitored?					
Are all allegations of abuse recorded and responses monitored?					
Does management monitor beneficiary complaints handling processes?					
Do we review our complaints handling systems to see if they need to be changed following feedback from the community?					

### Additional questions

1. What is your definition of a valid complaint?
2. How do you ensure safety of complainants?
3. Over the last 12 months, what types of complaint did you receive from the beneficiary community? How frequent were they?
4. How did you respond to complaints received? How to you monitor that complaints are handled according to stated procedures?

## VII. Accountability Principle Seven

Members are committed to the implementation of these principles if and when working through implementation partners.

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
**No/Never**              **Rarely**                      **Sometimes**              **Often**                      **Yes/Always**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Do we communicate our accountability commitments, including the HAP Principles of Accountability to our partners?					
Do we discuss with our partners the implications of these commitments to them?					
Do we identify how we can strengthen partners' capacity to implement these accountability commitments unless they have stronger/better policies in place themselves?					
Do we allocate relevant resources to assist partners to implement accountability commitments?					
Do we provide training in the application of any policy, code of conduct or inter-agency codes/standards to partner agency staff?					
Do we jointly monitor partner agencies' compliance with policies and codes?					

### Other – Financial Accountability

#### Questions

1. Do you meet the requirements for financial accountability in the countries where you are registered?
2. What are the financial practices, rules, procedures and manuals you use to regulate financial management?
3. Are the processes below widely known, little known, written or unwritten within your organisation?

<b>Process</b>	<b>Widely known</b>	<b>Little known</b>	<b>Written</b>	<b>Unwritten</b>
Budgeting				
Expenditure planning				
Financial control				
Purchasing				

Tick the answer you think best describes the situation in your agency.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
**No/Never**              **Rarely**                      **Sometimes**              **Often**                      **Yes/Always**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Do we involve all departments in the preparation of budget?					
Do we conduct all financial transactions in a transparent and accountable way?					
Do our internal control systems ensure appropriate utilization of funds?					
Are all financial discrepancies resolved in a transparent way?					
Do we provide accurate financial reports to donors and other stakeholders to ensure financial accountability?					
Do we provide independent audit reports to donors, government and the public to ensure financial transparency?					
Do our procurement practices ensure effective and efficient utilisation of funds?					

## ANNEX 3

### Setting and prioritising accountability goals (Step 4)

The Accountability Work Plan should specify the goals that will help the new HAP member agency achieve and demonstrate substantial improvement in accountability.

The goals should be consistent with the HAP International Accountability Principles (see Annex 1) and a minimum of one goal must be set for each of the four focus areas (institutional commitment to accountability; accountability in the field; monitoring and evaluation; addressing complaints).

The goals should be based on the findings of the accountability self-assessment (Step 3). They are the answer to the question, 'Bearing in mind our organisation's current accountability situation, what do we want to achieve over the next two or three years?'

#### **a) Identifying goals – Suggested Exercise<sup>7</sup>**

In your workgroup, you may choose to follow the steps in the following exercise to identify your accountability goals.

- Based on your self-assessment, ask each member of the accountability workgroup to consider what the broad priorities should be for the agency over the next two years.
- Ask them to consider this *individually*, and then to write their strategic goals clearly on separate Post-it notes. Allow about 20 minutes for this.
- Ask everyone to stick their Post-it notes on the wall, a board, or a sheet of flipchart paper so that everyone in the group can see them easily.
- You'll find that a number of common topics and themes emerge. Cluster the Post-its together according to topic.
- Now, as a group, decide on *one* goal for each topic area. Within each area, some goals will be more specific and detailed than others.
- When you have finished this part of the exercise, check the balance of external and internal goals. If you haven't identified any "internal" goals, it could be that you're not paying enough attention to maintaining the organisation and its staff. Go back to the notes and conclusions from the self-assessment. Have you identified all your weaknesses? Do your goals address them?
- On the other hand, if you have more internal than external goals, are you too inward looking? Have you thought enough about your beneficiaries and other stakeholders? Again, go back to your self-assessment conclusions and see if you need to amend them. Look for issues you haven't addressed through your goals.
- Next, reference each of your goals to each of the Accountability Principles. You may have identified several goals for the same Accountability Principle and no goals for others.
- Remember that the goals will enable your organisation to continuously improve its accountability. Check that you set at least one goal for each of the four focus areas required in an Accountability Work Plan.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Kate Gilmore, Amnesty International Operational Planning Workbook, 2003

