The **2010 HAP Standard** in Accountability and Quality Management

HAP Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

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Foreword

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International was established in 2003 to promote accountability to people affected by humanitarian crises and to acknowledge those organisations that meet the HAP *Principles of Accountability*, which the founding members developed as a condition of HAP membership. By applying these *Principles*, an organisation becomes accountable for the quality of its work to people it aims to assist and on whose behalf it is acting. In order to provide an objective, consistent and logical approach to verifying that HAP members apply and meet the *Principles of Accountability*, HAP developed the 2007 *Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management*. This was the first international standard designed to assess, improve and recognise the accountability and quality of humanitarian programmes.

How the 2010 HAP Standard was developed

The ISO/IEC Directives Part 2, Rules for the Structure and Drafting of International Standards (fifth edition, 2004) guided the drafting process for the *2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management* (referred to in this document as "the HAP Standard" or "the 2010 edition"). The 2010 edition replaces the 2007 edition following a transition period.

The HAP Standard is the result of an extensive review of the 2007 edition in light of the experience of how it was applied by different organisations, and reflects learning in accountability practice since 2007. The HAP Board authorised a Steering Committee to oversee the review. The review process involved wide consultation with different stakeholders, including crisis-affected people, aid workers and donors. Over 1,900 people contributed to the review and the preparation of the 2010 edition, bringing to the process authentic experiences from the perspective of different groups.

During the preparation of the HAP Standard, the HAP Secretariat sought input from quality and accountability initiatives, including the Sphere Project, People In Aid, and others relevant to HAP members, such as the Australian Council for International Development and the UK Disasters Emergency Committee. This effort is part of HAP's ongoing work to improve consistency between the HAP Standard and other relevant codes and standards.

The Plain English Campaign reviewed several drafts of the HAP Standard, with particular attention to language accessibility.

Who approved the 2010 edition

The HAP Board, authorised by the HAP General Assembly, approved the English version of the 2010 edition on 20 October 2010.

What is different in the 2010 edition

The 2010 edition incorporates all of the content in the 2007 edition, which it presents in a more logical order, in line with *The ISO/IEC Directives Part 2*, and using more user-friendly language. The HAP *Principles of Accountability* are included in the Annex of the 2010 edition. The qualifying norms for certification outlined in the 2007 edition are included in a section on the HAP certification scheme (section 2.4) in the 2010 edition. *The Preamble and Principles for Humanitarian Action* sections in the 2007 edition have been reviewed and included under the *HAP Standard Commitment* (section 4) in the 2010 edition. The section on *Working with humanitarian partners* in the 2007 edition is included under *Purpose and scope* (section 2.2.2) in the 2010 edition. The sections on *Putting Principles into Practice and Declaration of additional interests* in the 2007 edition are under *General requirements* (section 5.1) in the 2010 edition.

The HAP Standard was originally developed for application in humanitarian relief programmes. Based on experience and on the review consultations, the scope of the 2010 edition has been expanded and the HAP Standard can also be applied to other aspects of an organisation's work, including development and advocacy. This expansion in scope does not necessarily change the nature of HAP's primary area of work.

Overall, the 2010 edition gives further detail of requirements in the 2007 edition. Elements of financial accountability and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse have been strengthened to reflect feedback on the 2007 edition and to promote coherence with other accountability systems. A separate section for organisations working with partners has been included under each benchmark.

The order of the benchmarks has changed, and minor adjustments have been made to the wording of benchmarks. Five specific requirements in the 2010 edition include content that was not already part of the 2007 edition. These are requirements 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2.6 and 4.3 in section 5.2 of the HAP Standard.

Next revision date

The HAP Standard will continue to evolve and improve. HAP invites users of the HAP Standard to share their experiences by contacting the HAP Secretariat (secretariat@hapinternational.org). This feedback helps HAP to continuously capture and share learning from the application of the HAP Standard.

HAP will revise and update the HAP Standard after 2015.

1. Introduction

1.1 Accountability and the HAP Standard

Accountability has many meanings. Traditionally, it was understood as the way in which those who authorised others to act on their behalf made sure that authority was being used as agreed. Accountability is now more often understood to *also* be a right of anyone affected by the use of authority. This recent meaning of accountability is the foundation for the HAP Standard. For the purpose of the HAP Standard, *accountability is the means through which power is used responsibly.* It is a process of taking into account the views of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily the people affected by authority or power.

