

Appendix A:

The HAP Standard: Draft Version 3 (27 July 2006)

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
“making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries”

Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard

Draft – Version 3
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Associated Members: ACFID; CDP; Danida; DFID; Swedish SIDA

The Manual of Humanitarian Accountability

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Foreword

Humanitarian agencies exercise considerable financial, technical and logistical power in their mission to save lives and reduce suffering. Accountability is the means through which this power can be exercised with responsibility and legitimacy.

Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear upon its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Humanitarian accountability therefore involves managing the quality of humanitarian action in order that it respects the needs, concerns, capacities and disposition of people whose welfare and safety is adversely affected by armed conflict and other calamitous events.

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) was founded upon the belief that relief agencies should be accountable for the quality of their work to those people designated as “intended humanitarian beneficiaries”. This is not to say that humanitarian agencies must always achieve the highest quality standards in their programmes or that they can be held responsible for suffering properly attributable to the actions of others. However, while acknowledging the primary responsibility of states for protecting their citizens, humanitarian agencies should, within the constraints that limit access and resources, be accountable for the quality of their work to those they choose to assist.

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership was founded in 2003 to promote voluntary compliance with HAP’s Accountability Principles, designed to promote this vision. To achieve a reasonable degree of consistency and equity in compliance monitoring, complaints-handling and quality assurance certification it was necessary to develop a set of relevant, measurable, actionable and affordable performance benchmarks, set within an explicit framework of shared values that define the quality of humanitarian action for those seeking to comply with the HAP Accountability Principles.

Because the founding members of HAP did not incorporate a statement of humanitarian values in the Accountability Principles, the Humanitarian Accountability Covenant has been developed to provide a simple statement of the basic values against which HAP certified agencies wish to be held to account. These are adapted from various sources including the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Movement, the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes, and the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, none of which were completely suitable in their current form for immediate application in the HAP monitoring, complaints-handling and quality assurance systems.

The HAP Standard is the operational expression of the principles set out in the Humanitarian Accountability Covenant. The Standard includes a set of quality management performance benchmarks for assessing compliance with the HAP Accountability Principles, and upon which monitoring, complaints-handling and quality assurance certification is based. Where the term “shall” is employed, the benchmark is a requirement. Where the term “should” is used, the benchmark is recommended.

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In addition, the HAP Standard requires a declaration of agency-specific interests and policies that may have a direct bearing upon the welfare and safety of the intended beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Quality assurance certification under the HAP Standard will be open to those organisations that fulfil the qualifying norms described in the Covenant.

The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant

1.1 Introduction

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership’s Accountability and Quality Management Standard is rooted in a set of common values that drive and shape the humanitarian work of its subscribers and against which they have voluntarily elected to be held to account. The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant embodies these core values in a hierarchy of principles, beginning with the fundamental principle of humanity. It is against these guiding principles that HAP certified organisations elect to be held accountable. Because the contexts in which humanitarian action takes place are complex, difficult and sometimes hostile, and the human and financial resources at the disposal of the humanitarian community are often inadequate, humanitarian organisations frequently face stark choices between bad and worse options, where their aspirations to uphold the highest standards of humanitarian action are impossible to realise due to constraints beyond their control. However, for humanitarians the moral obligation to express solidarity with those living in distress and suffering is an imperative that prevails even in situations when an ideal response is impossible. The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership recognises that in such circumstances the best possible humanitarian action will be flawed, but still worthwhile. Therefore, in such circumstances accountability may be expressed in the form of an explanation for decisions and actions that can account for operational shortcomings. In practice, an organisation that can demonstrate that it abandoned a lower-level humanitarian principle as a necessary condition for complying with a higher-level principle will be adjudged to have acted in good faith and in accordance with the spirit of the Humanitarian Accountability Covenant.

1.2 Preamble:

While:

- *recognising* that the essence of humanitarian accountability is to respect the needs, concerns, capacities and disposition of those we seek to assist, and to be answerable for our actions and decisions to interested parties, especially disaster survivors;
- *respecting* International Humanitarian Law, international refugee law, human rights law and other relevant international treaties and national laws;
- *reaffirming* the primary duty of states to protect and assist citizens in times of armed conflict and calamity;
- *acknowledging* the duty of care concerning the well-being of intended beneficiaries incumbent upon all those engaging in humanitarian action;
- *asserting* the right of all in need to receive humanitarian assistance or protection on the basis of their informed consent;
- *noting* that operational constraints beyond our control can adversely affect our performance,

We commit to being accountable for our actions and decisions affecting our humanitarian work within the hierarchy of humanitarian principles and related performance benchmarks set out below.