## b) Examples of accountability goals

Possible goals	Accountability Principle
1. To review existing mechanisms for communicating our organisation's mission and principles	One – Commitment to humanitarian standards and rights
2. To draft and approve a whistle blower policy for the organisation	Two – Setting standards and building capacity
3. To review our Code of Conduct to ensure it meets IASC principles. To work towards prohibiting sexual relations between staff and beneficiaries regardless of beneficiary age.	Two – Setting standards and building capacity
4. To train all field staff in the use and implementation of our child protection policies	Two – Setting standards and building capacity
5. To develop internal communication flows so that all staff know about all humanitarian standards, internal or external, that we follow.	Three – Communication
6. To develop and implement information flows for beneficiaries in all our operations in South Asia	Three – Communication
7. To establish a consortium of international and local agencies to implement information flows for beneficiaries in South Asia	Three – Communication
8. To increase the level of participation by beneficiaries in the design and evaluation of all our programmes	Four – Participation in programmes
9. To develop an investigation policy and investigation capacity for all our operations	Six – Addressing complaints
10. To set up a complaints mechanism for our operations in Central Africa and South Asia	Six – Addressing complaints
11. To review all contracts with partner agencies to ensure these meet our accountability requirements	Seven – Working with partners

## c) Prioritizing goals: Suggested Exercise

You may find that you now have too many goals. There isn't a right number, but if you end up with more than nine or ten goals, look first to make sure that they are sufficiently broad but also do-able.

If you consider that you have too many goals, there may be a danger of being over-ambitious, and stretching the organisation beyond its capacity. So the next stage is to prioritise them. The priority setting steps can take place after the assessment and analysis or after the goal setting.

- Write the goals up clearly on a flip chart.
- Give everyone in the workgroup coloured stick-on dots. The facilitator will decide the number of dots, to be lower than the number of goals. For examples, if the group has identified 15 goals, you may give each participant only 10 coloured stick-on dots.
- Ask each of the members of the workgroup to allocate a dot to each of their preferred goals.
- You then count the number of dots for each goal. It's likely that some goals will have received no dots, or very few and you may be able to immediately discard these.
- Discuss in the group the goals that received highest score. You may also need to discuss the goals you are discarding, to make sure that they will not affect the remaining goals.
- You should now have a list of goals, which your workgroup are willing and interested to achieve.

## ANNEX 4

### Accountability activities (Step 5)

To make a goal achievable, we need to describe specific and realistic actions that we will undertake to achieve it. These actions could be projects or freestanding activities.

Members that have opted for the Accountability Work Plan Option A (see page 5) must also identify indicators for the proposed activities: *how will we measure whether these activities have been undertaken?* In addition, and even though it is not mandatory, we encourage you to discuss the expected outcome of the proposed activity (or alternatively of the proposed goal).

Below are some possible exercises and examples of activities. Examples of goal sheets are available in Annex 5.

#### a) Examples of accountability activities

Take each of your goals and list below what activities will help you work towards achieving the goal in Year 1 and Year 2 of the Accountability Work Plan. Create as many goal sheets as you need. Below are some examples for your reference.

Goal no.	Possible goal	Accountability Principle
4	To train all field staff in the use and implementation of our child protection policies	Two – Setting standards and building capacity

Activity no.	Year 1 activity	Indicators
4.1	Draw up training timetable for all field offices <u>within the next 3 months</u>	Consultation process and actual document produced
4.2.	Request assistance from child-rights agency and, in particular, access to their training modules	Training modules used
4.3	Conduct training for senior managers and field officers in HQ, and Asian regional offices, and evaluate.	Training sessions undertaken Evaluation Reports prepared
4.4	Conduct training for senior managers and field officers in the remaining of our operations.	Training sessions undertaken Evaluation Reports prepared
4.5	Include briefing and training on child Protection Policies within all induction programs for all new staff, volunteers or paid, local or international	New Induction Package available

Goal no.	Possible goal	Accountability Principle
6	To develop and implement information flows for beneficiaries in all our operations in South Asia	Three – Communication

