

Appendix B:

The HAP Standard: Draft Version 5 (2 December 2006)

HAP-07 Standard

In Humanitarian and Quality Management Standard

Draft – Version 5
2nd December 2006

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Drafted by:

HAP Editorial Steering Committee

In consultation with:

Beneficiary Representatives

Complaints Mechanism Workshop Participants

Field Line Managers

Dhaka and Nairobi Workshop Participants

Field Test Sites (Senegal; Somaliland, Sri Lanka)

© HAP International

Maison International de l'environnement 2

Chemin Balxert 7

CH-1219 Châtelaine

Geneva

Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 788 1641

E-mail: secretariat@hapinternational.org

Full Members: CAFOD; CARE International; Christian Aid; Danish Refugee Council; Medair; Medical Aid for Palestinians; MERCY Malaysia; Norwegian Refugee Council; OFADEC; Oxfam GB; Save the Children UK; Tearfund UK; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children; World Vision International

Associated Members: ACFID; CDP; Danida; DFID; MANGO; Swedish SIDA

The 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard

Table of Contents

1. Foreword
 - 1.1 Background
 - Box: The Principles of Accountability
 - 1.2 Qualifying Norms
2. The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant
 - 2.1 Preamble
 - 2.2 Humanitarian Principles
 - 2.3 Declaration of Interests
 - 2.4 Quality Management Benchmarks
 - 2.5 Working with Partners
3. Benchmarks for the HAP 2007 Standard
4. Requirements and Means of Verification

1. Foreword

1.1 Background

Humanitarian agencies exercise significant financial, technical and logistical power in their mission to save lives and reduce suffering. In contrast, disaster survivors have no formal control and often little influence over emergency relief agencies, making it difficult for the men, women and children affected by disasters to hold aid agencies to account. In 2003 the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) was launched to promote accountability to disaster survivors and to certify agencies that comply with HAP's Principles of Accountability.

The HAP Principles of Accountability

1. Respect and promote the rights of legitimate humanitarian claimants

- 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

- Members set a framework of accountability 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

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

7. Implement these principles when working through partner agencies.

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

* 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

The application of the HAP Accountability Principles makes disaster relief agencies accountable to disaster survivors for the quality of their humanitarian work. HAP defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that makes it fit for purpose in satisfying stated or implied needs of the consumer, in our case, the intended beneficiaries. Thus, by definition, a humanitarian quality management system will take proper account of the diverse concerns, capacities and disposition of disaster survivors while seeking to meet their essential needs. However, the Accountability Principles do not include performance benchmarks or verifiable indicators of compliance, nor do they spell out the common humanitarian values that unite the supporters of HAP. To enable compliance monitoring, complaints handling and humanitarian quality assurance certification to happen in a coherent, consistent and robust way, it has been necessary to develop the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Like HAP's Principles of Accountability, the HAP 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard has been developed through extensive consultation and field tests. It has been designed to recognise the key features of a simple but effective humanitarian quality management system that can be adopted by all humanitarian agencies. It 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. As the HAP Standard represents a solemn contract to be accountable to people affected by disasters not just now but also in the future, these values are presented below in "The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant"¹

As 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. Their aspirations to uphold the highest standards of humanitarian action cannot always be realised due to constraints beyond their control. However, 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. HAP recognises that on many occasions the best possible humanitarian action may be inadequate but still worthwhile.

To be accountable in such circumstances an agency must explain the reasons for its operational shortcomings. The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant is a practical tool designed to provide principled guidance for humanitarian agencies facing such tough choices. It draws upon, but is not identical to Jean Pictet's classical formulation of humanitarian principles. Each principle is categorized by its relative importance, beginning with the essential principles of humanity and impartiality, followed by the fundamental principles of transparency, informed consent and duty of care, and concluding with the operational principles of neutrality, complementarity and independence. In practice, for example, an accountable agency will be able to justify any "operational" compromises that it has been obliged to make as a necessary condition for achieving its "fundamental" objectives. In so doing, the agency will have demonstrated that it acted in good faith and thus in accordance with the HAP Standard.

