

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International

Strategy 2010-12

*Making Humanitarian Action Accountable
to Beneficiaries*

Contents

	Foreword	3
1	Vision, Mission and Values	5
2	Humanitarian Crises and Accountability	7
3	Accountability: HAP's Value Proposition	8
4	Strategic Objectives	11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Learning how to improve accountability and quality management practices</i>• <i>Facilitating widespread adoption of improved accountability and quality management practices</i>• <i>Scaling up impact through advocacy</i>• <i>Validating progress through compliance verification</i>• <i>Responding to complaints</i>	
5	Organisational Objective	14
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Strengthening the partnership</i>• <i>Aligning governance, membership and membership rules to strategy.</i>• <i>Securing resources</i>• <i>Developing skills and competencies.</i>	
6	Financial Forecasts	16

Foreword

HAP was founded in 2003 to promote the application of good practices of accountability and programme quality management by humanitarian agencies and to provide independent verification that its members comply with the Partnership's Principles of Accountability. From the six founding members that met in its first General Assembly held in December 2003, HAP had grown to 43 members drawn from 18 nations, collectively working in over 70 countries and together spending more than \$5 billion per annum by October 2009. Of this sum, \$245 million of humanitarian programmes implemented by 7 members and representing about 2% of global humanitarian spend, had been quality assured by the HAP certification scheme.

Since HAP's foundation - and due in part to its efforts - there has been mounting recognition in the sector of the need for improved accountability to the beneficiaries of humanitarian action. This has been reflected in a range of initiatives to emerge from the UN system, bilateral donors, national governments and the non-governmental sector. Amongst these initiatives HAP's model of programme quality assurance has a distinctive, complementary, and transformative contribution to make.

As the number and variety of actors in humanitarian emergencies increases so also does the need to improve accountability and quality norms in the sector. Based on extensive consultation and field trials, the HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management was designed as a tool to enable measurement of an agency's efforts to put the Principles of Humanitarian Accountability into practice. While there are many valid approaches to improving programme quality, applying the HAP Standard offers a unique opportunity in the sector to enable agencies to demonstrate the accountability and quality of their programmes. HAP continues to develop and promote independent systems of quality assurance including the HAP certification system.

HAP's tools and services are being designed and refined in consultation with aid workers, members of disaster and crisis affected communities and other key stakeholders, and offer practical ways to bring about the changes in systems, approaches and attitudes that are needed to eradicate poor quality aid programmes. Multi-mandate agencies, operational agencies and agencies who work with local partners agree that they too see improvements in the quality of programmes through applying the HAP Standard and tools. Over the last six years, HAP has appreciated engagement with and the support of a growing number of humanitarian and multi-mandated agencies who are committed to working with us to tackle what Amartya Sen has called "unfreedoms"¹, such as:

- lack of critical information that allows people to make informed decisions about the things that impact their lives
- exclusion that prevents marginalized groups from gaining access to services and decision making processes
- the absence of safe and accessible means of raising concerns or complaints
- the lack of transparent performance standards and the means to assess the competence of aid workers
- the repetition of mistakes and bad practices resulting from inadequate learning processes within the aid system

The application of the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management is a tried and tested means through which these "unfreedoms" can be

¹ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*. (New York, NY: Random House, 1999) 3, 4.

confronted. HAP's learning tools and verification processes, including certification, can provide assurance that an agency will implement good practices in its programmes.

It is clear that cooperative, coordinated and industry wide efforts can make change happen. HAP's system of quality assurance is one process that aims to do just this. But is it happening fast enough? Is there an appropriate sense of urgency, given ongoing reporting of poor quality and unaccountable aid programmes? HAP's 2010-12 strategic plan seeks to address this challenge through pursuing the following directions:

- Working with disaster and crisis - affected communities, member agencies and other key players to intensify demand for accountability
- Encouraging the research community to examine more thoroughly the proposition that improved accountability through systematic programme quality management gives more value for money for beneficiaries and donors alike
- Engaging more strategically with the United Nations humanitarian system and with the donor community
- Reaching out to the broader humanitarian community to learn from and engage with them on options for meaningful and practical improvements in accountability and quality assurance
- Extending its verification, certification, and organisational development services to meet growing demand

The HAP 2010-12 Strategy includes feedback from HAP members and is approved by the HAP Board. It sets out the ways and means by which HAP will seek to extend its services, and work with others to drive forward system wide accountability and quality reforms.