1.3 Hierarchy of humanitarian principles

Organisations seeking to comply with the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard commit themselves to uphold the principles of:

1. Humanity: the right of all persons to give and to receive relief from suffering, distress and indignity.
2. Impartiality: the provision of humanitarian assistance on the basis of need alone, without discrimination based upon race, ethnicity and nationality or by political, religious, cultural or organisational affiliation.
3. Informed Consent: the intended beneficiaries, or their proxies, understand and agree with the proposed humanitarian action and its implications
4. Duty of care: humanitarian assistance meets or exceeds recognised minimum standards pertaining to the welfare and safety of the intended beneficiaries.
5. Transparency: all relevant information is communicated to intended beneficiaries or their proxies and other specified parties
6. Neutrality: refraining from giving material or political support to parties to armed conflict
7. Complementarity: operating as a responsible member of a broader humanitarian assistance community.

1.4 Performance Benchmarks

Organisations seeking to comply with the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard will strive to meet specified performance benchmarks for:

1. Applying HAP’s Accountability Principles through a quality management system
2. Implementing a transparent public information policy
3. Gaining consent from beneficiaries or their proxies and specified stakeholders
4. Capacity building
5. Improving the competence of staff
6. Running a safe and accessible complaints handling system
7. Continuous improvement in accountability and quality management systems

While not yet the subject of detailed requirements and performance indicators, organisations seeking to comply with the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard will pay due attention to:

8. Coordination mechanisms
9. Gender equity
10. Human rights
11. Ethical fund-raising
12. Supply chain transparency and efficiency

1.5 Declaration of additional interests or values

Organisations seeking to comply with the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard will declare additional specific affiliations, interests, values and policies where these may have a direct bearing upon the welfare and safety of beneficiaries and specified stakeholders. These may include, but not be limited to matters concerning:

- Organisational affiliation
- Gender
- Age
- Physical or mental impairment
- Religious or political affiliation
- Technical specialisation
- Conflict prevention and/or peace-building
- Environmental sustainability
- Non-operationality (or working through local partners)

1.6 Qualifying norms

Organisations seeking quality assurance certification under the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard will meet the following criteria:

1. A core mandate to provide civil, independent, humanitarian assistance on an impartial, non-discriminatory, non-sectarian, non-partisan basis.
2. Formally registered or recognised as a not-for-profit organisation in the country where it has its headquarters.
3. Compliance with the requirements for financial accountability under the law in the country where it has its headquarters.

The Accountability and Quality Management Standard

Standard 1:

The agency shall establish an accountability framework and quality management system in accordance with the HAP standard.

Standard 2:

The agency shall publish information on a) its organisational background, b) its accountability framework and quality management system c) its humanitarian plans, and d) its progress

Standard 3:

The agency shall seek the informed consent of intended beneficiaries through enabling beneficiary representatives to participate in programme decisions.

Standard 4:

The agency shall establish procedures to identify and support local capacities.

Standard 5:

The agency shall monitor staff competence, and establish a system for performance improvement.

Standard 6:

The agency shall establish and implement effective complaints handling procedures that are accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries.

Standard 7:

The agency shall establish a continuous improvement process for its accountability and quality management system.

Standard One

The agency shall establish an accountability framework and quality management system in accordance with the HAP standard.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
1.1	The agency shall document and publish its accountability and quality management system, including all accountability and quality standards, codes, guidelines, and principles committed to by the agency.	1	Review copy of documented accountability management system.
		2	Review list of all initiatives signed up to and note how these are incorporated into the system. This can include certificates, acknowledgment letters of membership; a list from the agency of what they adhere to.
		3	Sample review of proposals and internal / external documents that would contain statements of adherence to the relative initiatives.
		4	Verify that the document is accessible throughout the agency.