Activity no.	Year 1 activity	Indicators
6.1	Commission external report on how beneficiaries in region see the agency and its humanitarian assistance. To be completed within 4 months in time for regional workshop.	Contract for consultants. Reports.
6.2	To review findings during regional workshop and in all field operations, and develop approaches to address information flows to beneficiaries and the image of the agency	Workshops Workshops Report
6.3	To produce posters about standards and entitlements in local languages for field offices and project sites. Process to start within <u>3 months</u> and be rolled out over <u>24 months</u> .	Posters
6.4	To monitor or evaluate impact of posters	Evaluation report

## b) Accountability and the project cycle or country programme: exercise<sup>8</sup>

**Time-frame:** A 1½ or 2 day workshop is likely to be needed if participants have not previously taken part in accountability training. The exercises below help participants to contextualise accountability at strategic and practical levels.

### DAY ONE

#### *Morning*

**Introduction/awareness raising:** Include briefing on the definitions and components of accountability in the humanitarian sector, an introduction to accountability tools and approaches and lessons learned from the implementation of the Principles of Accountability and the HAP Standard at other locations.

#### *Afternoon*

**Goal setting for relief work or country programme:** Brainstorming with all participants on their operational goals for relief work or country programme. The group explores whether current project or programme goals reflect the agency's commitment to accountability, or whether goals need to be rephrased.

Take one or more programme/project goals and discuss whether they are formulated in such a way that commitment to accountability comes through.

#### Discuss Goal 1

“To be the lead agency in assisting refugees by providing food and non-food items. “

- Does this goal include a reference, formally or informally, to accountability?
- Should this goal include accountability?
- Can it be rephrased so that accountability to beneficiaries becomes a component of the goal?

<sup>8</sup> Based on a 2 day workshop conducted in Amman by Agnès Callamard and Tahmina Rahman, March 2003

## Rephrase Goal 1

“To be the lead agency responsible for accountable provision of food and non-food items to refugees.”

or

“To be the lead agency in assisting refugees by providing food and non-food items.

To ensure accountability to refugees is implemented at every possible stage of our assistance.”

## DAY TWO

**Project or programme cycle:** Small group work to consider how issues of accountability could be addressed throughout the different stages of the project/programme cycle.

Which key measures would ensure accountability to beneficiaries and communities in assessing, designing, implementing, monitoring and phasing out of humanitarian response?

Below are four examples based on group work in Amman in March 2003.

### Assessment Phase

Key activities in the assessment	Measures to ensure accountability to beneficiaries and communities
Prioritising needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consult communities, officials, other aid agency staff;</li> <li>➤ Clarify your role by writing official letters to stakeholders;</li> </ul>
Meeting key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inform communities of decisions taken;</li> <li>➤ Take minutes from meetings with stakeholders to be shared and distributed;</li> <li>➤ Facilitate, promote and coordinate meetings that include all stakeholders;</li> </ul>
Meeting beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organise community based meetings and meetings with community leaders;</li> <li>➤ Share aims and objectives and plans;</li> <li>➤ Request for opinions on needs and priorities;</li> </ul>
Site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Proper introductions during site visits,</li> <li>➤ Explain objectives;</li> <li>➤ Ensure proper reporting including photos, videos, minutes;</li> </ul>
Verifying resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ask (local) communities what resources are available and what their contribution could be to the project;</li> <li>➤ Consulting other agencies in order to coordinate, to avoid duplication and facilitate sharing of records;</li> </ul>

### Design Phase

Key activities in designing assistance	Measures to ensure accountability to beneficiaries and communities
Identifying target group and area of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet target group;</li> <li>➤ Base data on assessment;</li> </ul>
Identifying agency resources, human and financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communicate with NGOs</li> </ul>
Identify target group resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet target group</li> </ul>
Categorizing the target group – children, mothers, undernourished, disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communicate with beneficiaries, build trust;</li> </ul>
Writing proposals, defining objectives and indicators, activities, work plan, participatory approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Design mechanisms to deal with complaints.</li> </ul>