Making Humanitarian Action Accountable to Beneficiaries

1. Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

HAP's vision is a humanitarian system with a trusted and widely accepted accountability framework, which is transparent and accessible to all relevant parties.

Mission

HAP's mission is to make humanitarian action accountable to its intended beneficiaries through self-regulation by its members linked by common respect for the rights and dignity of beneficiaries.

Value Proposition

HAP's strategic value proposition is that quality, accountability and programme results are inextricably linked. By improving agency accountability in a systemic way, programme quality, impact and outcomes will also be enhanced. The essential tools for driving this virtual circle are the application of a programme quality management system, reinforced through shared learning and independent verification. All stakeholders; intended beneficiaries, affected communities, donors and agencies alike, make measurable gains as a consequence of the work undertaken by the Partnership.

Values

HAP is a value-driven organisation. These are the values that we seek to promote in the sector and by which we want our own performance to be judged.

- **Focus**

We will put respect for the rights of crisis-affected populations at the heart of everything we do.

- **Integrity**

We will be personally and organisationally accountable for our own actions as we promote accountability in the sector. We will be honest, impartial and transparent in ways of working, to earn and maintain the confidence of those with whom we work. We will implement our activities with independence, professionalism and rigour.

- **Inclusiveness**

To establish programme quality assurance as the norm in the sector we will work with, listen to, support and respect all those committed to our values irrespective of race, gender, religion or politics.

- **Innovation**

We will generate innovative, imaginative and practical ideas that are both challenging and inspirational in promoting our mission.

- **Learning from experience**

We will improve accountability to disaster and crisis affected communities by learning from our experiences, both positive and negative; appraising our performance in the light of feedback; and continuously improving our methods, tools and approaches.

2. Humanitarian Crises and Accountability

There is emerging consensus that global warming, natural resource depletion and growing inequalities will together contribute to increased frequency and severity of humanitarian crises. Increasingly large numbers of vulnerable communities will be affected directly by such emergencies and indirectly by the work of humanitarian agencies. The pressing challenge of the next decade is to ensure that scarce humanitarian resources are deployed in an ever more effective, efficient and accountable manner.

The need for improved accountability

Recent years have witnessed an increased number and variety of actors in humanitarian emergencies – some of which have a specialist humanitarian mandate, some of which are “multi mandated”. While significant efforts have been made to improve quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector, reports of poor quality programming, serious cases of corruption and instances of exploitation and abuse of disaster survivors by aid workers still surface far too often.

Some commentators on the sector believe that popular trust in aid agencies has declined in the last twenty years. To counter this, the sector has placed a new emphasis on speed and efficiency in the visible delivery of goods and services. While the motives are commendable, the growth in pre-packaged and pre-positioned relief supplies increases the risk that programmes are supply rather than demand driven, and less responsive to the requirements of affected communities. In turn, members of crisis and disaster-affected communities are often poorly informed about their rights and entitlements, and of the roles and responsibilities of aid agencies.

The response of the humanitarian system

The humanitarian system has been active in recent years in seeking to respond to greater demands for improved accountability. The UN has introduced the “cluster” approach to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian response in key sectors. The donor community has also codified good practice through the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, which brings together 35 humanitarian donors.

These efforts in the humanitarian system have been paralleled by the emergence of national certification schemes - for example, in Pakistan, India, Cambodia and Palestine - to improve the accountability and quality management systems of national NGOs.

There has also been a growing number of NGO initiatives deploying a variety of approaches – for example, learning, codes of conduct and external compliance verification – to promote quality and accountability in humanitarian interventions. The variety of initiatives to promote quality and accountability is welcome but it also presents challenges regarding focus and coordination. Increased effort has been devoted to improving collaboration between these various initiatives, with a new focus on the coherence and inter-operability of their respective products and services.