Accountability is particularly necessary for organisations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises. Such organisations exercise significant power in their work to save lives and reduce suffering. In contrast, crisis-affected people have no formal control, and often little influence, over these organisations. As a result, it is difficult for those people to hold organisations to account for actions taken on their behalf.

Being accountable to crisis-affected people helps organisations to develop quality programmes that meet those people's needs, and reduces the possibility of mistakes, abuse and corruption. Accountability processes that are managed effectively make the organisations perform better. In this context, the HAP Standard helps organisations to assess, improve and recognise the quality and accountability of their work, and benefits both the organisations and the people affected by crises.

1.2 Contents of the HAP Standard

The scope of the HAP Standard is set out in section 2. Section 3 introduces some of the main terms and definitions used in the Standard. The principles that organisations applying the HAP Standard make a commitment to are set out in section 4. Section 5 presents the HAP Standard requirements[1], identified by the word "shall".

All sections of this document form part of the HAP Standard, reinforcing and building on each other.

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[1] Contractual requirements and legal or statutory requirements are not covered in the HAP Standard.

2. Purpose and scope

2.1 Purpose

The HAP Standard helps organisations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises to design, implement, assess, improve and recognise accountable programmes. It describes how to establish a commitment to accountability and the processes that will deliver quality programmes for the people who experience them first hand. The HAP Standard is intended to be used either on its own or with other tools, frameworks and standards.

2.2 Scope

The HAP Standard can apply to all types of local, national and international organisations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises, including HAP members and non-members, multi-mandate organisations (see section 2.2.1), and organisations that deliver direct assistance and those that work with partners (see section 2.2.2).

2.2.1 Multi-mandate organisations

The work of many organisations is not limited to providing humanitarian relief, but includes all types of assistance to people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises. The dividing line between humanitarian and development assistance is fluid. For example, activities such as disaster risk reduction include both types of assistance and, over time, an organisation may provide both disaster relief and development aid to the same group of people.

In the interests of the people affected by any type of crisis that HAP members and other organisations aim to assist, the HAP Standard can be applied to all aspects of an organisation's work, including relief, development and advocacy. The HAP Standard is also relevant to disaster preparedness and recovery, as it supports approaches that recognise and strengthen the capabilities of people affected by or prone to crises. Terms used in the HAP Standard, particularly the term "humanitarian", should be interpreted broadly, depending on each organisation's decision of the scope of application of the 2010 edition. Organisations that implement different types of programmes at the same location are encouraged to work towards meeting the HAP Standard across all programmes at that location.

2.2.2 Organisations working with partners

The HAP Standard applies to:
- organisations that deliver direct assistance to the people affected by a crisis;
- organisations that provide financial, material or technical support to other organisations but do not directly take part in providing the assistance; and
- organisations that combine both these approaches.

An organisation that works with partners will not be in a position to meet the HAP Standard in relation to the people it aims to assist in the same way as an organisation that delivers direct assistance. However, an organisation working with partners needs to apply the HAP Standard in relation to its partners and to work with partners to identify appropriate ways for them to meet the HAP Standard in relation to the people they aim to assist and other stakeholders, as appropriate. To this end, each benchmark in the HAP Standard contains additional requirements for organisations when they work with partners, so that their partners can meet those requirements relevant to the direct provision of assistance.

2.3 Users of the HAP Standard

The HAP Standard is designed for all those providing, contributing to providing, receiving, observing, assessing and assuring the quality of humanitarian action. The HAP Standard enables:
- organisations to design and implement accountability processes in line with clear requirements, to inform stakeholders of their approach, and to allow them to have a clear basis for assessing and improving their practice;
- stakeholders to identify, assess and comment on the accountability and quality of an organisation, using clear benchmarks and associated requirements; and
- assurance practitioners to review and comment on an organisation's accountability and to assess its performance from the perspective of crisis-affected people and other stakeholders. The HAP Standard offers the basis for assessing and recognising organisations that comply with it through the HAP certification scheme (see section 2.4). For this reason, requirements have been stated as criteria that can be audited.

