

Alliance Technique d'assistance au Développement (ATAD)

Initial Audit – Summary Report – 1 April 2025

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Audited
<input type="checkbox"/> International <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct support <input type="checkbox"/> Federated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
Legal registration	ATAD is a non-profit association under Burkinabe common law	
Location of head office	Kaya, Burkina Faso	
Total number of staff members	107	

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Aninia Nadig
Second auditor	-
Third auditor	-
Observer	-
Expert	-
Facilitators in Burkina Faso	Diane NANEMA Issaka KAZIENGA

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS:2014 Audit framework	Independent Verification
Audit cycle	First Cycle
Type of audit	Initial Audit
Scope of the audit	The organisation and all its projects (humanitarian and development)
Subject of the audit	N/A; the entire organisation is covered by this initial audit.

1.4 Sampling*

Sampling unit	Projects
Total number of ATAD sites included in the sample	8
Total number of sites for the on-site visit	1
Total number of sites for remote assessment	2
Selection of the sampling unit	
Random sampling – on-site/remote/unselected	Purposive sampling (none)
Multisectoral WASH-Nut support – not selected	
PCRSS (World Bank) – remote	
WAHAFA: Welthungerhilfe Anticipatory Humanitarian Action Facility: Centre-North and Sahel – remote	
Building resilience along the Kaya-Dori corridor (humanitarian) – not selected	
WASH, Protection and Social Cohesion (DANIDA) – on-site (Kaya)	
Any other considerations regarding sampling: Random sampling was sufficient to identify the four projects to be included in the audit. No judgmental sampling was required	
Sampling risks identified: The auditor identified no sampling risks.	

**It is important to note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's activities, programmes and documentation, as well as on direct observation. The findings are analysed to determine the organisation's systematic approach and the application of all aspects of the SCH in different contexts and working methods.*

2. Activities undertaken by the audit team

2.1 Opening meeting

Date	02/12/2024	Number of participants	8
Location	Online	Any substantive issues raised	None

2.2 Sites assessed

Location of sites	Dates	On-site or remotely
Kaya (head office)	2 December 2024 – 4 December 2024	Remote
DANIDA Project: Kaya	3 February 2025 – 5 February 2025	On-site
PCRSS Project: Nine municipalities in the Centre-North region	2025	Remote
WAHAFA Project: Centre-North and Sahel	2025	Remote

2.3 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	Number of interviewees		On-site or remote
	Female	Male	
Head office			
Management		2	Remote
Staff	2	4	Remote
Sampling unit: Projects			
Management			
Staff	2	4	On-site
Partner staff			
Donor partners		2	Remote
Regional administration		1	On-site
Total number of interviewees	4	13	19

2.4 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of interviewees		On-site or remote
	Women	Man	
DANIDA: Accountability Committee			On-site
DANIDA: Joint Group	8	2	On-site
DANIDA: Accountability, complaints and protection committees	3	7	On-site
DANIDA: Community Women's Committee	10		On-site
DANIDA: Women IDPs	10		On-site
Total number of participants	31	9	40

2.5 Closing meeting

Date	13 February 2025	Number of participants	10
Location	Online	Any substantive issues arising	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

Originally an informal association of consultants, the Alliance Technique d'Assistance au Developpement (ATAD) was established in December 2000. ATAD is a non-profit association under Burkinabe common law, with its head office in Kaya (Sanmatenga Province) and offices in Gorom-Gorom, Dori, Ouagadougou, Arboillé and Tougouri.

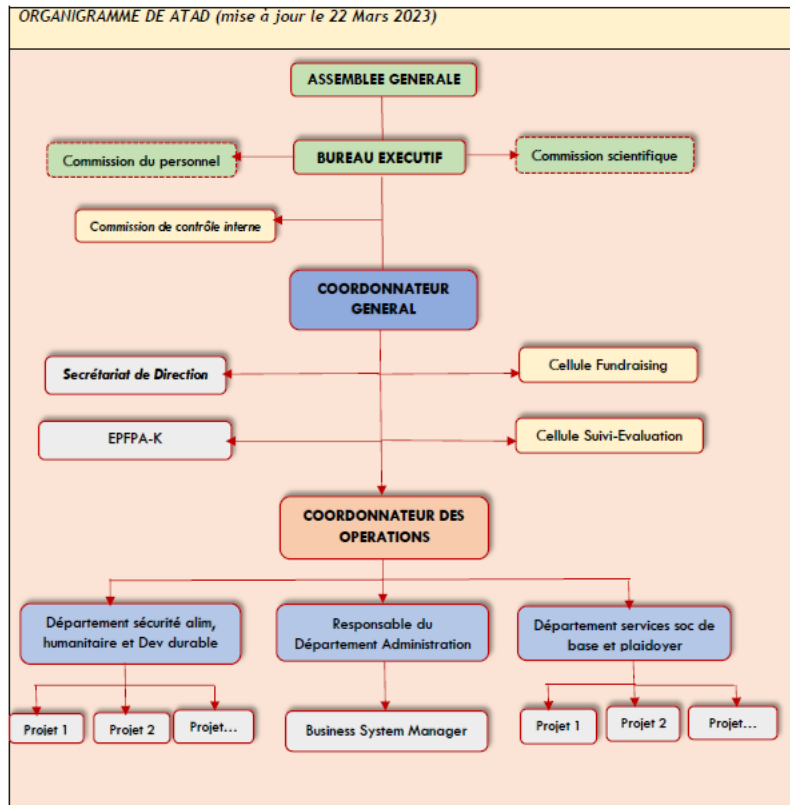
With around 100 permanent staff and a similar number of seasonal workers, ATAD prioritises projects that support, raise awareness and empower communities so that they can become more involved in managing the development initiatives that affect them. ATAD also supports communities and local associations through educational activities and capacity-building initiatives. ATAD's projects focus on women, who make up the vast majority of beneficiaries.