As donor governments, multi-lateral agencies, national governments in crisis-prone countries and international NGOs all seek to address the issue of accountability, HAP International has an important and distinctive role to play alongside related initiatives in helping agencies to improve their accountability and programme quality management systems.

3. Accountability: HAP's Value Proposition

The Value of Accountability

Humanitarian programmes will be delivered more effectively; saving more lives; and improving the quality of more people's lives; if their intended beneficiaries participate in all stages of the programme cycle.

The accountability of humanitarian agencies to beneficiaries helps to ensure that programmes meet their needs both in concept and execution; and reduces the possibility of error, corruption and the need for complaint.

The HAP compliance verification scheme

HAP's organisational development and certification services promote the application of good practices of accountability to intended beneficiaries by assessing, strengthening and then confirming compliance with the HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management.

HAP certification, i.e. independent verification of quality management and accountability systems:

- Ensures that affected persons' needs, capacities and circumstances drive the agency's quality management systems, and contribute to improved services.
- Motivates and focuses an agency's efforts to improve its accountability to affected communities.
- Demonstrates substantive achievements and measured progress to all stakeholders.

HAP International works collaboratively with members, partners and supporters to:

- Learn and continuously improve the HAP Accountability and Quality Management Standard and related services, products and standards.
- Provide organisational development services and training to help agencies appraise and improve their accountability and quality management systems at an operational and organisational level.
- Supply – or accredit others to provide – a process of independent programme quality assurance and continual improvement in programme management practices.
- Promote greater cooperation and interoperability with other quality and accountability initiatives, both at international and national levels.
- Advocate at a systemic level for greater accountability in humanitarian aid delivery

Our Aspiration for Humanitarian Accountability

Our aspiration is that by 2012 there will be significant, demonstrable improvements in policy and practice in the sector delivering accountability and better quality programming to crisis and disaster affected communities. HAP will work with others towards:

- Providing robust assurance that at humanitarian assistance is accountable to beneficiaries by the end of 2012.
- Demonstrating that HAP's organisational development and quality assurance services are a cost-effective means for achieving sustainable improvements in programme quality.
- Recognition by agencies active in the sector, including donors and UN agencies, that HAP's quality assurance services offer a cost-effective and sustainable way to improve humanitarian performance.

- Enhancing inter-operability and cooperation with other leading quality and accountability initiatives in the drive towards the creation of a comprehensive global quality assurance mark.

Our Ambition as HAP International

Through the effective implementation of this strategy we expect that:

- HAP will consolidate its reputation as a leading centre for identifying and sharing good quality management and accountability practices in the sector.
- The HAP organisational development and certification services will be recognised as valuable tools to assess and improve the quality of agency interventions in and beyond the humanitarian sector.
- The value of HAP certification will be recognised by institutional donors and reflected in their policies.
- HAP's services will be extensively sought and valued throughout the sector as a means of improving humanitarian outcomes and accountability towards beneficiaries.
- A growing number of organisations will offer HAP recognised or HAP accredited services.

The HAP Country Strategy

While HAP's mission is global in ambition, its resources are small. Therefore HAP will focus its services in a smaller number of countries in which conditions most favour demand for these, ensuring a balanced approach between donor countries and those regions most affected by disasters, while continuing to support all its members wherever they are based. In the experience of HAP thus far, a series of short engagements across a wide range of countries and regions reaps less rewards in terms of establishing a sustainable commitment to a coherent and measureable approach to improved accountability, than a concentrated effort in a few countries or regions over a period of time. For this reason, HAP will select countries in which to focus their efforts, with an aim to assist in the growth and development of an "accountability movement" sufficiently strong to be sustained and expanded by local peers, and with the potential in the future for accreditation of local bodies to carry out HAP certification, or establishment of other viable means to assure quality to an equivalent standard.

