

HAP Standard Review Consultation Meeting

London, 25&26 January 2010

1. General Information

1.1 Location of the consultation: London, UK

1.2 Date of the consultation: 25&26 January 2010

1.3 Person responsible for organising the consultation and contact details:
Monica Blagescu, mblagescu@hapinternational.org

1.4 Time allocated to the consultation: 2 days

1.5 Brief overview of method used in the consultation:

Brief presentations took place in plenary during the morning of day 1. The following slides and speaking notes are available:

- The HAP Standard Review: overview of the process
- Financial accountability in the HAP Standard: INTOSAI and HAP
- Making the Standard more explicit on prevention of and response to exploitation and abuse by aid workers

For the remainder of the two days, small group discussions on specific topics took place alongside plenary sessions, where highlights from the breakout groups were discussed. Please see agenda in Annex 1.

1.6 Number of individuals who were consulted: Overall, 43 participants attended the consultation, including the HAP Secretariat staff. Several HR specialists joined only for the breakout session on Day 2 on Benchmark 4. For a full list of participants and their affiliation, please see Annex 2.

2. Feedback and specific suggestions for improving the HAP 2007 Standard

The sections below highlight the main discussion points and suggestions made by participants during the consultation meeting. The levels of details for different sections differ, depending on how the small group discussion was captured and reported in plenary. Consensus has been marked where this was explicit, and options are listed where different views were expressed. These notes have been put together with support from participants.

Day 1

Summary from break out sessions on the following topics:

1. The Standard for multi-mandate and large/complex organisations

Christian Aid shared their experience:

The two main challenges of securing buy-in from partners and addressing the tension between relief, development and advocacy work were overcome by:

- corporate support of accountability in all areas of work
- jointly agreed plan to develop the capacity of partners. During Christian Aid workshops, specific capacity building projects were formulated; for example,

- self-assessments, focus on specific areas such as information sharing, recruitment approaches or contextualising the complaint-handling policy
- Christian Aid partners developing an improvement plan with support from Christian Aid; all CA appeals have targets on accountability
- A humanitarian officer taking the lead in implementing this corporate priority

CAFOD acknowledged that, in the initial stages of their engagement with HAP, staff found it difficult to see how the Standard would apply across the organisation, due to the “humanitarian” references. This could have been overcome if the introductory section in the Standard defined the scope of the word “humanitarian” in the context of the Standard, making it clear that the Standard also applies to non-humanitarian programmes. CAFOD has since been certified across the organisation.

In relation to larger NGOs and those that have complex governance arrangements, the example of Caritas International and ACT Alliance were used.

- Caritas Haiti is now acting as the implementing partner of CAFOD and of other Caritas members. Caritas Haiti faces different demands from different partners, who each have different accountability requirements. If all Caritas members were applying the HAP Standard, the requests of Caritas Haiti would be managed much easier.
- The ACT Alliance is the main channel for building interest and support for other partners beyond Christian Aid and DCA (both HAP-certified members). It was suggested that other large NGOs regardless of their governance structure should consider certification for one of their distinct parts and use this as an opportunity to share learning and promote improved accountability across the larger unit. The advantage of NGOs with extensive governance arrangements (networks, partnerships, federations) is that they can pilot the application of the HAP Standard at smaller units of management/governance.

PMU InterLife shared their experience of applying the Standard across different types of programmes:

- It is not possible to draw the line between relief and development programmes, especially for partner NGOs
- Develop corporate buy-in based on the perspective of end-users (Applying the Standard across different programmes makes sense from the perspective of target communities, who are not interested on whether programmes are relief or development; they expect the same treatment from all aid agencies and staff)
- Initial confusion on benchmarks, Principles of Accountability and Principles of Humanitarian Action

Another discussion point was on the strong link between accountability to affected populations and advocacy programmes

- Advocacy and accountability: how they can support each other (advocacy programmes collecting data on accountability)
- Advocacy in accountability (for example, informed consent for stories)

Consensus: The drive to apply the Standard to multi-mandate agencies has come from members. The Standard is flexible and can apply to multi-mandate agencies; as more multi-mandate agencies apply it, learning should be captured and any corrections made / gaps flagged. The application of the Standard across different types of programmes avoids drawing arbitrary lines in organisational values and culture; this is the case for both HAP members and partners NGOs that engage in different types of programmes

Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- Emphasise more the legitimacy of the HAP Standard – drawn from the processes through which it was developed and reviewed, and the recognition and commitment of members to use it as a tool to improve performance.
- Engage more actively with donors so that they support and encourage the application of the HAP Standard; this would act as an incentive and recognise agencies that are certified.
- While development NGOs may be more familiar with participatory approaches, the concept of “standards” is less developed and accepted in the sector. Being more explicit about the application of the HAP Standard to multi-mandate agencies will encourage cross-learning within agencies where relief programmes are already applying the Standard.
- Be clear that the Standard is primarily for multi-mandate agencies, i.e. humanitarian agencies that are also involved in other types of programmes, and *not* necessarily directly targeting just development agencies, for example.
- Fundraising colleagues should be sensitised to the HAP Standard; they raise funds on behalf of affected communities
- Develop a child-friendly version of the HAP 2010 Standard

Specific suggestions in relation to the Standard:

- The Covenant is misunderstood and under-utilised → Reword and be more specific about the purpose of the Principles of Humanitarian Action (Secondary principles are seen to be related to the Principles of Accountability, the tertiary principles are more operational).
- The use of the word “exoneration” in discussions about the Principles of Humanitarian Action gives the wrong impression that HAP is dictating the Standard, when actually it is the agencies themselves that have made a commitment to meet the Standard, thus this point ought to be emphasise more. The hierarchy is a tool for agencies to overcome difficult circumstances, make decisions and “explain non-compliance” (preferred instead of exoneration).
- Address the language barrier; define “humanitarian” and remove the term throughout the Standard where appropriate. For example, the use of the term “humanitarian quality management system” is overly complex and could easily be replaced with “management system” which would appeal to all types of programmes.

2. The Standard for agencies working with partners

(Group 1)

Tearfund UK shared their experience:

- Modelling the Standard internally before applying to partners
- Baseline acted as a catalyst for securing buy-in across different programmes, which then led to a decision to proceed with certification
- Developed internal quality standards
- Do not impose on partners, but engage in dialogue to identify appropriate approaches (only financial accountability and child protection are mandatory)

Emerging good practice to be reflected in the Standard

- Agencies need to define and categorise different types of partnerships. This will lead to agencies being explicit about levels and types of accountability
- Emphasise context, bottom up approaches and ownership

- A stronger push for monitoring and ensuring practice / changes in behaviour and not only policy/system reform; be explicit with partners from the start that monitoring will happen
- Clarify
 - means of assessing the risk of working with partners
 - process of establishing partnerships
 - minimum requirements for partners
- Consider incorporating requirements regarding agencies' practice in relation to partners under each benchmark
- Partners need to know about how the agency itself is being monitored and held to account: receiving feedback from partners and about partners from affected communities

(Group 2)

Emerging good practice to be reflected in the Standard

- Agencies need to identify different types of partnerships (what happens when governments are partners of NGOs?) and the limits of accountability (to partners, to communities, etc)
- Agencies need to clarify expectations from the start what the benefits of the relationship are on both sides and what evidence will demonstrate mutual accountability. Questions were raised on how negotiable/non-negotiable accountability is in partner agreements and suggestions were made that MOUs or partner agreements be explicit about accountability commitments.
- Participants emphasises that coordination is crucial in partnerships, and that the HAP Standard provides a good means for both self-regulation and mutual accountability when working with partners.

Consensus regarding the Standard

- Use more simple language throughout. Bring some of the clear guidance from The Guide into the Standard, and provide some guidance or separate examples of resources/capacity required to meet the Standard when working with partners
- Streamline requirements in relation to agencies working with partners across all benchmarks.

3. Improving financial accountability in the Standard

(based on notes prepared by Smruti Patel, HAP, group rapporteur)

The discussion focused on strengthening financial accountability in the Standard. The main argument here was that in the absence of financial accountability, resources designated for humanitarian aid will not reach the beneficiaries. Thus, financial accountability and humanitarian accountability are intrinsically linked.

At present, Qualifying Norm 3 (QN 3) and Benchmark 2 make reference to financial accountability, and a review of internal control systems already takes place as part of the baseline analysis and the certification audit.

Specific suggestion on QN 3

Suggestions were made to add “and has internal controls and an adequate financial risk management system.” The INTOSAI colleague noted that this wording is not in line with the internal control standards as defined by accounting or financial international bodies; risk management is part of the internal control system. Therefore, to keep the text shorter, it was suggested to restrict the addition to: “and has an adequate financial risk management system”

The term “adequate” should then be explained in the Guide.