ATAD's vision is to help build a tolerant society for inclusive community-led sustainable development through responsible and committed stakeholders. This vision is articulated through six missions covering political, social and economic participation; strengthening technical knowledge; promoting peace, justice and human rights; and fostering values of solidarity and accountability.

ATAD runs humanitarian and development projects, the two areas often being linked. Furthermore, this responds to a requirement from the government that humanitarian activities must include a development component. ATAD also carries out advocacy (either as a separate activity or as part of a project) with local authorities on behalf of the rights of affected individuals and communities. Areas of advocacy include women's and young people's access to land and finance, and climate change issues through national and international networks, for example through the National Advocacy Network on Disaster Risk Prevention and Management or the *Global Network of CSOs for Disaster Reduction* (GNDR).

ATAD's overall objective is to support local community initiatives aimed at harnessing the natural and non-natural resources of their environment to genuinely promote local development by facilitating reflection on constraints and potential, the search for the most appropriate solutions, and the means and methods of implementation.

At the time of this audit, ATAD is working in the Centre-North, North, Central Plateau, Sahel Plateau and Boucle du Mouhoun regions. Depending on needs and opportunities, ATAD will also operate in other regions of Burkina Faso.



3.2 Governance and management structure

ATAD has clear and detailed procedures that underpin its governance and management structure. The governance framework is based on the principles of separation of powers between the decision-making and political bodies (General Assembly and Executive Board) and the executive and operational body (Coordination).

The organisational components of ATAD are:

- A General Assembly of 30 members, chaired by the President of the Association, which meets once a year in ordinary session and in extraordinary sessions as required.
- The Executive Board of 7 members: President, Secretary-General, Treasurer-General, Secretary for External Relations; Secretary responsible for women’s and gender issues, and two secretaries for information and organisation.
- Two specialist committees:
 - o A Scientific Committee whose role is to ensure the quality of documents and to verify that actions comply with the Association’s policies and values
 - o A personnel committee which participates in the recruitment, monitoring and evaluation of staff
- A coordination unit for the implementation of projects and programmes, whose sub-units are:
 - o A general coordination unit led by a general coordinator and supported in its tasks by a secretariat responsible for monitoring and evaluation
 - o An operations coordination unit
 - o Three departments, each with a head of department and project officers
 - A department for food security, humanitarian aid and sustainable development
 - A Social Sectors and Advocacy Department
 - An administrative, finance and accounting department
- The Administrative, Financial and Accounting Department comprises a logistics unit and eight accountants, each of whom manages the resources for one to three projects.
- A fundraising unit responsible for securing funding

3.3 Work with partner organisations

ATAD is committed to training and capacity building for local organisations and associations, particularly through the Local Humanitarian Leadership framework. Collaborations with local organisations are governed by collaboration agreements, based on ATAD's expectations. However, these agreements do not specify the accountability requirements to which ATAD adheres.

Within the framework of Local Humanitarian Leadership, ATAD contributes to strengthening local organisations and associations, particularly regarding the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), and supports them in their responses to calls for proposals. ATAD also regularly responds to calls for proposals in partnership with a local organisation.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms

ATAD has several internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms. Its policies include a Code of Conduct, protection against exploitation and abuse, and measures to combat fraud and corruption. The organisation also has a safety guide and an accountability framework.

Governance is based on the principles of separation of powers between decision-making and political bodies (see section 3.2). This principle is reflected, amongst other things, in a strict approach to authorisation rights for policies, reports or communications, and in detailed procedures for the award and execution of contracts.

ATAD has an internal control committee that supports the executive board. Internal control ensures the regularity and compliance of operations and the reliability of the resulting supporting documents. It also verifies the legality and regularity of financial and accounting operations and prepares the organisation for annual external audits. The procedures for awarding and executing contracts are overseen by the Contracts Award Committee.

ATAD has an anti-corruption policy that covers the risk of fraud and corruption for the organisation, as well as for projects. Some projects use a risk mapping approach, but this is not systematic.