HAP acknowledges that change of the magnitude that it envisages takes time to become embedded and sustained. HAP works with and across a variety of organisation types and systems and needs to be flexible and adaptable in its approach, in order to find appropriate ways forward in collaboration with its members. From networks of national NGOs to global federated agencies, the solutions are not always the same and therefore neither are the approaches to sustainable progress on accountability and programme quality. In some countries or regions, an approach of accrediting local agencies to certify against the HAP Standard will work. In others, it may be that existing quality assurance schemes already reflect or - with further changes – will reflect all the elements of the HAP Standard.

To complement its ongoing support to member agencies, HAP will begin by selecting up to four focus countries in 2010, adding no more than two per year thereafter. HAP will develop plans to conclude its operational involvement in each country within a four to five year cycle, depending on progress. If this approach is successful, by 2012, HAP will be working in eight focus countries, with potential for accredited bodies in one of these.

Ultimately, the success of HAP's outreach strategy should be judged by the growth in self-sustainable national (or regional) HAP accredited bodies, rather than on the number of agencies certified by HAP itself. Effective progress in this direction will be made in countries or regions where aid agencies' commitment to quality programming and accountability is matched by strong donor support. Therefore, HAP will focus its efforts in countries where the potential for strong agency demand and donor support for HAP programme quality assurance is high.

4. Strategic Objectives

There are five objectives in HAP's formal statute of association. The following strategic objectives are derived directly from these, and from subsequent policy commitments endorsed by the HAP Board and General Assembly.

- Learning how to improve accountability and quality management practices
- Facilitating widespread adoption of improved accountability and quality management practices
- Scaling up impact through advocacy
- Validating progress through compliance verification
- Responding to complaints

Strategic objective 1: *Learning how to improve accountability and programme quality management practices*

HAP will release an improved version of the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management in 2010. The revised standard will be at the heart of HAP's strategy to model a global programme quality assurance scheme by 2012. This will be supported by related standards, guidelines and tools developed for the sector through evidence-based research, learning, knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Activities and targets

- The revised HAP standard will reflect a broad consensus of principal stakeholders; it will be more applicable to multi-mandate agencies; it will be endorsed by INTOSAI, Transparency International and other key authorities; it will be more robust in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, and it will be more inter-operable with other quality assurance schemes.
- HAP will translate its standards, guides, compliance verification guidelines and learning from good practice of member agencies into languages and formats required in focus countries.
- HAP will develop guidelines for conducting a HAP baseline analysis and organisational development services by third party agencies, and a standard for accrediting HAP partners that offer HAP certification.
- HAP will investigate and test new certification options specifically designed for utilisation by large federated or decentralised agencies, in collaboration with these agencies.
- HAP will develop a research agenda which will be implemented through a combination of in-house research and collaboration with members and research bodies in the design of studies that examine the relationship between accountability, programme quality and programme outcomes.
- HAP will seek to monitor and report annually on the global volume of humanitarian assistance that has been assured as accountable to beneficiaries by robust programme quality assurance schemes.
- HAP will report on the costs and benefits of each completed certification process, subject to agreement with the agency concerned.

- HAP will conduct an after-action review of all deployments under the New Emergencies Policy.
- At least four agencies will have taken part in trial audits against the revised HAP standard with specific reference to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by 2011.
- HAP will design an assessment tool for selecting countries or regions of focus using transparent criteria, and implement this to consolidate its programme from 2010 onwards.
- HAP will work with partners to develop an on-line distance learning programme on accountability and programme quality management.

Strategic objective 2: *Facilitating widespread adoption of improved accountability and quality management practices*

During the 2010 to 2012 period, HAP will provide concentrated capacity building services in a number of countries to stimulate growth in membership and the establishment of a sustainable accountability movement in these countries, targeting countries where there is evident demand and potential for ongoing growth.

