



The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management

Summary of changes from the 2007 edition

The purpose of this document is to detail changes between the 2007 and 2010 editions of the HAP Standard and, in doing so, to assist users of the 2007 edition in transitioning towards using the 2010 edition.

The first section highlights major differences between the two editions, with a focus on what has been removed and what has been added. The second section presents the minor differences between the two editions and adjustments to content in the 2007 edition. The third section is for reference purposes only and includes a summary of the views held by a minority of reviewers who commented on the 2nd draft of the Standard and that have not been reflected in the 2010 edition.¹

Readers may find this document more useful if read alongside copies of the two editions of the HAP Standard (available for download on the HAP website).

If you have any further questions in relation to differences between the 2007 and 2010 editions of the HAP Standard, please contact [Monica Blagescu \(mblagescu@hapinternational.org\)](mailto:mblagescu@hapinternational.org) who managed the review process and preparation of the 2010 HAP Standard, or members of the [HAP Standard Review Steering Committee](#).

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented to the HAP Board in preparation to their meeting on the 20 October 2010 when the 2010 HAP Standard was approved. Other documentation made available to the Board included: a final draft of the 2010 edition, a summary of the review process, and full copy of feedback that HAP members sent on the 2nd draft of the 2010 HAP Standard that was available for public review.

1. Major changes

The 2010 edition incorporates all content in the 2007 edition, but presents it in a more logical order in line with the [The ISO/IEC Directives Part 2, Rules for the Structure and Drafting of International Standards](#) (fifth edition, 2004) which guided the structure and drafting of the HAP Standard, thus avoiding repetition and using more user-friendly language.

1.1 What has been removed

The following have been removed from the 2007 edition:

General

1. Repetitions. In as far as possible, repetitions have been avoided in the 2010 Standard. Standard developers advise that, if it is necessary to invoke a requirement elsewhere, this should preferably be done by reference, not by repetition. If, for convenience, the repetition of a requirement seems useful, this may be done, provided that it is made clear that the requirement is repeated for information only.
2. Means of verification that were measuring beyond the content of the requirements (for example, Movs 2 and 3 under Requirement 1.1 in the 2007 edition).
3. Definitions which were included are part of requirements. This is not in line with ISO/IEC Directives Part 2.
4. Extensive reference to HAP members and membership obligations. The HAP Standard can apply to members and non-members alike.
5. Extensive reference to the HAP certification process. According to the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2, compliance details are to be presented in a separate guide. Also, a standard “shall be so written that conformity can be assessed by a manufacturer or supplier (first party), a user or purchaser (second party), or an independent body (third party)”; in this case the organisation itself, crisis-affected communities or partners of the organisations, an independent third party (such as HAP, a donor, etc).
6. Use of first person (“we [...] the organisations”). As advised by the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2.

From specific sections

1. *Foreword* (endorsement from the Chair of the Board). Not in line with the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2.
2. The explicit hierarchy of humanitarian principles from *Putting Principles into Practice*. Extensive debate was held on the order and how this fits with the risk management system of different organisations. The decision was made that the HAP Standard Principles was a more appropriate title. Organisations using the HAP Standard will set the order of priority of the principles and continue to use these, and their risk management system, to explain non-compliance with specific requirements (see general requirement 5.1.2 in the 2010 edition).

3. Norm 1 from *Qualifying norms for certification* (now section 2.4 in the 2010 edition). This was and still is covered somewhere else, thus repetition was avoided.
4. References to 'humanitarian accountability framework' and 'humanitarian quality management system'. Reference is made only to accountability framework and quality management system, since the function of referring to the term humanitarian has been addressed under the Purpose and Scope section.
5. Examples from the *Declaration of additional interests*. Not all were relevant.
6. Entire section 2.4 *Humanitarian Quality Management Benchmarks*. This was seen to be repetitive and unnecessary.
7. Reference to the Principles of Accountability and the Principles of Humanitarian Action in the *Quality Partnerships* section. Specific requirements are explicit under each benchmark in the 2010 edition.
8. Primary focus on the humanitarian quality management system from *Benchmark 1*. Focus shifted onto commitments (the accountability framework).
9. "Baseline analysis of compliance" and "implementation plan" as requirements of the accountability framework. These are covered somewhere else in the 2010 edition (see section 2.4, requirement 1.2 and requirement 6.2)

1.2 What has been added

The following have been added to the 2010 HAP Standard:

General

- Sections (*Foreword, Introduction, Purpose and Scope, Terms and definitions*) include content and are ordered in line with the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2.