## Implementation Phase

Key activities in implementing assistance	Measures to ensure accountability to beneficiaries and communities
Reviewing activity, timeline, Recruitment	➤ With community groups and representatives;
Training	➤ Advertise positions including in local papers;
Procurement, purchasing	➤ Training of Trainers; ➤ Training in complaints handling, listening
Setting-up distribution systems, registration etc	➤ Public tenders, advertising and reporting to ensure transparency;
Distribution of assistance	➤ Issue coupons
Amendments, meetings, consultations	➤ Identify leaders; ➤ Involve beneficiaries in distribution process; ➤ Set-up complaints system, listening and feedback to beneficiary;
	➤ Ensure complaints listening and feedback throughout the process;

## Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

Key Activities in monitoring and evaluation of assistance	Measures to ensure accountability to beneficiaries and communities
Define monitoring systems/methods	➤ Include tools and mechanisms to listen to complaints;
Identify monitors and training	➤ Train monitors in use of tools to listen to complaints and respond to them;
Report regularly	➤ Report back to complainants and/or beneficiaries;
Take action/feedback	➤ Provide individual redress and take necessary actions for organisational change;
Define TOR for evaluator	➤ Include suggestions from beneficiaries in drafting TOR;
Select Evaluators	➤ Ensure that evaluators have skills and/or awareness of beneficiary accountability issues and methods
Select methodology	➤ Participatory methodology;
Conduct evaluation	➤ Ensure beneficiary participation;
Report and disseminate	➤ Report and disseminate findings to beneficiaries;
Management decisions	➤ Report and disseminate management decisions to beneficiaries based on the evaluation.

## Comments from the facilitators

- The contents of the tables contain raw data from the workshop;
- The contents are indicative of the extent of the participants' learning from the workshop on Day 1 about accountability principles, framework, tools and methodologies;
- Participants indicated they intended to use the practical measures that they identified.

## ANNEX 5

### Goal sheets – examples

HAP members that have opted for Accountability Work Plan Option A (see page 5) may find the examples below of particular relevance. These are goal sheets that include activities, indicators, timeframe, location, responsibility, and status for each activity.

Goal no.	Possible goal	Accountability Principle
4	To train all field staff in the use and implementation of our gender policies, including prohibition of sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries	Two – Setting standards, building capacity

Activity no.	Activities – Year 1	Indicators	Month	Location	Lead	Status
4.1	Draw up training timetable for all field offices within next 3 months	e.g. actual document	Jan	HQ and regions	Person X	Ended
4.2	Request assistance from women organisations and in particular access to their training modules and/or trainers	e.g. training modules in use.	Feb	HQ and regions	Person X	Ongoing
4.3.	Recruit trainers locally and at HQ	Contracts	Apr-Jun	HQ/Asia	Training Office	To start
4.4	Conduct training for senior managers and field officers in London HQ, and Asian regional offices	Training sessions	Jun	HQ/Asia	Training Office	To start
4.5	Review modules and approaches on the basis of feedback.	Evaluation report Second draft	Jul	HQ	Training Office	
4.6	Conduct training for senior managers and field officers in the remaining of our operations.	Training sessions	Aug	All sites	Training Office	
4.7	Include briefing and training on Gender Sensitive Policies within all induction programs for all new staff, volunteers or paid, local or international	New Induction package	Sept	HQ	Training Office and Human Resources	

Goal no.	Possible goal	Accountability Principle
6	To develop and implement an information strategy for beneficiaries in all our operations in Africa Region	Three – Communication

Activity no.	Activities – Year 1	Indicators	Month	Location	Lead	Status
6.1	Commission external report on how beneficiaries in region see the agency and its humanitarian assistance.	Actual report	April, in time for regional workshop	Zimbabwe and Zambia	Person A	To start
6.2	To review findings during regional workshop, addressing information flows to beneficiaries and reviewing agency image.	Workshop report and recommendations	June – Aug	Zimbabwe and Zambia	Persons B and C	To start
6.3	To produce posters on standards and entitlements in local languages for field offices and project sites.	Poster design	Process to be rolled out over <u>24 months</u> starting August	HQ, Zimbabwe and Zambia	Person D	To start
6.4	To review camp management in two large camps of the region to identify opportunities for information sessions on entitlements and standards.	Meetings Reports of Findings	Sept – Nov.	Zambia	Person E	To start
6.5	To implement information sessions on entitlements in camps	Sessions held Different target groups, etc.	Process to be rolled over 24 months starting Dec	Zambia	Person E, D, etc.	To start

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