Activities and targets

- HAP will concentrate its membership recruitment campaigns in countries where there is potential for sustainable growth, seeking an average growth of eight new members per year, and ensuring a balance of focus across regions and between global northern and global southern countries.
- HAP and its partners will provide BSO² training and tailored support for 30 agencies during the 2010-2012 period to improve their effectiveness in responding to serious and sensitive complaints.
- HAP will deploy its roving team in at least two countries per year, selected through the New Emergencies Protocol³, and in joint deployments with other quality and accountability partners where possible.
- HAP will work to expand its capacity to provide organisation development services, and to support others to acquire the skills to provide such services, in concert with growing demand.

Strategic objective 3: *Scaling up impact through advocacy*

HAP will work with members and other partners to promote the use of third party quality assurance schemes as a cost-effective means of improving programme quality and accountability. Through an integrated communication and advocacy plan HAP will inform policy processes with a view of promoting increased coherence between the HAP Standard, donor guidelines and other relevant quality assurance schemes by 2012.

² "Building Safer Organisations" is the name given to HAP's complaints investigators training course

³ The New Emergencies Protocol is a consultation process for HAP members, quality and accountability partners and other interested parties, to assess the need for collective action on promoting accountability and programme quality assurance.

Activities and targets

- HAP will work closely with other quality and accountability initiatives to define and promote a shared vision of a *“trusted and widely accepted accountability framework which is transparent and accessible to all relevant parties”*⁴ which can form the basis of a global and comprehensive programme quality mark.
- HAP will work closely with supporting donors to strengthen quality and accountability in the programmes they fund, including through the addition of quality and accountability criteria in their programme quality guidelines, and mutual recognition of shared criteria in accreditation schemes and HAP certification by 2012.
- HAP will promote the use of programme quality assurance tools and services within the UN coordination system, and through the UN-NGO Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- HAP will promote the adoption of more systematic and robust performance evaluation norms for reporting on accountability and quality management practices.
- HAP will publish an annual assessment of progress towards its vision of an accountable humanitarian sector in its annual Humanitarian Accountability Report.
- HAP will publish a follow-up beneficiary based consultation report on the effectiveness of measures taken to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers.

Strategic objective 4: *Validating progress through compliance verification*

HAP will strengthen its membership compliance monitoring services, and support at least 15 more agencies to become certified by 2012.

Activities and targets

- The HAP Secretariat will submit an annual compliance report to the Board, covering the status of each member’s Accountability Work Plan (AWP) and progress towards certification.
- While certification will remain the key tool for programme quality assurance, an AWP monitoring audit will be introduced from 2010 to enable the Secretariat to confirm compliance with HAP’s basic membership requirements.
- To meet increasing demand for HAP certification, HAP will explore the option to accredit other bodies to certify agencies against the HAP Standard.
- HAP and its accredited certification partners, will certify at least 30 agencies by 2012

Strategic objective 5: *Responding to complaints*

HAP will operate a robust complaints handling system, with enhanced accessibility in focus countries.

Activities and targets

- HAP will establish a fully operational complaints handling system for members and non-members by August 2010.
- HAP will support and mentor at least 2 investigators annually to conduct quality investigations, depending on demand.

⁴ HAP Statutes, Mission and Vision, Article 3

- HAP will establish a pool of 5 registered investigators by end 2010; and a further 4 investigators will be added by 2012.

5. Organisational Objective

HAP will underpin its programme by strengthening the partnership through improved stakeholder representation in its governance, and through consolidating a competent, adequately resourced and environmentally minded Secretariat.

Strengthening the Partnership

HAP will strengthen the engagement of its members, quality and accountability partners, donors, and other supporters through making its services and governance processes relevant and responsive to their needs and interests.

Activities and targets

- Convene an annual general assembly for members, peer initiatives and donors, designed to maximise inter-agency learning, to promote improvements in programme quality assurance, and to enhance cooperation in achieving greater inter-operability and cooperation between quality and accountability initiatives.
- The HAP Board will meet at least twice per year, each October to approve annual budgets and workplans, and in April to approve accounts. The HAP Board and Secretariat will conduct an annual joint review, and explore means to strengthen performance across all of HAP's strategic objectives.
- HAP will support a variety of peer-learning processes, both within the formal HAP Standard review process, and in relation to its whole range of services, which ensure that all users of HAP's services have the opportunity to provide feedback and advice, and that this feedback is reviewed and acted upon appropriately.