The HAP Standard can also be used by:
- advisors and consultants, to assess and comment on accountability and quality management systems, and to help in designing and implementing them;
- professional development and training practitioners, to build competency in accountability and quality management systems; and
- other standards bodies, to bring a clear understanding of accountability into their own work.

2.4 The HAP quality assurance certification scheme

Through a thorough and independent audit, the HAP certification scheme verifies and recognises that an organisation meets the HAP Standard. HAP, or a body accredited by HAP for this purpose, carries out the audit. To qualify for a HAP certification audit, an organisation provides evidence that:

1. it is formally declared as a not-for-profit organisation in the country or countries where it is legally registered and where it works;
2. it meets the requirements for financial accountability under the law in the country or countries where it is legally registered and where it works, and has a reliable internal control system to ensure funds are used properly; and
3. it makes its accountability framework public, has reviewed its status of compliance with it, and has a plan for improving its performance against it.

Full details on the HAP certification scheme, including the period for which certification is granted and the compulsory mid-term monitoring audit, are available in *The Guide to HAP Certification*.

2.5 Relationship to other initiatives

The HAP Standard is intended to complement other standards that relate to accountability to people affected by different types of crises, as well as issue-specific standards and guidelines on quality management systems, human rights, and protection from abuse and corruption. Examples include relevant ISO standards, the *UN Secretary-General's Bulletin: Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse* (ST/SGB/2003/13), the *Sustainability Reporting Guidelines and NGO Sector Supplement* of the Global Reporting Initiative, the One World Trust *Global Accountability Framework*, and the Transparency International *Handbook on Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations* (2010).

In particular, the HAP Standard is intended to complement the work by People In Aid, the Sphere Project, the Emergency Capacity Building Project, Groupe URD (Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement), the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and national self-regulatory schemes that focus on accountability and quality in the non-profit sector.

The HAP Secretariat will prepare working papers on how the HAP Standard relates to other relevant initiatives. These papers will be regularly updated to reflect learning and changes in the HAP Standard and the respective initiatives, and will be made available on the HAP website.

3. Terms and definitions

Each organisation has its own terms and definitions, and uses language appropriate to its specific needs. The purpose of the following definitions is to promote a shared understanding of terms used in the HAP Standard. The definition of those who are the primary subject of the HAP Standard is given first. Two other subject groups are listed next, followed by the other defined terms in alphabetical order.

People an organisation aims to assist: women, men, boys and girls or groups with different needs, vulnerabilities and capacities, that an organisation is committed to assisting. Alternative terms used by organisations include beneficiaries, target community, target population, participants, claimants and rights-holders. An organisation might not aim to assist all the crisis-affected people at a specific location. For this reason the HAP Standard differentiates between "people the organisation aims to assist" and all "crisis-affected people" at a specific location.

Crisis-affected people: all those affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises at a specific location. An organisation might not aim to assist all people affected by a crisis, as explained above.

Other stakeholders: other people, groups and entities (than the two groups mentioned above) that the organisation has identified as having an influence on, or being influenced by, its decisions and actions. This definition does not, therefore, include all those who may have knowledge of, or views about, the organisation. Organisations have many stakeholders, each with distinct types and levels of involvement, and often with wide-ranging (and sometimes conflicting) interests and concerns. For organisations working with partners, their partner organisations are an example of "other stakeholders".

Accountability: the means through which power is used responsibly. It is a process of taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of power.

Accountability framework: a document that specifies what stakeholders can hold an organisation accountable for. Details of what is required in an accountability framework are given in requirement 1.1 (see section 5.2). The accountability framework enables organisations to communicate, implement, monitor and improve on commitments that they make. To this end, an overarching accountability framework is adapted to specific contexts. An accountability

framework may include or refer to a baseline analysis of compliance with commitments made, a detailed plan for putting the commitments into practice, and staff guidelines.

Competencies: the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that staff need in order to be effective in their roles, and that ultimately determine an organisation's success.

Complaint: a specific grievance of anyone who has been negatively affected by an organisation's action or who believes that an organisation has failed to meet a stated commitment.