In addition to the common principles, the Humanitarian Accountability Covenant also requires HAP certified agencies to declare any additional interests or policies that may have a direct bearing upon the welfare and safety of disaster survivors, intended beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

1.2 Qualifying norms

Certification under the HAP Standard will be open to those organisations that fulfil the qualifying norms described below. HAP will accept applications for certification from any organisation that meets these qualifying norms.

HAP Certification Qualifying Norms

1. A mandate to provide humanitarian assistance on an impartial, non-discriminatory, non-sectarian and non-partisan basis.
2. Formally declared as a not-for-profit organisation in the country or countries where it is legally registered and where it conducts humanitarian work.
3. Compliance with the requirements for financial accountability under the law in the country or countries where it is legally registered and where it conducts humanitarian work.
4. A publicly available statement of the agency's core commitments that constitutes its accountability framework.

¹ "Covenant" has many meanings. Here it is used to denote a binding but unilateral agreement

2. The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant

2.1 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 as these affect our humanitarian work with regard to the humanitarian principles, other declared interests and humanitarian quality management benchmarks set out below.

2.2 Humanitarian Principles

Organisations seeking to comply with the HAP 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard first commit themselves to accounting for their humanitarian work in relation to the general principles set out below.

Hierarchy of Humanitarian Principles

Essential principles

1. **Humanity**: the right of all persons to receive and give assistance.
2. **Impartiality**: the provision of humanitarian assistance in proportion to need and with respect to urgency, without discrimination based upon gender, age, race, impairment, ethnicity and nationality or by political, religious, cultural or organisational affiliation.

Fundamental principles

3. **Transparency**: all relevant information is communicated to intended beneficiaries or their proxies and other specified parties
4. **Informed Consent**: the intended beneficiaries, or their proxies, understand and agree with the proposed humanitarian action and its implications
5. **Duty of care**: humanitarian assistance meets or exceeds recognised minimum standards pertaining to the welfare and safety of the intended beneficiaries.

Operational Principles

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.
8. **Independence**: acting under the authority of the governing body of the agency and in pursuit of the agency's mandate

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

2.3 Declaration of interests

Organisations seeking to comply with the HAP 2007 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)

2.4 Quality Management Benchmarks

Organisations seeking to comply with the HAP 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard will demonstrate that they are able to meet specified performance benchmarks for:

1. Establishing a quality management system
2. Making information publicly available
3. Enabling beneficiary representatives to participate in programme decisions
4. Evaluating and improving the competence of staff
5. Implementing accessible and safe complaints handling procedures
6. Making continuous improvements in their quality management system

The specific requirements and means of verification for each of the HAP 2007 Standard benchmarks are set out in section three.

While not yet the subject of detailed requirements and performance indicators, organisations seeking to comply with the HAP 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard will pay due attention to:

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

2.5 Working with Partners

Aid agencies can deliver humanitarian value in two different ways.

1. Operationally – the agency implements projects directly through staff or volunteers.
2. Non-operationally – the agency provides financial, material or technical support to a partner that implements projects directly through staff or volunteers.

Some agencies combine both approaches. The HAP 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard applies to both operational and non-operational modes of humanitarian work. However, the diversity of humanitarian partners and the diversity of forms of humanitarian partnership suggest the need for great flexibility and sensitivity in the application of HAP's Principles of Accountability.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Humanitarian Partnership defined

A partnership is a relationship of mutual respect between two autonomous organisations that is founded upon a common purpose with defined expectations and responsibilities. Partnerships can be established with or without formal contractual agreements. Partners can be small community based organisations or large national or international institutions. A humanitarian partnership is one in which two or more bodies combine their resources to provide essential goods or services for disaster survivors.