Aligning governance, membership and membership rules to strategy

HAP's governance functions will continue to evolve to better enable the realisation of its mission and vision. During 2010, the minimum requirements for members will be revised, the engagement of members of disaster and crisis affected communities, donors and accredited partners in the governance of HAP will be reviewed, and by 2011 new opportunities for strengthening the governance of HAP will be introduced.

Activities and targets

- Consult with the membership on strategy and governance during 2010, with particular emphasis upon strengthening the engagement of members of disaster and crisis affected communities, donors and agencies interested in exploring accreditation options.
- By 2011, the HAP Board and General Assembly to have adopted revised governance arrangements that enable strengthened stakeholder engagement more fully aligned to the delivery of HAP's strategic objectives.

Securing resources

HAP will endeavour to secure the financial resources to support its strategy through a mixed portfolio of donations, cost recovery and membership fees, yielding annual gross revenue

budget of CHF 2.4 million in 2010, growing by an average of 4% per annum through the plan period.

Activities and targets

- HAP will work with committed donors to secure 30% of planned revenue for core activities.
- HAP will secure geographically focused funding agreements over a 4-5 year timeframe, to yield 20% of planned revenue.
- HAP will secure restricted funding for discrete thematic programmes (e.g. New Emergencies and child protection) to raise 20% of planned revenue.
- HAP will realise 30% of planned revenue from service delivery cost recovery and membership fees.
- From 2010, HAP will seek to maintain a year-end reserve of 33% of its net annual expenditure budget to provide a better cushion for extended funding application and approval processes.

Developing skills and competencies

HAP's employees are enthusiastic, dedicated, responsive professionals who work collaboratively as a team, trust and respect each other, demonstrate personal integrity and are committed to maintaining the highest level of service to those who request it.

Activities and targets

- Develop HR policies and systems to support an effective team through improved staff development, performance management and redeployment.
- Facilitate ongoing professional development opportunities that will impact organisational performance and job satisfaction.
- Identify and deploy best use of consultancy support.
- Develop strategic partnerships to capitalise upon complementary skills and competencies.
- Ensure early recognition of HR needs in key operational and policy decisions.