Complaints procedure: a specified series of actions though which an organisation deals with complaints and ensures that complaints are reviewed and acted upon. Details of what is required in a complaints procedure are given in requirement 5.1 (see section 5.2). Organisations that meet the HAP Standard have procedures for handling all types of complaints, including those related to sexual exploitation and abuse of crisis-affected people by staff.

Humanitarian action: assistance, protection and advocacy actions undertaken on an impartial basis in response to human needs resulting from complex political emergencies and natural hazards. (ALNAP)

Informed consent: agreeing to an action based on a clear understanding of the facts, implications and consequences of the action.

Organisation: a legal entity with defined structures, assigned tasks, rules and regulations, and staff to perform a set of activities. The HAP Standard can apply to a whole organisation, part of an organisation, or a group or partnership of organisations. Organisations have different structures, governance and management arrangements. The organisation will be defined at the start of applying the HAP Standard, taking account of the activities, products, services, sites and subsidiaries, for which it has either management and/or legal responsibility.

Partnership: a formal arrangement for working jointly to achieve a specific goal, where each partner's roles and responsibilities are set out in a written agreement. Different organisations have different types of partners. For example, the members of associations or membership organisations that meet this definition may also be partners. Informal arrangements are not considered to be partnerships under the HAP Standard, though organisations applying the HAP Standard may choose to expand this definition.

Quality assurance: a set of activities to determine or verify whether products or services meet or exceed the expectations of those the products and services are intended for. Quality assurance is a process-driven approach with specific steps to help define and attain goals.

Quality management system: a set of co-ordinated processes that enable an organisation to continually improve its performance in meeting the needs and expectations of its customers. In the HAP Standard, such processes enable organisations to improve performance in meeting the needs and expectations, and respecting the dignity, of the people they aim to assist. Details of what is required in a quality management system according to the HAP Standard are given in requirement 1.2 (see section 5.2).

Risk management: identifying, assessing and prioritising risks followed by co-ordinated and efficient use of resources to reduce, monitor, and control the probability or effect of unfortunate events, or to make the most of opportunities. The risks with the greatest loss and the greatest probability of happening are handled first.

Staff: an organisation's national and international permanent or short-term employees, as well as volunteers, consultants and any others who interact with the people the organisation aims to assist on behalf of the organisation.

Staff code of conduct: a statement of principles and values that establishes a set of expectations and standards for how staff will behave, including minimal levels of compliance and disciplinary actions. (Transparency International)

4. The HAP Standard Commitment

Recognising that the essence of accountability is to respect the needs, concerns, capacities and situation of the people they aim to assist, and to be answerable for their actions and decisions to these people and other stakeholders;

Respecting international humanitarian law, international refugee law, human rights law, and other relevant international treaties and national laws;

Reaffirming the primary responsibility of states for all persons on their territories and their duty to provide assistance and protection to people in need;

Upholding the right of people in need to receive assistance and protection on the basis of their informed consent, and everyone's right to offer assistance appropriate to people's needs;

Acknowledging the duty of care shared by all those involved in humanitarian action for the well-being of the people they aim to assist; and

Recognising also that the responses to the humanitarian imperative can take different forms, and may be affected by external constraints,

Organisations that meet the HAP Standard make a commitment to the HAP Standard Principles and to being held accountable according to the requirements of the HAP Standard.

The HAP Standard Principles[2]

Humanity: concern for human welfare and respect for the individual.

Impartiality: providing humanitarian assistance in proportion to need, and giving priority to the most urgent needs, without discrimination (including that based upon gender, age, race, disability, ethnic background, nationality or political, religious, cultural or organisational affiliation).

Neutrality: aiming only to meet human needs and refraining from taking sides in hostilities or giving material or political support to parties to an armed conflict.

Independence: acting only under the authority of the organisation's governing body and in line with the organisation's purpose.

Participation and informed consent: listening and responding to feedback from crisis-affected people when planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, and making sure that crisis-affected people understand and agree with the proposed humanitarian action and are aware of its implications.

Duty of care: meeting recognised minimum standards for the well-being of crisis-affected people, and paying proper attention to their safety and the safety of staff.

Witness: reporting when the actions of others have a negative effect on the well-being of people in need of humanitarian assistance or protection.

Offer redress: enabling crisis-affected people and staff to raise complaints, and responding with appropriate action.