Specific sections

1. Specific reference to applicability of the standard to local, national and international organisations, HAP members and non-members, and multi-mandate organisations in *Purpose and scope*. Clarification that, where used, the term, "humanitarian" should be interpreted broadly (in the spirit of humanitarianism, rather than the narrow interpretation in the context of humanitarian law).
2. Subsection on *Users of the HAP Standard*. To clarify who and for what the standard can be used, going beyond organisations that apply it and the HAP certification scheme.
3. Subsection on *Relationship with other initiatives*. In line with ISO/IEC Directives Part 2 and to reiterate HAP's commitment to inter-operability.

Feedback was sought from other quality and accountability initiatives and, where they replied, such feedback is reflected in the 2010 edition.²

4. Extensive section on *Terms and Definitions* to clarify terminology used in the HAP Standard.
5. “Offer redress” under the *HAP Standard Principles*, to better reflect the *HAP Principles of Accountability*.
6. General requirements as a separate section. There is no new content in here with the exception of recognition of the role that an organisation’s own approach to risk management (including order of its principles/criteria) plays to explain when requirements are not met.
7. Under *Specific requirements: the HAP Standard benchmarks*, a note on what each benchmark contains. To make it easier for users to follow the logic of the benchmarks.
8. Requirement 1.3, that the accountability framework of organisations working with partners “shall reflect a commitment to partnerships based on mutual accountability, respect, and continual improvement”. Some aspects of this were presented in the earlier edition, though not as explicit requirement linked to the accountability framework.
9. Requirement 2.2 on staff code of conduct, in line with one of the main criteria of the review process and in response to feedback received during the review consultations.
10. Requirement 3.1 on the organisation setting out a corporate statement on how it will share information, to keep the logic of all benchmarks.³
11. Requirement 3.2.6 (reporting on the outcomes of participation), in line with overwhelming feedback received during the revision, in particular from crisis-affected people and field staff.
12. Requirement 4.1.2 (the organisation setting out a corporate statement on how it will enable participation), to keep the logic of all benchmarks.⁴
13. Requirement 4.3 (adapting participation approaches to context and the programme stage, with informed consent as a minimum), in response to overwhelming feedback received during the revision. Participants in consultations highlighted that, in some situations, they start at the bottom of the participation ladder; this should be recognised and organisations encouraged to adapt their participatory approaches depending on context and the intervention.

² Significant progress has been made with People In Aid, the DEC and ACFID, who provided extensive feedback on drafts of the 2010 edition. The ECB Project commented through their main project organisations which are also HAP member agencies. HAP Secretariat staff have provided detailed feedback on several rounds of the Sphere Common Standards, the DEC Framework and the ACFID Code (all undergoing revision); HAP input was well received, with much of it incorporated in subsequent drafts of the respective documents.

³ The first requirement of each benchmark covers organisational policy or corporate statements, and subsequent requirements cover an organisation’s practice.

⁴ See footnote 3.

2. Minor changes/adjustments to what was already in the 2007 edition

Overall, the 2010 edition gives further detail of requirements in the 2007 edition. A separate section for organisations working with partners has been included under each benchmark. The order of the benchmarks changed, and minor adjustments have been made to the wording of benchmarks.

Other adjustments are highlighted below:

1. The title of the Standard has been changed to the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management. The use of the word “humanitarian” in the title was seen as deterring staff not working on relief programmes from reading and engaging with the standard.
2. The qualifying norms for certification in the 2007 edition are included in a short section on the HAP certification scheme (section 2.4). In line with the ISO/IEC Directives, a standard is not the place to include extensive details on conformity assessment, though users of the standard felt that, at a minimum, this detail should be included.
3. The Preamble and Principles for Humanitarian Action from the *Humanitarian Accountability Covenant* in the 2007 edition have been reviewed and included under the HAP Standard Commitment (section 4 in the 2010 edition).
4. The section on *Working with humanitarian partners* from the 2007 edition is included under *Purpose and scope* (section 2.2.2 in the 2010 edition).
5. The sections on *Putting Principles into Practice* and *Declaration of additional interests* from the 2007 edition are now under general requirements (section 5.2 in the 2010 edition).

2.2.2 Organisations working with partners

This is explicit about organisations having to apply the HAP Standard requirements in relation to their partners (accountability to partners), and working with partners so that partners too meet the requirements, as jointly agreed. Focus shifted from “capacity building” activities to “working jointly to improve how partners ...” in recognition of the different types of partners that organisations may have (including those that may not need capacity building support).

2.4 The HAP quality assurance certification scheme

This makes explicit reference to “a reliable internal control system to ensure funds are used properly”. This was already verified during certification with the 2007 Standard, though the earlier edition was not explicit in its content.