Humanitarian Partners: qualifying norms

Logically, humanitarian partners of non-operational HAP certified agencies should meet the qualifying norms required of HAP certification applicants, and their humanitarian work should comply with the HAP Principles of Accountability. However, as this would exclude many effective humanitarian partners, the qualifying norms for humanitarian partners need to be more inclusive, and the HAP Standard compliance norms less demanding than those required of HAP certified agencies. The requirements that apply to humanitarian partnerships entered into by non-operational agencies certified by HAP should at a minimum involve organisations that have:

- a commitment to address humanitarian suffering
- autonomy in relation to the partnering agency
- an identifiable management capacity
- a commitment to learning
- a commitment to the mutuality of the relationship.

The requirements that should be met by the humanitarian partners of HAP 2007 Accountability and Quality Management Standard certified agencies are incorporated in the benchmarks in Section 3.

Quality Partnerships

Partnership is based on trust and mutual respect. This quality of partnership is particularly sensitive to attempts by one party to impose conditions upon the behaviour or activities of the other. Agencies committed to the Accountability Principles will damage the quality of their humanitarian partnerships if they seek to impose the benchmarks upon their partners. Equally, good partnerships do entail mutual transparency and openness on the part of both parties to be monitored and evaluated. Contracts between the agency and partners should cover the parties' respective roles and responsibilities. The agency should also consult with its humanitarian partners on how best to strengthen the partnership in such a way that both parties can better meet their common objectives.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

3. Benchmarks for the HAP 2007 Standard

Benchmark 1:

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall establish a humanitarian quality management system.

Benchmark 2:

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall make the following information publicly available: a) its organisational background, b) its accountability framework, c) its humanitarian plan, with d) progress reports, and e) its complaints handling procedures.

Benchmark 3:

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall seek the informed consent of intended beneficiaries through enabling beneficiaries and their representatives to participate in programme decisions.

Benchmark 4:

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall determine necessary competence for staff implementing the humanitarian quality management system.

Benchmark 5:

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall establish and implement effective complaints handling procedures that are accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries and the host community.

Benchmark 6:

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

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Benchmark One

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall establish a humanitarian quality management system.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
1.1	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall document its accountability framework and quality management system, including accountability and quality standards, codes, guidelines, and principles committed to by the agency.	1	Review copy of documented accountability framework and quality management system.
		2	Review list of all initiatives (internal and external) signed up to and note how these are incorporated into the framework.
		3	Sample review of proposals and documents that refer to accountability initiatives.
		4	Verify that the document is accessible throughout the agency including its humanitarian partners.
		5	Review humanitarian partner's contracts with agency for evidence of requirement.
1.2	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall demonstrate that the quality management system enables the implementation of the accountability framework.	1	Review processes and procedures.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Benchmark Two

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall make the following information publicly available: a) its organisational background, b) its accountability framework, c) its humanitarian plan, with d) progress reports, and e) its complaints handling procedures

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
2.1	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall ensure that information is presented in languages, formats and media that are accessible and comprehensible for beneficiaries and specified stakeholders.	1	Review how the languages, formats and media to be used have been determined.
		2	Review of the documented organisational background, accountability framework, humanitarian plans, progress reports and complaints handling procedures.
		3	Review guidelines for information dissemination.
		4	Review information availability and accessibility.
		5	Compare languages used by beneficiaries, local staff and specified stakeholders to the above documents.
		6	Review contracts and budget provision granted to humanitarian partners to support application of requirement.
		7	Interviews of beneficiaries.
2.2	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall include its name and contact details in all publicly available information.	1	Review format and current status of contact details at relevant publicly accessible sites.
2.3	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall make available the relevant organisational structure including staff roles and responsibilities.	1	Review information availability and accessibility.