Requirement 1.1

An additional (sub)requirement could be inserted: "The agency shall include in its humanitarian accountability framework its documented commitment to financial accountability towards all relevant stakeholders".

The corresponding means of verification could be extended to explicitly refer to this requirement. "Review copy of documented accountability framework and cross-reference with all relevant agency commitments including the agency's non-disclosure policy and commitment to financial accountability".

Benchmark 2:

A proposal was made that financial reports present information by funding source and country/project level. Participants agreed that the interpretation of project differs, and thus a clear explanation needs to be provided. A further suggestion was to break down expenditure by amounts spent locally and elsewhere (overhead costs).

In general, current practice allows financial information to be *extracted* by project, though this is likely to require extra capacity/resources.

There were questions asked about where this type of financial reports should be published and their frequency. Some participants suggested that financial reports should be shared with all stakeholders and that, at country level, such information would also be best shared with peers through a coordination mechanism (there were no suggestions about whether this should be through the cluster system or a different mechanism).

Risks that would arise from making such financial report available were also discussed, particularly in relation to staff safety and security. Participants acknowledged that risks of sharing financial reports need to be assessed and non-disclosure explained in relation to such risks.

Sharing such information at country level is particularly important when agencies work with partners. Some of the existing practice to ensure financial accountability, and particularly prevent double booking includes:

- Agencies suggesting to their partners a list of audit agencies that the partner agencies could use.
- Separate accounts for different funders; though this practice presents various challenges.
- Planned financial spot checks between partners.
- Declaration of commitment between partners to disclose information on all sources of funding.

There was consensus that:

- a declaration of commitment to disclose all sources of funding is a good suggestion to be applied by all agencies, but that some of the other practices listed above are not always desirable.
- the suggested reporting format from INTOSAI be recommended in The Guide with a clarification of what “project” means in this context
- any reporting by donor by country/project will be made available as part of current reporting cycles (for example, part of the annual report)

There was concern on the level of detail that financial reporting can reach, particularly for different types of organisations such as alliances, federations, that have autonomous chapters, or those with country level autonomy; how reporting will be broken down “per project” for such organisations and where such information would be published. These were highlighted as dilemmas, in addition to a clear definition of project.

Suggestions for the Guide

- The terms “adequate” and “internal control” should be explained.
- Means of verification needs to be developed for the financial compliance
- Good practice on financial management and internal controls needs to be included.

Audit guidelines will need to be adjusted in accordance with specified section on internal controls.

MANGO expressed interest to work with HAP and INTOSAI to develop this work further, particularly the appropriate sections in The Guide.

4. Making the Standard more explicit on prevention of and response to exploitation and abuse (based on notes prepared by Richard Powell, SCUUK, group rapporteur)

The group considered the questions of whether there was the need to establish a new standard solely for prevention of and response to exploitation and abuse by aid workers, to establish a new benchmark or whether the priority should be to strengthen and make more explicit the current standard.

The consensus across the two workshops was that it was not advisable to develop new standards and benchmarks. Group members felt that this could be counterproductive and confusing. The group noted that in some countries or with some governments where discussion on prevention of exploitation and abuse, including of a sexual nature is not possible, having a separate Benchmark would effectively be a block on reporting.

The groups proposed that the most effective approach would be to utilise the current infrastructure of the standard and benchmarks. In this way, agencies would avoid developing a number of mechanisms and could concentrate on strengthening and making more effective the current mechanisms.

The group went on to identify a number of priority areas for strengthening the current systems.

1. The first of these recognised the central role of complaint handling systems and the need to reflect this in Benchmark 5.1.
2. Criteria for complaint handling systems that would assist to strengthen would include being able to deal with a range of issues and need to meet criteria for comprehension, accessibility and inclusivity
3. In addition there is a need to strengthen the basis upon which complaint and response systems are established. These could be strengthened through a process of mapping the PSEA infrastructure along the lines of:
 - Legal/judicial systems for dealing with allegations/complaints
 - Cultural/local issues/barriers around raising a complaint