Section on Terms and definitions

1. “People an organisation aims to assist” instead of beneficiaries, which was seen as inappropriate by the majority of contributors to the review process. A few individuals who commented on the two drafts found this formulation somewhat awkward (initially, it was “seeks to assist” but this was changed as per Plain English Campaign advice).
2. Accountability: explicit about being held to account by different stakeholders, primarily those who are affected by the exercise of power.
3. Accountability framework definition was adapted and made more explicit on content. It currently includes only the first element (statement of commitments) from the 2007 edition; the other two (baseline analysis of compliance and implementation policy or plan) were removed, since these are covered under other requirements. Organisations may still choose to include these elements in their accountability framework. For HAP member agencies, this interpretation is also better aligned with the accountability workplan, which is a membership obligation.
4. Definition of “organisation” clarifies that “the organisation” will be defined at the start of applying the HAP Standard.

The HAP Standard Commitment

1. Changed from *Humanitarian Accountability Covenant*, which was seen as aspiring to go beyond the HAP Standard and its application.
2. Minor editorial adjustments have been made (including change from 1st to 3rd person) in the former *Preamble* to reflect feedback from consultations.
3. *Principles for Humanitarian Action* are called *The HAP Standard Principles*, to clarify that these play an important part within the HAP Standard. Minor editorial changes have been made to reflect feedback from consultations.
4. Relevant parts in this section have been cross-referenced with an earlier draft of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter.

Benchmarks

The section below compares text of old and new editions, focusing on wording in the benchmarks and on requirements. The means of verification have not been included here, since they are more relevant to assessments and those undertaking them; the means of verification have received input from those who currently use the standard to undertake assessments (audits, baseline analyses, self-assessments, evaluations) and by HAP member agencies. Overall, it reflects their feedback.

The additional requirements for organisations working with partners are not included here. These reflect what was already implicit under requirement 6.2 in the 2007 edition. The additional requirements for organisations working with partners have been developed by a dedicated working group and reflect feedback from organisations working with partners.

The wording of benchmarks no longer includes the word “shall”. It is the requirements

under each benchmark that do so

The *Staff competency* benchmark has been moved from fourth to second in the order of benchmarks since it was seen to follow more logically after the benchmark on *Establishing and delivering on commitments*. All other benchmarks have been kept in their old sequence.

No reference is made to benchmarks as *Benchmark One*, *Benchmark Two*, etc since the review consultations revealed that this formulation encouraged reference to numbers rather than the content behind the benchmarks.

1. Benchmark One in the 2007 edition

The wording of the benchmark was made more clear, with the focus on setting out what commitments the organisation will be held to account and how these commitments will be delivered.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Benchmark One The agency shall establish a humanitarian quality management system.</p>	<p>1. Establishing and delivering on commitments The organisation sets out the commitments that it will be held accountable for, and how they will be delivered.</p>

Requirement 1.2 was made more clear and explicit about what is required of the organisation. This is also aligned with the ISO 9000 standard series and internationally accepted elements of a quality management system.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Requirement 1.2 The agency shall demonstrate that its humanitarian quality management system enables implementation of its humanitarian accountability framework</p>	<p>Requirement 1.2 The organisation shall implement its accountability framework through a management system that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. makes clear the management roles and responsibilities, including for the governing board; 2. is based on a set of processes that ensures resources are used properly to achieve objectives; 3. involves staff in decision-making; and 4. enables continuous improvement.

2. Benchmark Two in the 2007 edition

Keeping with the logic in the wording of the other benchmarks, the statement has been changed to reflect an overarching commitment to sharing information rather than the detail of what type of information will be shared.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Benchmark Two The agency shall make the following information publicly available to intended beneficiaries, disaster-affected communities, agency staff and other</p>	<p>3. Sharing information The organisation ensures that the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about the organisation and its</p>

specified stakeholders: (a) organisational background; (b) humanitarian accountability framework; (c) humanitarian plan; (d) progress reports; (e) complaints handling procedures.	activities.
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The staff code of conduct has been added as a specific type of information that organisations will make available.

Requirement 3.4 in the 2010 edition was implied in the 2007 edition (it had become one of the means of verification for requirements 2.3 and 2.4) and has now been made explicit.

“Requirement 3.4: The organisation shall ensure that its staff identify themselves to people they aim to assist and other stakeholders.”

3. Benchmark Three in the 2007 edition

Based on consultation and the Board request, this was adjusted as follows:

2007 edition	2010 edition
Benchmark Three The agency shall enable beneficiaries and their representatives to participate in programme decisions and seek their informed consent.	4. Participation The organisation listens to the people it aims to assist, incorporating their views and analysis in programme decisions.

