

# **The Guide to the HAP Standard**

Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management

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# The Guide to the **HAP Standard**

Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management

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## What is this Guide for?

This Guide is a companion to the HAP Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard (2007), the full text of which is attached as Annex 1. The Guide follows the structure and format of the HAP Standard for ease of reference. It is aimed at the leaders, managers, and staff of humanitarian agencies that wish to improve the performance of their organisation, at those interested in assessing the case for seeking humanitarian quality assurance certification by HAP, and at those with responsibility for achieving compliance with the requirements of the HAP Standard. It will also be of relevance to individuals and organisations with a general interest in accountability. The Guide explains:

- The HAP Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard (2007)
- How agencies can meet the Standard
- How agencies can make an application for Certification
- How agencies will be assessed against the Standard in the HAP Certification process.

The Guide consists of the following parts:

## **Part I Introduction**

The introduction explains how the HAP Standard and Certification scheme are new steps that both build upon and strengthen well-established and widely recognised good practices of humanitarian action. It discusses:

### **1. Accountability: ‘the responsible use of power’**

- Too many humanitarian standards?
- How were the HAP Standard and Certification system developed?
- HAP Standard: urgent corrective procedure.
- Survivors, beneficiaries, claimants, clients, or customers?

## **Part II Meeting the requirements of the HAP Standard**

The first part of the Guide examines each component of the Standard, explains why it is important, how an organisation can meet these requirements, and how it will be measured in a Certification audit. It covers:

### **2. Qualifying norms for Certification**

This chapter examines HAP’s four ‘qualifying norms’, the prerequisites that an agency must meet before it can apply for HAP Certification. These are:

- A formal commitment to humanitarian impartiality
- Not-for-profit status
- Demonstrated financial integrity
- A publicly available humanitarian accountability framework.

### **3. The Humanitarian Accountability Covenant**

This section examines the Humanitarian Accountability Covenant, the part of the Standard that is concerned with practical challenges often experienced when putting humanitarian principles into practice. The four elements of the Covenant which merit further explanation and advice concerning compliance and assessment are:

- Principles for Humanitarian Action including non-compliance exoneration

- Declaration of additional interests
- Working with humanitarian partners.

#### **4. Benchmarks for the HAP Standard**

This section examines the six benchmarks that an agency must meet if it is to comply with the Standard and succeed in achieving Certification. Advice on ‘good practice’ to help agencies align their management systems to the Standard accompanies each benchmark. The six benchmarks cover:

- Humanitarian quality management systems
- Information provision to stakeholders
- Beneficiary participation and informed consent
- Staff competencies
- Complaints-handling mechanisms
- Learning and continual improvement.

### **Part III The HAP Certification Scheme**

This part of the Guide explains what the Certification process is, how to make an application for Certification, what documents need to be submitted, and the likely resource requirements for meeting the Standard.

### **Annexes**

1. Full text of the HAP Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard(2007)
2. Acronyms and glossary
3. Tools: a variety of practical tools for those wishing to enhance their management systems and bring them up to a level that meets the HAP Standard
4. Quality and accountability initiatives
5. Acknowledgements.

## **Supplementary information on the HAP website**

Additional materials to be used in conjunction with the Guide and the Standard are available on the HAP website at:

[www.hapinternational.org](http://www.hapinternational.org).

The Guide itself is available from:

[www.oxfam.org.uk/publications](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/publications).

Those seeking further guidance are welcome to write to the HAP Secretariat at: [secretariat@hapinternational.org](mailto:secretariat@hapinternational.org).