- Culturally sensitive terminology and practices
 - Cultural/traditional practices which are exploitative such as early marriage, child labour, physical punishment, FGM etc
 - Social/welfare responses to victims/witnesses
 - Community based resources available to support victims/witnesses
 - INGO resources available to support victims/witnesses and undertake investigations (pool of trained investigators)
 - Clear understanding of what issues should be reported to national authorities and when to do so and the permissions required to do so as well as understanding the risks involved.
4. The groups identified a number of areas where Benchmark 2 should be strengthened. These fell into 3 main categories: Communication; Competence, Confidence
5. In terms of **Communication**, Benchmark 2 (information sharing) needs to be strengthened by including the requirement of communicating the standards of behaviour are expected of staff as well as those which are unacceptable, communicating the duty of care and the communicating the principle of doing no harm. Benchmark 2 would be strengthened if it included definition of a complaint and response system and sexual exploitation and abuse within a “text box”. Benchmark 5 could be strengthened to define “safe referral” with guidance on dealing with complaints and safeguarding those involved. Each Benchmark and requirement should include references prevention and response to exploitation and abuse, where relevant. In communicating the strengthened standards and the overarching nature of exploitation against the weakest and most vulnerable should be reflected in an emphasis on gender age ability etc.
6. In terms of **Competence**, the group focussed on the skills needed to receive and respond to complaints. The groups identified the set of processes, roles and skills needed that relate to dealing with internal aspects as well as the external aspects of complaints.
- The role of managers in creating and maintaining environments where high standards are maintained is an area that could be reflected in stronger requirements.
 - The group identified the role of managers and the need to make resources, tools and guidance available to those who occupy these roles.
7. Establishing **Confidence** in the system was seen as crucial both within the staff populations and beneficiary populations. Confidence is heightened if there are strong monitoring mechanisms in place to identify when and where the systems are being implemented. Therefore Benchmark 6 (continual improvement) should be strengthened in this respect.
- Likewise there is a need to be more specific on Code of Conduct, being explicit on the need for it cover professional and personal life and making the link to the Secretary General’s Bulletin no 13, 2003;
 - The group observed that transparency is key to confidence building particularly in terms of organisational responses, which often are given higher priority when agencies feel that they are exposed, or at risk as a result of increased awareness/exposure around these issues.

DAY 2

1. The Introduction and Preamble

(based on notes prepared by Nicholas Morris, group rapporteur)

Observations:

- Consideration of the Covenant is bound up with the benchmarks and questions around the application of the Standard to multi-mandated agencies;
- Introduction and Covenant are an integral part of the Standard but not seen or used as such by agencies;
- Some confusion perceived among qualifying norms, accountability principles, and humanitarian principles, and some duplication with benchmarks, e.g. commitment to publish a humanitarian accountability framework is both a qualifying norm and part of Benchmark 2 (information sharing);
- Concerns have been raised on the hierarchy of principles;
- The wide understanding of "stakeholders" beyond beneficiaries and partners has implications for the Standard;
- The declaration of interests section (2.3) needs refining/clarification;
- An introduction and explanation of the Standard is necessary but needs to be more relevant and accessible.

Suggestions:

- Consider moving the Preamble to the start of the Introduction;
- Drop the accountability principles; they have been overtaken by events and/or covered elsewhere. The 2010 Standard should have the 2007 Standard as its departure point with only a summary explanation of what went before;
- Consider making commitment to humanitarian principles a qualifying norm; these principles could be either just existing code(s), such as the revised Sphere humanitarian charter if appropriate, or principles developed for the Standard, but with as much as possible clearly in common with other principles, or a combination of the two;
- Consider the risks and benefits of
 - requesting certified agencies to decide on criteria for explaining non-compliance in accordance with the HAP Standard hierarchy,
 - leaving the means of explaining non-compliance to agencies in accordance with their own relative weighting and organizational ethos, but make it clear that a validation of that decision by the auditor would need to meet standard not organization-specific values (i.e. though not explicit, there would be a HAP Standard hierarchy) [another group proposed that having a framework for managing risk should be a qualifying norm];
- The section on partners (2.5) will need revision in light of the treatment of partners in the revised benchmarks.