Transparency: being honest and open in communications and sharing relevant information, in an appropriate form, with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders.

Complementarity: working as a responsible member of the aid community, co-ordinating with others to promote accountability to, and coherence for, crisis-affected people.

[2] The first four Principles are derived from the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross. The next six are specifically relevant to accountability, with some derived from the HAP *Principles of Accountability.*

5.1 General requirements

5.1.1 In order to meet the HAP Standard, an organisation shall meet all its requirements.

5.1.2 An organisation that is unable to meet the HAP Standard in a specific situation because of external constraints shall explain and justify the reasons for that to its stakeholders. The organisation's explanation shall reflect its approach to risk management and the HAP Standard Principles, which provide guidance for organisations facing difficult choices. Not meeting requirements related to one principle may be unavoidable in order to meet another principle in that specific situation.

5.1.3 The organisation shall make public a declaration of additional interests. These include additional affiliations, interests and values that may directly affect the people it aims to assist. The purpose of the declaration is to give a broad understanding of the nature of the organisation and vested interests in the organisation. Where appropriate, the declaration may become part of an organisation's accountability framework.

5.2 Specific requirements: the HAP Standard benchmarks

There are six benchmarks in the HAP Standard. Each has related requirements, indicated by the word "shall", and means of verification, which specify the source of information that allows assessment as to whether the requirements are met. The first requirement of each benchmark covers organisational policy or corporate statements, and subsequent requirements cover an organisation's practice. Sources of information are a combination of documents, interviews with a cross-section of the relevant stakeholders, and observation of practice.

The benchmarks are set out below, followed by tables relating to each benchmark, its requirements and their means of verification:
- Establishing and delivering on commitments;
- Staff competency;
- Sharing information;
- Participation;
- Handling complaints; and
- Learning and continual improvement.

The organisation sets out the commitments that it will be held accountable for, and how they will be delivered.

	Requirements		Means of verification
1.1	The organisation shall produce a written accountability framework that: 1. identifies its stakeholders, with the people it aims to assist as priority; 2. states its commitments, with reference to the people it aims to assist; 3. includes the HAP Standard benchmarks; 4. has been approved by its leadership; and 5. has milestones for each commitment.	**1**	The accountability framework
1.2	The organisation shall implement its accountability framework through a management system that: 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.	**1**	Records of each point in the requirement relating to commitments in the accountability framework
		2	A strategy or plan for putting the accountability framework into practice
		3	Interviews with staff at different levels

2. Staff competency

	Requirements		Means of verification
1.3	The organisation's accountability framework shall reflect a commitment to working in partnerships based on mutual accountability, respect, and continual improvement.	**1**	The accountability framework
1.4	The organisation shall document: 1. its overall approach to working in partnership; 2. the process and criteria for selecting partners and the role of accountability in assessing potential partners; and 3. what is negotiable and non-negotiable when working with partners, referring specifically to the accountability framework.	**1**	Documents on the organisation's approach to working with partners
		2	Documents, such as staff guidance, on selecting partners
1.5	The organisation shall work with each of its partners to agree on: 1. expectations and working arrangements; 2. the commitments of partners to the people they aim to assist and how these commitments will be met; and 3. if and how the organisation will interact with the people it aims to assist.	**1**	Interviews with staff of both the organisation and its partners, and records, such as minutes from meetings, of a joint decision-making process
		2	Partner agreements, or other relevant documents that guide partnership arrangements
1.6	The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners put relevant parts of the accountability framework into practice.	**1**	Interviews with staff about, and records (such as workplans and reports) of, activities to improve partners' practice
		2	Examples of improvements

The organisation ensures that staff have competencies that enable them to meet the organisation's commitments.