Requirement 4.2 is explicit about the stages at which the organisation will develop and put in place participatory processes; this was agreed during the revision consultations.

2007 edition	2010 edition
Requirement 3.2 The agency shall enable intended beneficiaries and their representatives to participate in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	Requirement 4.2 The organisation shall develop and put in place processes appropriate to the context so that the people it aims to assist and other crisis-affected people provide feedback and influence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. initial assessment; 2. project design, deliverables, criteria for selecting target groups and the selection process; 3. project implementation; and 4. monitoring and evaluation.

Reference is made to women, men, boys and girls where it was felt that specific attention needs to be given to these different groups.

All references to “representatives” have been removed. These were not seen as necessary.

4. Benchmark Four in the 2007 edition

Specific reference is made to staff competencies that enable them to meet commitments.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Benchmark Four The agency shall determine the competencies, attitudes and development needs of staff required to implement its humanitarian quality management system.</p>	<p>2. Staff competency The organisation ensures that staff have competencies that enable them to meet the organisation's commitments.</p>

Minor adjustments have been made to some of the requirements.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Requirement 4.1 The agency shall maintain a statement of the competencies (knowledge, skills and behaviours) and attitudes required from its staff</p>	<p>Requirement 2.1 The organisation shall clearly define and document the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that staff need to meet its commitments.</p>
<p>Requirement 4.2 The agency shall ensure that staff are aware of the humanitarian accountability framework and humanitarian quality management system, its relevance and importance, and understand their responsibilities in its implementation</p>	<p>Requirement 2.3 The organisation shall ensure that staff understand the code of conduct and their responsibility under the accountability framework.</p>
<p>Requirement 4.3 The agency shall implement a system to review staff performance and competencies, including their knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes</p>	<p>Requirement 2.1 The organisation shall regularly and consistently review and act on staff performance relating to knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes needed to meet commitments.</p>
<p>Requirement 4.4 The agency shall enable continual staff development for more effective implementation of the humanitarian quality management system</p>	<p>Requirement 2.1 The organisation shall continually develop its staff so the commitments are met more effectively.</p>

5. Benchmark Five in the 2007 edition

The benchmark was adjusted to be more concise.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Benchmark Five The agency shall establish and implement complaints-handling procedures that are effective, accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries, disaster-affected communities, agency</p>	<p>5. Handling complaints The organisation enables the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible and safe process.</p>

staff, humanitarian partners and other specified bodies.	
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Requirement 5.1 includes more detail on what to be included in a complaints procedure. This draws on emerging good practice, recommendations from the working group, and feedback from the consultations. Specifically, this requirements includes detail on:

- procedure for investigating complaints and the response timeframe
- the process for fast-tracking allegations of exploitation and abuse, including those of a sexual nature
- appeal and support for people who complain and for any witnesses

It also clarifies what was meant by “the process for safe referral of complaints that the agency is not equipped to handle”, with the following detail:

- the process for safely referring to a third party people who complain if the complaint is about issues the organisation cannot handle, such as medical attention and psychological, social or legal support.

Requirement 5.1 in the 2007 edition was adjusted to focus more on complaints procedures that reflect the preferences of users, rather than simply developed in consultation with users.

2007 edition	2010 edition
Requirement 5.1 The agency shall ask intended beneficiaries and the host community about appropriate ways to handle complaints	Requirement 5.2 The organisation shall identify and put in place complaints procedures that are based on the preferences of the people it aims to assist, staff and other stakeholders, after consulting them.

Requirement 5.4 in the 2007 edition was adjusted to include focus on taking action as a result of complaints.

2007 edition	2010 edition
Requirement 5.4 The agency shall verify that all complaints received are handled according to the stated procedures	Requirement 5.4 The organisation shall ensure that it handles complaints in line with its procedure and that it acts upon complaints.

Requirement 5.5 in the 2007 edition (on the organisation setting up complaints mechanisms for its staff) was removed and included throughout the requirements (with staff being one of the potential users of the complaints procedure).

6. *Benchmark Six in the 2007 edition*

The wording of the benchmark was adjusted to be more clear.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Benchmark Six The agency shall establish a process of continual improvement for its humanitarian accountability framework and humanitarian quality management system.</p>	<p>6. Learning and continual improvement The organisation learns from experience to continually improve its performance.</p>

Requirement 6.1 in the 2007 edition was further developed under requirements 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4. These reflect what was assessed as part of the old requirement 6.1 and the feedback received from consultations. They go beyond statement of commitment to focus on some practice.