2. Quality management system (Benchmark 1) and continual improvement (Benchmark 6)

(Group 1)

Observation

- Benchmark 1 is the hardest to measure (refer to page 46 in The Guide) and the one where agencies encounter most challenges

Suggestions:

- combine Benchmark 1 and Benchmark 6: state commitments, implement them through specific processes, improve them (M&E)
 - Option: include Requirement 1.3 on continual improvement
- Strike a balance between flexibility and prescriptive templates
 - define the elements of a management system (use the 8 ISO areas)
- Remove the word humanitarian (Clearer explanation in The Guide)
- Prevention of exploitation and abuse should be a requirement of accountability commitments (HAF) or a qualifying norm (MoV)

Possible formulations: “the agency shall demonstrate how it delivers its quality and accountability commitments” / “the agency shall establish, implement and continually improve a management system for delivering its quality and accountability commitments”

(Group 2)

Suggestions

- The HAF must state who is responsible for it and how results are assured
- Possible formulation for Benchmark 6: “The agency shall continually improve its accountability framework, management systems and working relationships with relevant stakeholders”
- For requirement 6.1, consider: “the agency shall use ongoing monitoring and evaluation to drive improvements in systems and practice.”
- Put more emphasis on continual improvement;
 - shows that quality and accountability are ongoing processes
 - beneficiary views need to drive improvement
- Consider including continual improvement in each benchmark; suggestions were also made to move requirement 6.1 to Benchmark
- BM 6.2: partner element to also be incorporated in each benchmark

A point of clarification was made that, to follow the ISO guidelines for the development of international standards, all duplication and overlap in the Standard needs to be avoided.

3. Information sharing (Benchmark 2) and complaint handling (Benchmark 5)

Financial accountability

- Discussion on feasibility of publishing financial reports per country/project and per donor (source of funding); overall agreement that this is possible and several examples were shared.
- Challenge of safety of staff: consider adding risk analysis in the MoVs
- Define “project”, “budget” and “financial reports” in this context

Prevention of and response to exploitation and abuse

- Requirement 2.1 needs clarification; consider including explicit reference to code of conduct (here, in Benchmark 4 or in Benchmark 5)
- Clearly define complaint-handling procedure; procedure, different entry points, valid complaints, types of complaints
- Review requirement 5.2 and/or relevant parts in The Guide to include:
 - Victim support guidance (e.g. use of advocates)
 - Staff support guidance (e.g. risk analysis)
 - Appeal process
- Clarify that “processing complaints” includes investigation

- In requirement 5.1, consider including mapping exercise of legal, judicial, social care and community structures to manage internal and external complaints
- Question on whether 5.5 should be part of 5.2 or stand-alone. Would it fit best under Benchmark 4?

There was discussion on the cultural and political sensitivities of the word “complaints”, and whether it would be more appropriate to use the word feedback (in some countries the use of the word can lead to government concerns and therefore blockage, in others there are no local language equivalents making it difficult in implementation). Tearfund, for example, have referred to “feedback” instead of complaints. Other participants highlighted that feedback can be either positive or negative, and in relation to anything that the aid agency does; agencies can take feedback into account, challenge it or disregard it as appropriate. A complaint, by contrast, contains the specific grievance of a stakeholder. While responding to feedback may be optional, a complaint requires an answer.

It was agreed that the Working Group will put forward recommendations to the Steering Committee on how to address the issue of wording (complaint versus feedback or other options); and that of content (should this benchmark refer to feedback in general, of which complaint is one aspect?).

Definitions

- Include *all* definitions throughout the Standard *either* in the same place (equivalent of current page 7) *or* immediately next to where the respective words are referenced.
- Strengthen the definition of the word “beneficiary” (broaden it to that it is non-discriminatory and more inclusive)
- Broaden the understanding of the word “complaint” so that it is more clearly applicable in all cultural contexts; need for the Standard to be explicit about agencies needing *to respond* to all types of *feedback*

Language

- MoV 4 under Requirement 2.1: how will “accessibility” be assessed?
- Mov 1 under Requirement 2.2: consider making reference to rights/entitlements and deliverables,
- Remove superfluous words such as “specified” stakeholders, “linked”

4. Participation (Benchmark 3)

Challenge/Issue	Suggestions to address it
Informed consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on how this is currently assessed, include requirement on it • include definition in the benchmark or in a box of all definitions in the Standard • change from “seek” to “obtain”
Different levels of participation	<p>Include MoV on: documented guidance for staff In the Guide, recommend that guidance for staff includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition • acknowledgment of different levels of participation; • suggestions on assessing the context’s feasibility to engage in different levels of participation with a view of moving from <i>information sharing</i> to <i>influencing</i>