	Requirements		Means of verification
2.1	The organisation shall clearly define and document the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that staff need to meet its commitments.	**1**	Job descriptions, recruitment procedures and files, vacancy notices and staff codes of conduct
		2	Interviews with staff responsible for recruitment, appointment, staff development and performance review
2.2	The organisation shall have in place a staff code of conduct which refers to: 1. not exploiting and abusing people, including sexual exploitation and abuse; 2. being sensitive to the local culture; and 3. the responsibility of staff to report abuses.	**1**	Staff code of conduct and related policies
2.3	The organisation shall ensure that staff understand the code of conduct and their responsibility under the accountability framework.	**1**	Staff induction and briefing procedures
		2	Samples of contracts and copies of the signed code of conduct
		3	Interviews with staff
2.4	The organisation shall regularly and consistently review and act on staff performance relating to knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes needed to meet commitments.	**1**	A documented process for, and records of, reviewing staff performance
		2	Interviews with staff
		3	Examples of consistent actions following from reviews, including when staff fail to meet the code of conduct
2.5	The organisation shall continually develop its staff so that commitments are met more effectively.	**1**	Examples and records of staff development activities, including training reports
		2	Interviews with staff on the effect of staff development activities

3. Sharing information

Requirements		Means of verification	
2.6	The organisation shall ensure that staff who interact with its partners understand the partnership agreements, the implications of the organisation's accountability framework for partners, and each partner's obligations.	**1**	Records of, and interviews about, a process for relevant staff to understand the partnership agreements and their implications
		2	Interviews with staff of both the organisation and partners about the purpose, content and relevance of partnership agreements
2.7	The organisation shall work with its partners to agree on the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that a partner's staff need to meet agreed commitments, and to ensure these are reflected in a staff code of conduct (as in requirement 2.2).	**1**	Interviews with staff of both the organisation and its partners, and records, such as minutes from meetings, of a joint decision-making process
		2	Partners' staff codes of conduct
2.8	The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners implement and monitor their staff codes of conduct.	**1**	Interviews with staff about, and records (such as workplans and reports) of, activities to improve partners' practice
		2	Examples of improvements

> 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 activities.

Requirements		Means of verification	
3.1	The organisation shall define and document processes for sharing information, covering: 1. commitment to accurate and timely information sharing; 2. what information it will share with the people it seeks to assist and other stakeholders; 3. how decisions will be made on when and how to share information; and 4. criteria used for deciding not to share information.	**1**	Documents on processes for sharing information, such as a corporate statement and staff guidelines
3.2	The organisation shall share with the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders information appropriate to their needs, including: 1. its background and contact details; 2. its accountability framework, staff code of conduct and complaints procedure; 3. its goals and project objectives, expected results with the time frame, and a financial summary, as well as summaries of evaluations and progress reports; 4. staff roles and responsibilities; 5. criteria for selecting target groups and deliverables as agreed in requirement 4.2; and 6. how input from participation activities has contributed to decisions.	**1**	Records of, and interviews with staff and crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls about, a process for developing a context-specific information plan
		2	Observation and interviews with staff and with crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls to confirm that information is shared
		3	Examples of media and records of information sharing activities

Requirements		Means of verification
3.3 The organisation shall ensure that information specified in requirement 3.2 is presented in languages, formats and media that are appropriate for, accessible to, and can be understood by the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders.	**1**	Observation, records, and interviews to confirm a process for deciding appropriate and accessible languages, formats and media
	2	Interviews with people the organisation aims to assist and other stakeholders
3.4 The organisation shall ensure that its staff identify themselves to people they aim to assist and other stakeholders.	**1**	Observation, records, and interviews to confirm how staff identify themselves, including through identity cards with validity dates, organisation name and contact details
	2	Interviews with people the organisation aims to assist and other stakeholders

Requirements		Means of verification
3.5 In agreement with its partners, the organisation shall make public the names of its partners, the main joint activities, and a financial summary of the programmes it funds.	**1**	Interviews with staff of both the organisation and its partners, and records, such as minutes from meetings, of a joint decision-making process
	2	Examples and records of information sharing activities
3.6 The organisation shall work with its partners to agree on how and when they will share information, including with the people they aim to assist, and to put this agreement into practice.	**1**	A plan on what information partners will share
	2	Examples and records of information sharing activities, and interviews with affected women, men, boys and girls and with partner staff
3.7 The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners meet requirements 3.1 to 3.4.	**1**	Interviews with staff about, and records (such as workplans and reports) of, activities to improve partners' practice
	2	Examples of improvements

The organisation listens to the people it aims to assist, incorporating their views and analysis in programme decisions.