Benchmark Three

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall seek the informed consent of intended beneficiaries through enabling beneficiaries and their representatives to participate in programme decisions.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
3.1	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall specify the processes to identify intended beneficiaries and enable their participation in project design, implementation and evaluation.	1	Review mechanism used to identify intended beneficiaries.
		2	Review processes to enable participation.
		3	Interview staff about the processes for enabling participation.
3.2	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall identify beneficiaries and their appointed representatives and demonstrate their participation and informed consent in project design, implementation and evaluation.	1	Compare the appointment/identification process with beneficiary map/analysis.
		2	Review beneficiary input in and impact on project design, implementation and evaluation.
		3	Review process for establishing beneficiary criteria.
		4	Review records of meetings with beneficiary representatives.
3.3	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall inform the beneficiary community about beneficiary selection criteria and entitlements as agreed with beneficiary representatives.	1	Demonstrate how the community have been informed about selection criteria and entitlements e.g. minuted meetings; letters of agreement, information boards etc.
		2	Interview beneficiary representatives, beneficiaries and agency personnel.
3.4	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall conduct a local capacity analysis of the host community and intended beneficiaries in order to enable participation in implementation.	1	Review of capacity analysis report.
		2	Demonstrate how the capacity analysis has influenced implementation.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Benchmark Four

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall determine necessary competence for staff implementing the humanitarian quality management system.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
4.1	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall maintain a statement of required competencies (knowledge, skills, and behaviours).	1	Review of job descriptions, recruitment files, vacancy advertisements, etc.
		2	Interview agency personnel responsible for recruitment, assignment and training.
4.2	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall implement a system to review staff performance.	1	Review staff performance management system.
		2	Review performance appraisal documents.
		3	Review follow up activities.
		4	Interview staff to confirm appraisal/performance management impact.
4.3	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall enable continuous staff development.	1	Review staff training records.
		2	Review other staff development approaches.
		3	Review agency support for its humanitarian partners continuous improvement.
4.4	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall ensure that staff are aware of the accountability framework and quality management system, with reference to the relevance and importance of their activities in meeting accountability objectives.	1	Review induction and briefing procedures.
		2	Interview staff to confirm awareness.
4.5	The Agency and its humanitarian partners shall verify 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.
		3	Review a sample of complaints processed from agency's humanitarian partners.

Benchmark Five

The agency and its humanitarian partners shall establish and implement effective complaints handling procedures that are accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries and the host community.

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
5.1	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall ask intended beneficiaries and the host community about appropriate ways to submit complaints.	1	Demonstrate that the consultation results have been incorporated into the complaints handling procedures.
5.2	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall establish complaints handling procedures which ensures that the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and parameters are clear • Procedures are clear • Complaints which the agency is not equipped to handle are safely referred • Confidentiality of complainants is assured 	1	Review the documented procedures.
		2	Review samples of complaints to verify complainants have been able to understand and use the procedure.
		3	Review budget, contracts and support given to humanitarian partners to implement requirement.
		4	Interview field staff, host community and/or intended beneficiaries about their perception of the procedures, and whether they feel they are adequate.
5.3	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall document and disseminate its complaints handling procedure that clearly state the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right of beneficiaries to file a complaint • Purpose, parameters and limitations of the procedure • Procedures for submitting complaints • Steps taken to process complaints • Commitment to confidentiality of complainants • Process for safe referral of complaints which the agency cannot handle. 	1	Review strategy and activities for raising awareness of the right and procedures to file a complaint.
		2	Review of the documented complaints handling procedures.
		3	Interviews with beneficiaries.
5.4	The Agency and its humanitarian partners shall verify 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.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

Benchmark Six

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

Requirements

No.	Requirement	No	Means of Verification
6.1	The agency and its humanitarian partners shall specify the processes used for continuous improvement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability Framework• Quality Management System, inclusive of all HAP benchmarks	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.
		4	Review meeting agendas and minutes to note discussions held and decisions taken to improve processes.
		5	Demonstrate how lessons learnt impact current processes.
		6	Review feedback from governing bodies.
		7	Review internal and external audits and evaluations pertinent to the agency and its humanitarian partners accountability framework and quality management system.