“Representatives” if open to interpretation	<p>The guidelines for staff ought to include definitions and process for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying • working with • reviewing the degree of representation of “representatives” with wider community <p>Include MoV on analysis of power, vulnerabilities; asking beneficiaries</p>
3.2 – project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	<p>Unpack this requirement by different stages of the project cycle</p> <p>Agency to feed back to the community on how their input has affected the project.</p> <p>Community views to be sought both on products and services/process</p>
Feedback: two-way between agency and beneficiaries/non-beneficiaries	<p>Include MoV: review feedback systems, beneficiary views, evidence of sharing outcomes of analysis</p>
Leadership, to ensure the enabling environment	<p>Links with BM1 and BM6 – does it need specific reference here?</p>

5. Staff Competencies (Benchmark 4)

Main points emerging from the discussion:

- 1) Where the standard relates to staff rather than to beneficiaries then it was agreed the People In Aid Code or other documents should be used as a reference.
- 2) Without effective organisational approaches to staff security, and health, safety, wellbeing [key elements of the People In Aid Code] then the HAP standard will not be possible to implement.
- 3) The group agreed that it would be very helpful to remind the reader that the HAP Standard is about quality management and beneficiary accountability.

More specific suggestions:

- A basic framework for managing risk in relation to staff is needed; if this is already included in Benchmark 1, for example, it needs to be made more explicit
- There needs to be a reference to Code of conduct
- Complaint handling (Requirement 5.5);
 - in certain national contexts, statutory mechanisms are in place that need to be recognised
 - clarify what procedures should be followed by national staff who are also beneficiaries but may have a complaint (would they use internal grievance procedures or would they use the complaints procedure as per the HAP Standard Benchmark 5). It was argued that HR good practice is to try and deal with less severe complaints or grievances informally where appropriate
- Consider making the benchmark (MoVs in particular) more explicit about staff competencies in relation to beneficiary accountability and quality management; the MoVs are mostly internal (i.e. what the auditor would look for) but not for communities and other stakeholders (what would they look for?)
 - Gender diversity/balance in 4.1

- Requirement 4.4 and means of verification
- 4.2 is key, yet it currently packs a lot information (awareness as well as understanding of several aspects)

HAP member approaches to implementing the 2007 HAP Standard

(based on notes prepared by Emily Rogers, HAP)

Concern Worldwide

In 2009 Concern Worldwide undertook a baseline analyses against the HAP Standard in different countries where it operates. Toireas Ni Bhriain, the focal person for Concern, gave an overview of the steps taken in the first stage of their process to introduce and roll out the HAP Standard.

Brief overview

- Each region selected a country to host the initial training and baseline. Senior managers from surrounding countries visited the host country to participate in a 2-day workshop and baseline.
- Toireas conducted the workshops; she spent time in each country beforehand to gain an understanding of some of the specific issues and challenges related to the country context, and to support partner NGOs to conduct their own self-assessment. The workshop gave an introduction to the HAP Standard and self-assessment questions. During the workshop staff identified questions that they would use in the baseline process with staff, partners and beneficiaries.
- The baseline took five days, with the final day dedicated to analysing the findings and writing the report. As part of the process, each participant focused on a specific benchmark and was responsible for the write up as part of the report.
- Participants then returned to their country programmes and repeated the process.
- The reports from each country are being sent to Toireas, who will then analyse all the results. Based on the headquarters' baseline in Dublin conducted by HAP, Concern was already aware of the need to strengthen complaints and response mechanisms, and aspects to do with working with partners.

Resources involved

In 2008, each country was asked to budget for one person to attend the training in 2009. In addition countries were asked to estimate costs that may be needed to implement changes likely to arise from the baseline. On top of this, there were costs associated with the focal point's salary and travel. A funding proposal to IrishAid to support this work was successful.

Reflections on the process

In general, the process to date worked well and is being acknowledged as the first step. Particular challenges included:

- Competing demands on staff – while staff were interested during the workshop, they faced competing demands when they returned to their own country-offices. There was a need to both empathise and also keep the 'foot on the peddle' to ensure the process progressed.

- Language – in particular that of Benchmark 1 was a turn off for most staff; it made the entire Standard difficult to explain.
- Risk of defensiveness – staff were encouraged to be honest and reflective as part of the process, to counteract the risk of staff and partner NGOs becoming defensive.

What next

Concern now has an organisational Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF). The key to this new version is that it uses the language of Concern.

Following the baselines, each country will contextualise the HAF and develop a country-specific accountability framework and a workplan based on the gaps identified as part of the baseline process.

From 2009, each country has been expected to report on accountability. This will continue and each country will be expected to report against their accountability framework. From 2010-2012 each country and HQ will have a budget element specifically for improving accountability.