Requirements		Means of verification	
4.1	The organisation shall define and document the processes through which it will: 1. identify the people it aims to assist and their representatives, referring to gender, age, diversity and special needs; and 2. enable women, men, boys and girls that it aims to assist, and other stakeholders, to participate in different stages of the project.	**1**	Documents on participation processes, such as a corporate statement and staff guidelines
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: 1. initial assessment; 2. project design, deliverables, criteria for selecting target groups and the selection process; 3. project implementation; and 4. monitoring and evaluation	**1**	Records of, and interviews with staff and with crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls about, a process for developing a context-appropriate participation plan
		2	Observation and interviews with staff and with crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls to confirm that participation takes place
		3	Examples and records of participation activities
4.3	The organisation shall enable the people it aims to assist to provide feedback and influence or make decisions about the project in a way that is continuously adapted to the context and the intervention. As a minimum, informed consent shall be obtained for the action.	**1**	Observation, records, and interviews to confirm a process through which the organisation assesses the capacity to participate and decides what is appropriate
		2	Records of informed consent and other participatory activities
		3	Examples and records that input is affecting decisions

Requirements		Means of verification	
4.4	The organisation shall work with its partners to agree on how the people they aim to assist will participate in different stages of the project, and to put this agreement into practice.	**1**	Interviews with staff of both the organisation and its partners, and records, such as minutes from meetings, of a joint decision-making process
		2	Documents, such as a plan, on how the people they aim to assist will participate
		3	Interviews with staff and with people the organisation aims to assist to confirm that participation takes place as agreed
4.5	The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners meet requirements 4.1 to 4.3.	**1**	Interviews with staff about, and records (such as workplans and reports) of, activities to improve partners' practice
		2	Examples of improvements

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.

	Requirements		Means of verification
5.1	The organisation shall define and document a complaints procedure, covering: 1. the people it aims to assist, staff and other stakeholders who have the right to raise a complaint and receive a response; 2. the purpose and limitations of the procedure; 3. how complaints can be raised; 4. the steps taken to deal with the complaints, the procedure for investigating them and the response time frame; 5. the process for fast-tracking allegations of exploitation and abuse, including those of a sexual nature; 6. confidentiality, non-retaliation, appeal options and support for people who complain and any witnesses; and 7. 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.	1	The complaints procedure

	Requirements		Means of verification
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.	1	Records of, and interviews with staff and with crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls about, a consultation process on the complaints procedure and the appropriate term to refer to it
		2	Examples and records that consultations guided the development of the complaints procedure
5.3	The organisation shall ensure that the people it aims to assist, staff and other stakeholders understand the complaints procedure.	1	Records of, and interviews with staff about, a process to confirm that the target audiences understand the complaints procedure
		2	Observation and interviews with staff and with crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls to confirm that they understand the complaints procedure
5.4	The organisation shall ensure that it handles complaints in line with its procedure and that it acts upon complaints.	1	Records and interviews to confirm that the complaints procedure is followed, referring specifically to responses and timescales
		2	A sample of current complaints and those which have been settled
		3	Interviews with staff, people the organisation aims to assist, and other stakeholders
		4	Examples of action taken as a result of complaints

6. Learning and continual improvement

Requirements		Means of verification
5.5 The organisation shall work with its partners to agree on how they will raise and handle complaints against each other in a safe and accessible way, and to put this agreement into practice.	**1** Interviews with staff of both the organisation and its partners about, and records, such as minutes from meetings, of a joint decision-making process	
	2 Documents on how the organisation and its partners will handle complaints	
	3 Observation, records, and interviews with staff to confirm that both the organisation and its partners follow the agreed complaints procedure	
5.6 The organisation shall work with its partners to agree on ways in which they will enable the people they aim to assist to raise complaints with the partners, including when partners will refer the complaint to the organisation, and to put this agreement into practice.	**1** Documents, such as a complaints procedure, on how the partner will handle complaints	
	2 Observation, records, and interviews to confirm that complaints are handled as agreed	
5.7 The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners meet requirements 5.1 to 5.4.	**1** Interviews with staff about, and records (such as workplans and reports) of, activities to improve partners' practice	
	2 Examples of improvements	

The organisation learns from experience
to continually improve its performance.