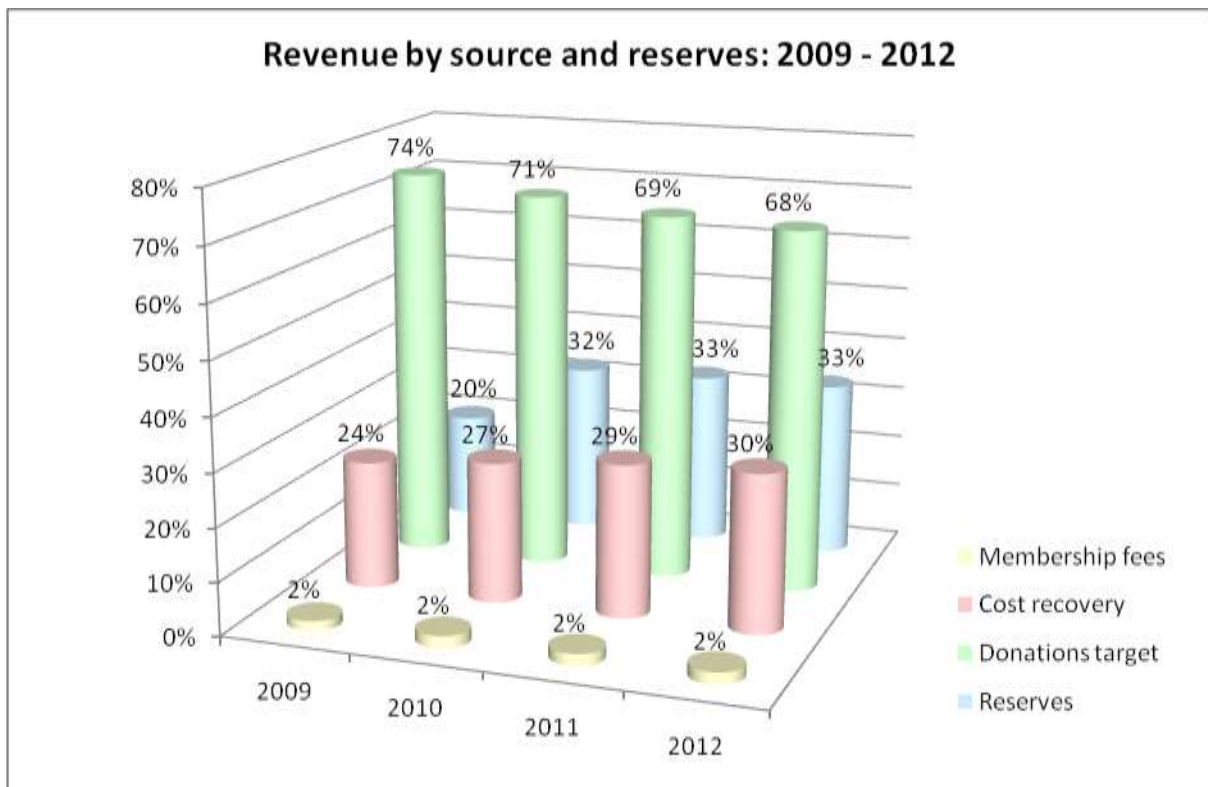
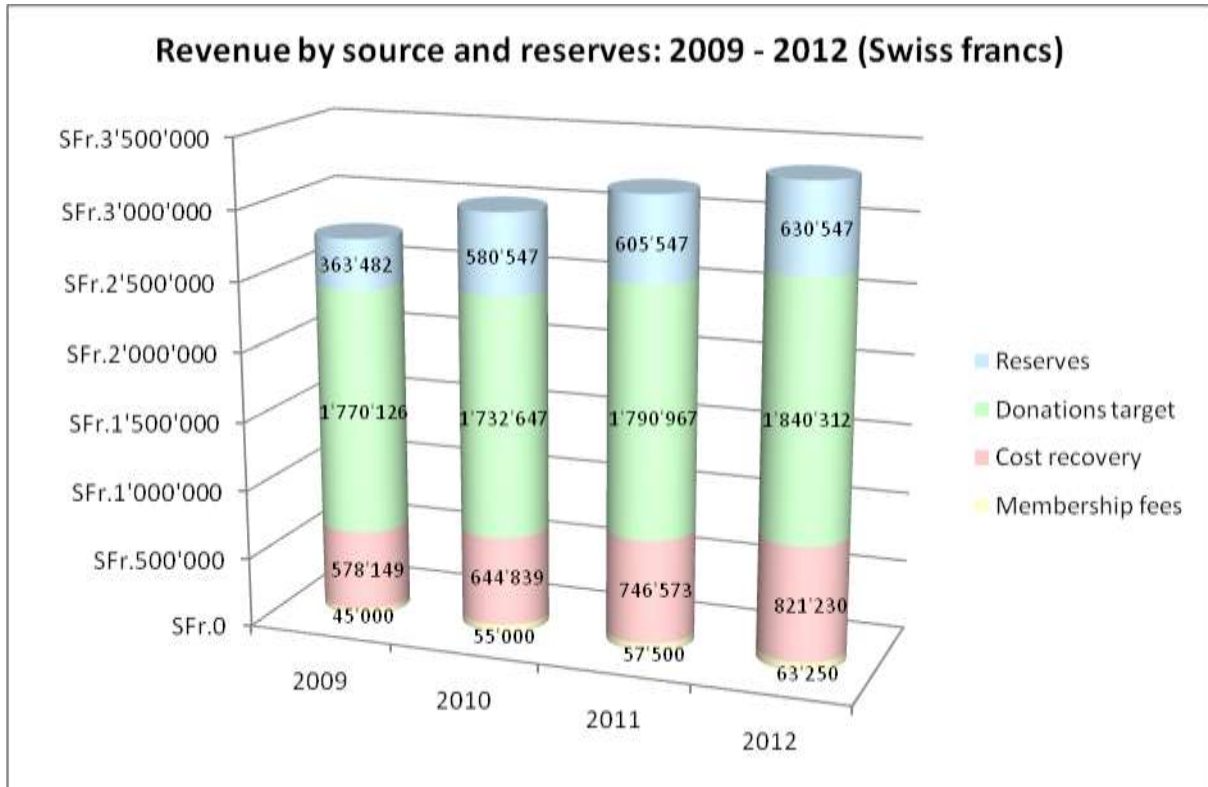
Achieving carbon neutrality