Tearfund UK

David Bainbridge provided an overview of the main approaches, learning points and results to date from Tearfund's experience with the HAP Standard and the certification process.

Main approaches

- Accountability is internally owned rather than externally driven: HAP becomes the external validation of internal beliefs.
- Phased approach, starting with emergency response, focusing first on operations and higher-capacity partners
- HAF converted into familiar Tearfund language and made manageable. It was developed by collecting together all policies that Tearfund had. Based on these, the core commitments were identified, resulting in 12 key Tearfund Quality Standards that are supported by different policies.

Learning

- Language differences between HAP and Tearfund
- Accountability perceived as sitting with the disaster-management side of Tearfund – how to encourage wider ownership?
- What about lower-capacity partners? Initially the focus was on partners those with higher capacity, the next step is to also engage with partners with limited capacity.
- There are challenges in undergoing more than one external process – HAP, PIA, DECAF (risk of “death by action plan!”); agencies need to consider carefully why they are making these different commitments and what makes sense for them.
- Have seen a danger of being too focused on “hardware” – need to work on organisational culture, values and attitudes so that accountability makes sense to all.
- Danger of too much emphasis on policy at the expense of practice. It is important to ensure that all policies make sense for the organisation and that they reflect good practice on the ground.

Results to date

- Gradually increasing integration into organisational culture – winning hearts and minds has been key to this more than improving systems and policy.
- Feedback from beneficiaries is now included in reports and presented to executive teams every quarter.
- Child protection is now included in the HAF, and fits within the same overarching framework.
- Programme team are now all on the same page with regard to Tearfund's core commitments.

Annex 1

HAP Standard Review Consultation Meeting

Agenda
London
25 and 26 January 2010

Monday, 25 January 2010

Time	Session	Contributor / Facilitator
09:15 – 09:30	Arrival / Registration	
09:30 – 09:45	Welcome & Introduction	
09:45 – 10:15	The Review: process and progress update	Monica Blagescu
10:15 – 11:00	Main considerations for the review: briefing, Q&A and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial accountability • Prevention of, and response to, exploitation and abuse 	Jan Pieter Lingen, INTOSAI Coleen Heemskerk, HAP
11:00 – 11:15	Tea / Coffee	
11:15 – 12:45	... previous session continues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standard and certification process for different-size agencies • The Standard for agencies working with partners • The Standard applied to multi-mandate agencies • Improving coherence and complementarity between the HAP Standard and the People In Aid Code; the HAP Standard and the Sphere Common Standards 	Barb Wigley, HAP Richard Cobb, Merlin Katharina Samara, HAP Ben Emmens, PIA John Damerell, Sphere Project
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch (participants choose breakout groups)	
13:45 – 15:00	Learning / challenges and options for addressing them in the 2010 Standard and The Guide to the Standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for breakout groups • Participants join their chosen group, amongst the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Standard and certification process for multi-mandate and different-size agencies ○ The Standard for agencies working with partners ○ Improving financial accountability in the Standard ○ Making the Standard more explicit on prevention of and response to exploitation and abuse 	Group facilitators
15:00 – 15:15	Tea / Coffee Break	
15:15 – 16:15	...previous session continues Participants join a different break-out group	Group facilitators
16:15 – 16:30	Wrap up of Day 1	

Tuesday, 26 January 2010		
Time	Session	Contributor / Facilitator
09:15 – 10:00	Feedback from breakout groups	Rapporteurs
10:00 – 11:15	Suggestions for adjustments in the Standard and The Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning of breakout groups ▪ Participants join a group on the following topics, which were agreed in plenary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The HAP Standard Introduction and Covenant ○ Benchmarks 1 and 6: quality management and continual improvement ○ Benchmark 2 and 5: information sharing and complaint handling ○ Benchmark 3: participation ○ Benchmark 4: staff competencies 	Group facilitators
11:15 – 11:30	Tea / Coffee	
11:30 – 12:30	...previous session continues Participants join a different breakout group	Group facilitators
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:30	Feedback from breakout groups	Rapporteurs
14:30 – 16:00 (with coffee break)	HAP member approaches to implementing the 2007 HAP Standard; briefing and round-table discussion	Toireas Ni Bhirain, Concern David Bainbridge, Tearfund
16:00 – 16:30	Wrap up and next steps	Monica Blagescu; participants

Annex 2: List of participants

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