Requirements	Means of verification
6.1 The organisation shall define and document processes to learn effectively, including from monitoring, evaluations and complaints.	**1** Documents on learning processes, such as a corporate statement and staff guidelines
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.	**1** Progress reports, including on the HAP Standard benchmarks
	2 Interviews with staff, crisis-affected people and other stakeholders, on monitoring processes
6.3 The organisation shall include in the scope of evaluations an objective to assess progress in delivering its accountability framework.	**1** Evaluation terms of reference and plans
	2 Sections in evaluation reports on accountability, including learning
6.4 The organisation shall ensure that learning, including on accountability, is incorporated into workplans in a timely way.	**1** Records of, and interviews with staff about, a process to verify that learning is reflected in workplans
	2 Workplans for acting on findings from learning processes
	3 Interviews with staff and examples that findings from monitoring and evaluation, complaints and other learning processes contribute to improvements

Requirements		Means of verification	
6.5 The organisation shall work with its partners to agree on how they will jointly monitor and evaluate programmes, the quality of the partnership, and each other's agreed performance, and to put this agreement into practice.	1	Interviews with staff of both the organisation and its partners about, and records, such as minutes from meetings, of a joint decision-making process	
	2	Documents, such as a plan, on how each will monitor the other and evaluate the partnership	
	3	Interviews with staff and examples of how each responds to the other's feedback, suggestions and learning	
6.6 The organisation shall work with its partners to improve how partners meet requirements 6.1 to 6.4.	1	Interviews with staff about, and records (such as workplans and reports) of, activities to improve partners' practice	
	2	Examples of improvements	

The HAP Principles of Accountability

1. Commitment to humanitarian standards and rights
• Members state their commitment to respect and foster humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries

2. Setting standards and building capacity
• Members set a framework of accountability to their stakeholders*
• Members set and periodically review their standards and performance indicators, and revise them if necessary
• Members provide appropriate training in the use and implementation of standards

3. Communication
• Members inform, and consult with, stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries and staff, about the standards adopted, programmes to be undertaken and mechanisms available for addressing concerns

4. Participation in programmes
• Members involve beneficiaries in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and report to them on progress, subject only to serious operational constraints

5. Monitoring and reporting on compliance
• Members involve beneficiaries and staff when they monitor and revise standards
• Members regularly monitor and evaluate compliance with standards, using robust processes
• Members report at least annually to stakeholders, including beneficiaries, on compliance with standards. Reporting may take a variety of forms

6. Addressing complaints
• Members enable beneficiaries and staff to report complaints and seek redress safely

7. Implementing Partners
• Members are committed to the implementation of these principles if and when working through implementation partners

* Framework of accountability includes standards, quality standards, principles, policies, guidelines, training and other capacity-building work, etc. The framework must include measurable performance indicators. Standards may be internal to the organisation or they may be collective, e.g. Sphere or People In Aid.

Related materials

The HAP Standard is part of a suite of accountability and quality management materials developed by HAP International. These include:

• The Guide to the HAP Standard – developed with input from practitioners, it helps organisations apply the HAP Standard and provides detailed explanations of the Standard.

• The Guide to HAP Certification – published by the HAP Secretariat, it includes information on the HAP certification process, benefits and how to prepare for it.

To find out more about HAP or access other materials, go to the HAP website or contact the Secretariat in Geneva.

A note on translations

Translations of the HAP Standard are made available on the HAP website. If you would like to translate the HAP Standard into a different language, please contact the HAP Secretariat.

The **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International** is a multi-agency initiative working to improve the accountability of humanitarian action to people affected by crises. Members of HAP are committed to meeting the highest standards of accountability and quality management.

As the humanitarian sector's first international self-regulatory body, HAP works closely with complementary projects and initiatives that share its vision of an accountability framework, which is transparent and accessible to all interested parties.

The **2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management** helps organisations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises to design, implement, assess, improve and recognise accountable programmes. It represents broad consensus on what matters most when organisations engage in humanitarian action.

The 2010 edition of the Standard was developed through an extensive process of reviewing the 2007 edition. Over 1,900 crisis-affected people, aid workers and donor representatives contributed to this review, bringing to the process authentic experiences from the perspective of different groups.

HAP Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

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