Good Practices

- **ISO 9000**
- **Mango**
- **InterAction PVO**

Tools

- 1. Framework / outline example of accountability management document**

Standard Two

The agency shall publish information on a) its organisational background, b) its accountability framework and quality management system c) its humanitarian plans, and d) its progress.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
2.1	The agency shall ensure that information is presented in main local languages and in formats and media that are accessible and comprehensible for beneficiaries and specified stakeholders.	1	Review of the documented organisational background
		2	Review of the documented programme plans.
		3	Review of the documented programme progress reports
		4	Review information availability and accessibility for public
		5	Review guidelines for information dissemination
		6	Compare languages used by beneficiaries and local staff to the above documents
		7	Interviews of beneficiaries and specified stakeholders.
2.2	The agency shall include its name and contact details in all publicly available information.	1	Review format and current status of contact details at accessible sites
2.3	The agency shall publish its organisational structure and related staff roles and responsibilities.	1	Review organisation charts and documented responsibility statements
		2	Interview field staff to verify their familiarity with these responsibilities
		3	Interview beneficiary representatives

Good Practices

- **Mango**
- **ALNAP**

Tools

- 1. Organigram example**
- 2. Communication Strategy example**
- 3. List of feedback from beneficiaries on what they say is important for them to be informed about.**
- 4. Examples of how to present key information in different digestible formats (charts, grids, photos, pictures)**
- 5. Methods to assess local learning styles and systems, so that materials and mediums are adapted to local context**
- 6. Support material to help identify good information points hubs**
- 7. Examples of innovative methods to present information**

Standard Three

The agency shall seek the informed consent of intended beneficiaries through enabling beneficiary representatives to participate in programme decisions.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
3.1	The agency shall specify the processes to enable beneficiary participation	1	Review process outline / structure.
		2	Interview staff about the process for enabling participation.
3.2	The agency shall identify representatives of the beneficiary community for participation in project design, implementation and evaluation.	1	Compare identification process with stakeholder map.
		2	Interviews representatives and beneficiaries in connection with existing meetings
3.3	The agency shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform intended beneficiaries about beneficiary criteria and entitlements • Register the consent of intended beneficiaries 	1	Review of records such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter of invitation ▪ Contracts ▪ Meeting minutes
		2	Review process for establishing beneficiary criteria
		3	Interview beneficiaries or public entities as proxies—media or local government
		4	Review procedures for field worker use for specificity and clarity
		5	Compare time frame of consent requests with the documented steps
3.4	The agency shall ensure that beneficiary representatives are consulted over programme implementation arrangements.	1	Review program records and reports for evidence beneficiary input received and used
		2	Review beneficiary involvement in monitoring and evaluation
		3	Interview beneficiary representatives, beneficiaries and agency personnel
		5	Review records of meetings with beneficiary representatives
		6	Review action taken on submissions made by beneficiaries

Good Practices

- **SPHERE**
- **ALNAP**
- **ECB2 Guide**

Tools

- 1. Beneficiary mapping**
- 2. Example of a participation strategy**
- 3. Tools for establishing selection criteria – key elements**
- 4. Tool to track community awareness of programme stages**
- 5. Tools from ECB2 “How to Guide” (see Guide for linked age references)**

Tool 1 How accountable are you? ► p20

Tool 2 Involving people throughout the project ► p21

Tool 3 Questions to help profile the affected community ► p23

Tool 4 How to conduct an individual interview ► p24

Tool 5 How to conduct a focus group ► p25

Tool 6 How to conduct a simple survey ► p27

Tool 7 How to identify gaps and coordinate assistance ► p28

Tool 8 Should you carry out a detailed survey? ► p29

Tool 10 How to track changes by walking about ► p32

Tool 11 How to conduct a lessons-learned workshop ► p33

Standard Four

The agency shall establish procedures to identify and support local capacities.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
4.1	The agency shall conduct a local capacity and vulnerability analysis including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Individuals▪ Groups▪ Organisations	1	Review of capacity and vulnerability analysis report
		2	Review how local capacity analysis is demonstrated in agency planning
4.2	Allocate resources appropriately to enable local capacity is recognised and respected in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Recruitment▪ Partnering▪ Capacity Building▪ Supply Chain	1	Check programme strategy and plans against recommendations of capacity and vulnerability report

Good Practices

- SPHERE
- ALNAP
- ECB2 Guide

Tools

1. Capacity building training contents list
2. How to rapidly conduct a Capacity and Vulnerability analyses

Standard Five

The agency shall monitor staff competence, and establish a system for performance improvement.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
5.1	The agency shall maintain a statement of required competencies for all positions.	1	Review of job descriptions, recruitment files, vacancy advertisements
		2	Interview agency personnel responsible for recruitment, assignment and training
5.2	The agency shall establish and implement a system to review staff performance.	1	Review staff performance management systems.
		2	Review performance appraisal documents
5.3	The agency shall enable continuous staff development.	1	Review staff training records

