



Concern's Quality Standards and Statement of Commitment

Concern is committed to the participation by extremely poor people in the making of decisions and is morally accountable to its beneficiaries.

Concern believes that a greater emphasis on accountability and quality management will lead to a higher level of quality programmes and will improve effectiveness and impact of our work. This belief is enshrined in our values and policy documents and to enable this belief, and hold us to account, Concern has developed an accountability framework and quality management system that seeks to be transparent.

The Concern Accountability Framework is a summary of the relevant internal and external standards, codes, guidelines, values and principles to which Concern is committed to. The seven commitments incorporate the status of compliance and recommendations following the HAP baseline analysis in Head office in February 2008 and sets out an improvement plan of action to address gaps in accountability and quality management to our stakeholders.

Our accountability and quality management commitments are in accordance with the HAP Principles of Accountability and Humanitarian Action and are intended to guide all Concern's work and that of our partners in countries of operation.

Concern's policy on where and how we work

Concern's policy is that we work in the poorest countries in the world as measured by the bottom 40 in the Human Development Index (HDI). However, in our emergencies policy, we retain the option of intervening in countries outside the bottom 40.

Concern's long-term goal is to develop and support strong, independent and accountable local institutions, both of and for poor people, which can be agents of long-term change within their own societies. In some contexts this is immediately achievable; in others it may require Concern to work for a long time at local level. However, Concern will retain our organisational capacity to implement programmes in emergencies and where the local context determines it is not possible to work in partnership.

Concern is committed to working with partners at different levels, including community organisations, local government institutions, national level institutions, and international agencies, with Concern facilitating the formation and building of linkages between these levels. There is a wide range of institutions from civil society, state, government, inter-government, and private sector with which Concern can usefully enter into partnership with. In all our partnerships, Concern will be guided by the principles of compatibility, mutual respect, negotiation, interdependence, accountability, transparency, integrity, ownership, openness, responsiveness, and trust.

In responding to emergencies, Concern has agreed to be guided by international codes of conduct and practice, including the *Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, and we consider this to be the best articulation of humanitarian principles, the *Humanitarian Charter*, the *People in Aid Code of best practice in the management and support of aid personnel*, the Sphere Project's *Minimum standards in disaster response*, *The HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management*, *IFRC Code of Good Practice in responding to HIV/AIDS* and Code of conduct on Images and Messages. In addition, our interventions should be informed by international humanitarian law, refugee law and, particularly in conflict situations, the Geneva Conventions.

Affiliations

Concern's governance and international quarters is in Ireland and we work closely with, and support the development of, our associated organisations Concern UK and Concern US. Concern is a member of Alliance 2015 which is a *strategic network* of European NGOs engaged in humanitarian and development activities. Its goal is to combine efforts in fighting poverty in developing countries and influence public (and political) opinion in Europe.

Concern is also a member of the following bodies and our responsibilities include:

Organisation

Voluntary Organisations in cooperation in Emergencies

Responsibility

Concern is a member of the VOICE Board and participates on VOICE sub-committees

International Council of Voluntary Agencies

Concern is a member of the ICVA EXCOM. In February 2009 the Concern representative was elected Chair of the ICVA EXCOM. The Chair of ICVA is automatically a member of the IASC Principals Group.

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (International) HAP.

Submission of Annual Accountability Work plan

Dochas – Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. Concern is a member of various working group for example Humanitarian and HIV/AIDS working groups.

Interaction US – through our US affiliate

Concern represents Interaction on the IASC Working Group.

Disaster Emergency Committee – DEC. Part of the DEC appeals and responding to humanitarian crises. Concern reports on improvement commitments against the DECAF and provides evidence of policies, procedures and process for application and assurance for each DECAF commitment. Concern reports on programme and financial activities as per DEC reporting schedule

Concern Accountability Framework

The accountability framework set out here in January 2010 will serve as an internal management tool to assist in delivery of quality programmes, monitoring and evaluation, staff development, good stewardship and so assist in improving accountability to all our stakeholders. We will develop indicators to ensure that we deliver our accountability commitments to our stakeholders and to this end we are applying the HAP Standard in our Emergency and Development work. This framework has been developed in consultation with Concern staff, approved by members of the Senior Management Team and it will be reviewed and updated regularly (every 12 months)

The accountability framework includes 7 accountability and quality management commitments:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| 1. Mission and Core Values | 2. Programme Quality | 3. Protection of Programme Participant | 4. Human Resources |
| 5. Working with Partners | 6. Financial Management and Good Stewardship | 7 Learning from our Experience | |