By 2011, HAP will have adopted new methods and approaches, including carbon off-setting, to ensure that negative environmental impact is limited.

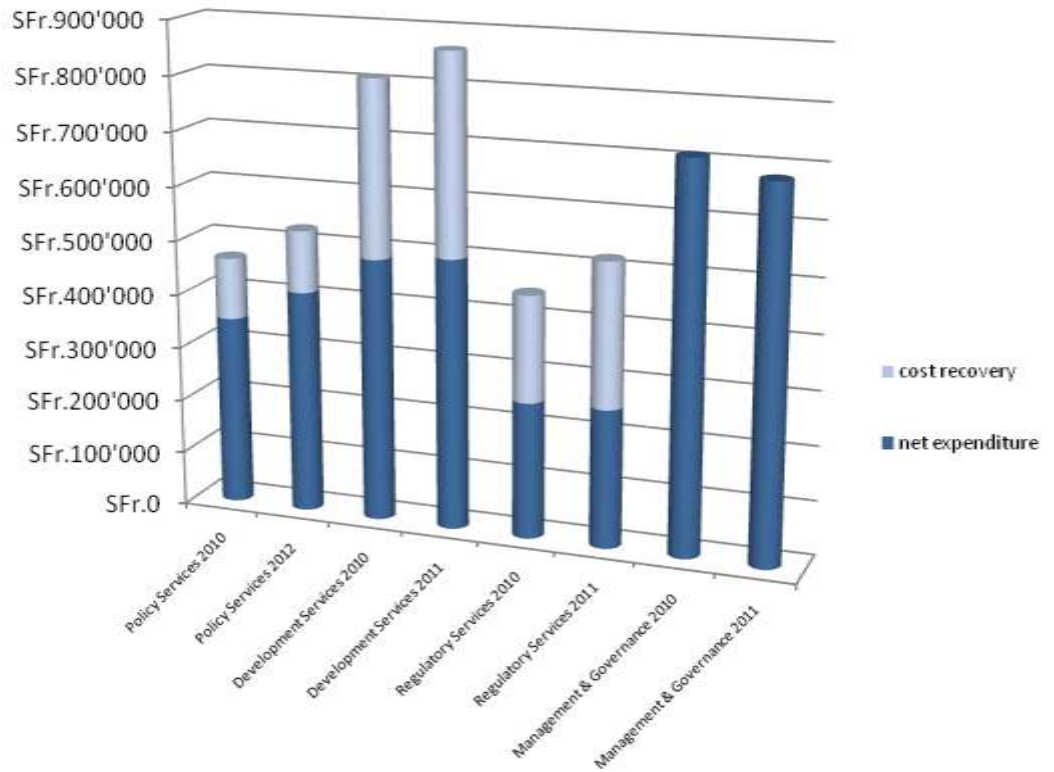
Activities and targets

By 2010 HAP will have completed an analysis of its carbon-footprint and identified ways and means of moving towards carbon-neutrality.

Financial Forecasts



2010-2011 projected gross expenditure and cost recovery by activity (Swiss francs)



The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International

HAP International
 Maison Internationale de l'Environnement 2
 Chemin de Balexert (First Floor, Room 1-08)
 CH-1219 Châtelaine
 Genève, Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 788 1641
 Fax: +41 22 797 3861

Website: www.hapinternational.org