Good Practices

- **People In Aid**
- **SPHERE**
- **MANGO: Financial transparency Management (Who counts)**
- **RedR (Review initiatives)**
- **IRC: Mandatory Reporting Policy**
 - **This is a Monitoring and Reporting Policy linked to sexual abuse / exploitation.**
 - **Staff sign up on recruitment and induction**
 - **Beneficiaries and other staff can anonymously report. (Contact Abby.Eason@theIRC.org)**
- **Save the Children (CRC): Child protection policy.**
- **Review UNHCR Complaints Mechanism Policy**
- **Medair: Competency framework and performance management framework – review as an example**
- **IRC: Technical support teams may have some ideas**
- **360 degree reviews – discuss inclusion (Klaas van Mill has corporate examples – Medair + Oxfam GB)**
- **Recommendation to have HR staff in emergency surge demand.**
- **Have standards induction training**
- **Review ECB1 work**
- **ALNAP – new participation guide / protection guide.**
- **Beneficiary surveys – examples**

Examples of Accountability Competencies

1. **Good interpersonal skills**
2. **Cross cultural experience / skills**
3. **Language skills**
4. **Self management skills / disciplines**

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5. PRA technical skills
6. Negotiation skills
7. Mediation skills
8. Diplomatic skills
9. Organisational knowledge of culture.

Standard Six

The agency shall establish and implement effective complaints handling procedures that are accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
6.1	The agency shall consult with beneficiaries about appropriate ways to submit complaints.	1	Evidence of guidelines / formats on fulfilling this requirement being used
		2	Review the reports from the beneficiary consultations
6.2	The agency shall publish a complaints handling procedure which ensures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose and parameters are clear • The mechanisms are clear • the safe referral of complaints which the agency is not equipped to handle • the confidentiality of complainants 	1	Review the documented procedure
		2	Review samples of complaints to verify complainants have been able to understand and use the procedure
		3	Interview field staff and beneficiaries about their perception of the procedure, and whether they feel it is adequate
6.3	The agency shall ensure that staff and beneficiaries have understood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the beneficiaries’ right to file a complaint ▪ the existence of the complaints handling procedure 	1	Review strategy and activities for raising awareness of the rights and procedures.
		2	Review documented strategy and how it is monitored
6.4	The Agency shall verify that that all complaints received are handled according to the stated procedures	1	Review a sample of pending and processed complaints, to check integrity of system.
		2	Review reports on integrity of complaints handling process

Good Practices

- ECB2
- **Building Safer Organisations – investigation framework**

Tools

1. **List of guiding questions for consultations with beneficiaries**
2. **Step by step guide on setting up a complaints mechanism**
3. **Communication methods for informing community of complaints handling procedures**
4. **Example of tracking trends in complaints and importance of using complaints data**
5. **Examples of complaints mechanisms in different humanitarian contexts.**

6. Standard Seven

The agency shall establish a continuous improvement process for its accountability and quality management system.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
7.1	The agency shall specify the processes used for continuous improvement.	1	Review continuous improvement process document / system.
		2	Note date created and last updated
		3	Dissemination: note if latest version is accessible at all levels within the agency.
		3	Review meeting agendas and minutes to note discussions held in relation to reports / continuous improvement processes and action taken
		4	Review feedback from governing bodies
		5	Review internal and external audits and evaluations pertinent to the agency’s accountability and quality management system.

Good Practices

- **ALNAP**
- **SPHERE**
- **Quality Compas – Group URD**

Tools

- 1. Corrective and Preventative action plan tracking guide**
- 2. Tools from ECB2 “How to Guide” (see Guide for linked age references)**

Tool 1 How accountable are you? ► p20

Tool 2 Involving people throughout the project ► p21

Tool 4 How to conduct an individual interview ► p24

Tool 5 How to conduct a focus group ► p25

Tool 9 Introduction to indicators ► p30

Tool 10 How to track changes by walking about ► p32

Tool11How to conduct a lessons-learned workshop ► p33

The Accountability Principles

1. Respect and promote the rights of legitimate humanitarian claimants

Commitment to humanitarian standards and rights

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

2. State the standards that apply in their humanitarian assistance work

Setting standards and building capacity

Members set a framework of accountability¹ 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. Inform beneficiaries about these standards, and their right to be heard

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. Meaningfully involve beneficiaries in project planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting

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. Demonstrate compliance with the standards that apply in their humanitarian assistance work through monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting 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. Enable beneficiaries and staff to make complaints and to seek redress in safety

Addressing complaints

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

7. Implement these principles when working through partner agencies.

Implementing partners.

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

¹ 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.