2007 edition	2010 edition
<p>Requirement 6.1 The agency shall specify the processes used for continual improvement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the agency's humanitarian accountability framework • the agency's humanitarian quality management system, inclusive of all HAP benchmarks 	<p>Requirement 6.1 The organisation shall define and document processes to learn effectively, including from monitoring, evaluations and complaints.</p>
	<p>Requirement 6.2 The organisation shall regularly monitor its performance, including in relation to the accountability framework, staff competencies, sharing information, enabling participation, handling complaints, and learning.</p>
	<p>Requirement 6.3 The organisation shall include in the scope of evaluations an objective to assess progress in delivering its accountability framework.</p>
	<p>Requirement 6.4 The organisation shall ensure that learning, including on accountability, is incorporated into workplans in a timely way.</p>

3. Summary of main minority points

A summary of the views held by a minority of contributors to the revision process and that have not been reflected in the 2010 edition are included below

Minority points	Outcome of discussions prior to the Oct 2010 Board meeting
<p>Terms and definitions</p> <p>Two HAP members had issue with the term “people an organisations aims to assist”. There was one suggestion for an alternative term “target community or target communities”.</p> <p>That the word ‘complaint’ be changed to ‘grievance’ which is a more formal expression of objection against a treatment of a person or entity received by another person or entity. The person or entity expressing the grievance should be affected negatively by the treatment or speak on behalf of those affected. If the word ‘complaint’ continues to be used, then we recommend an explanation be considered and alternatives provided.</p>	<p>As the majority of commentators did not have an issue with this term, it was left as in the last draft available for public consultation.</p> <p>Definition refers to grievance and MoV under requirement 5.1 makes reference to identifying suitable ways of referring to “complaint” although this a repetition (see requirement 3.3)</p>
<p>The HAP Standard Principles</p> <p>Neutrality. Two of the HAP members raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the application of the standard to multi-mandate organisations, the understanding of neutrality could be seen to conflict with. The phrasing in version 11 dated 16/06/10 was closer to NCA’s understanding: ‘Neutrality: Seeking only to meet humanitarian need and refraining from taking side in hostilities or engaging in armed conflict.’ NCA will however suggest a slightly adjusted phrasing of the last version, omitting the terms only and replacing political with financial. • Colleagues from OFADEC commented that <i>neutrality</i> may be misinterpreted to contradict <i>witness</i> <p>Witness. There was conflicting feedback on this.</p> <p>On the one hand, Oxfam GB commented “the Principle of Witness seems to conflate the role of humanitarian and human rights defender. There was a whole workshop on this organised in Geneva earlier this year by the Committee on Human Rights, and every one of the humanitarian agencies who spoke</p>	<p>The Steering Committee acknowledged that such tensions may be emerging from the fact that the Standard can be applied by multi-mandated agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Only” was seen as important by the Steering Committee in this context; it defines the intent of the action. Material is understood to cover financial. • Acting as a witness (reporting on something) was not seen to mean taking sides in hostilities <p>It was agreed that “reporting” was in the spirit of “witness” that is intended in the standard, and that “acting” would only apply to advocacy organisations which would then have to comply with the rest of the requirements in the standard.</p> <p>The Guide to the HAP Standard will include more detailed discussions about each of the</p>

Minority points	Outcome of discussions prior to the Oct 2010 Board meeting
<p>pointed out that while human rights defenders work is to witness, humanitarians' work is to provide assistance. The two can often be incompatible, as we saw to our cost in Sudan, and many others see in Ethiopia, Russia, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe and many other countries"</p> <p>On the other hand, several respondents suggested that this principle be strengthened, with "report" being replaced by "report and act"</p>	<p>benchmarks and their application and interpretation covering issues raised during the review e. g. applying the standard for relief and advocacy programmes; more discussion on neutrality, etc.</p>
<p>Benchmarks One respondent suggested not changing the order of the benchmark on staff competency</p>	<p>This was not seen to be an issue. Most international standards undergo even more drastic changes during revisions.</p>
<p>4. Participation and 5. Complaint-handling The benchmark seems to combine participation and feedback processes. While these are obviously inter-related, for clarity this benchmark should focus on how program decisions are influenced rather than the feedback process which should be reflected in Benchmark 5. The benchmark should be revised to: "The organization listens to those it seeks to assist and enables them to influence programme decisions at different stages in the project cycle."</p>	<p>Unlike feedback, which an organisation may choose to disregard, complaints refer to serious grievances that need to be addressed. Therefore, it was felt that the benchmark on complaint handling needs to deal only with complaints, which participation allows for different types of engagement.</p>