ATAD has a monitoring and evaluation system that covers the programme cycle. ATAD conducts regular evaluations and provides opportunities for weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual discussions to monitor key indicators and to exchange information and coordinate the various programmes and projects. This enables regular monitoring and learning at both the project and organisational levels.

ATAD's human resources system is in place and operational, with a transparent procedure. The code of conduct is signed by all employees and the sanctions for breaching the code are clearly set out.

4.2 Level of implementation of the CHS

ATAD has been working for several years with quality and accountability standards, focusing on community capacity building. Its approach to accountability centres on the credibility of the organisation itself, which is reflected in a well-developed organisational structure. Its accountability framework includes communication with communities, the establishment of a complaints mechanism and the sharing of information.

ATAD uses the CHS as a means of verification and to strengthen its own capacities and those of other organisations, particularly in the areas of coordination, planning, and monitoring and evaluation.

As part of local humanitarian leadership, ATAD works to strengthen local organisations, including the CHS. ATAD has trained and/or funded local organisations so that they can apply for tenders, or apply jointly.

ATAD focuses on long-term change, building the capacity of the communities themselves, and their resilience.

Strengths

ATAD has structures and procedures in place for the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of projects.

ATAD has a policy to protect against exploitation and abuse

ATAD has established human resources, financial and budgetary procedures, as well as financial, budgetary and procurement control structures.

ATAD has an organisational culture that aims to improve the quality of life of communities and welcomes complaints.

Weaknesses

ATAD does not manage risks systematically and comprehensively at either the organisational or project level.

ATAD does not have defined processes for communicating with communities about the organisation and its staff. This affects communities’ understanding of the organisation and the complaints mechanism in place.

ATAD does not systematically share the results of evaluations with communities.

ATAD has ambitions for the organisation that risk exceeding its human and financial resources.

In total, 11 minor weaknesses were identified, and no major weaknesses.

4.3 Organisational performance against each CHS commitment

Strong points and areas for improvement	Average rating*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	2.8
<p>ATAD has policies that commit to providing impartial assistance based on community capacities, and which take into account their diversity. Project activities are based on regular context and stakeholder analyses and impartial assessments of needs and risks, as well as community vulnerabilities and capacities. Projects are adapted in line with changing needs, capacities and contexts. However, ATAD does not sufficiently highlight the importance of disaggregating the data collected in its policies and guidelines.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities appreciate the assistance provided by ATAD and find it appropriate and in line with their needs. They also mention that their needs go beyond the assistance provided. Communities say they were consulted during initial assessments and during project implementation, and that ATAD adapts projects to changing needs or contexts.</p>	
Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	2.4
<p>The systems for project planning, monitoring, evaluation and adaptation enable ATAD to implement projects on time, adapted to contextual constraints and without putting communities at risk. Its work is based on systematic monitoring of relevant standards and indicators, which also allow for project adaptation where necessary. ATAD is well integrated into a network of organisations and maintains contact with local and national authorities to ensure that needs the organisation cannot cover are referred elsewhere. Its projects are designed so as not to put communities at risk.</p>	
<p>ATAD’s workload is commensurate with the organisation’s capacity. Nevertheless, the workload is high, particularly due to difficult security conditions. The workload therefore risks exceeding ATAD’s capacity, meaning it may not be able to systematically monitor projects or always adapt them in line with changing needs.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities report that assistance is provided on time and does not pose any risks to them. They confirm that ATAD staff are competent. However, some communities report a lack of follow-up by ATAD.</p>	
Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects	2.5

<p>Through its policies, strategies and guidelines, ATAD ensures that projects do not have negative impacts, particularly regarding the safety, dignity and rights of individuals, sexual exploitation and abuse by ATAD staff, cultural, social and political issues, livelihoods, the local economy and the environment. Nevertheless, certain identified weaknesses call into question the organisation’s ability to systematically identify and respond to all negative impacts.</p> <p>ATAD ensures that its projects strengthen local capacities (particularly economic ones) and community resilience. This is reinforced by the fact that ATAD works closely with local authorities and on the basis of information provided by them. ATAD has a system for securely collecting, processing and storing community information.</p> <p>ATAD designs its projects with sustainability in mind. However, the organisation does not systematically ensure that projects have a transition or exit strategy.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities appreciate ATAD’s support for capacity building. They say that ATAD’s projects do not have negative effects on them.</p>	
<p>Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.</p>	<p>2.3</p>
<p>ATAD makes efforts to promote a culture of open communication. However, external communication policies and processes are not sufficiently developed.</p> <p>ATAD involves communities in setting their priorities and identifying the risks they perceive, and encourages them to express their level of satisfaction with the project. However, this involvement is less rigorous and systematic in the case of emergency projects.</p> <p>ATAD’s external communication is factual, ethical and respectful of the dignity of communities.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities report being satisfied with ATAD’s assistance. However, some communities say that their views on the projects and their needs have not always been sought.</p>	
<p>Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed</p>	<p>2.0</p>
<p>ATAD has policies and procedures for managing complaints, including those concerning any abuse of power by the organisation. However, this approach is not consistently implemented.</p> <p>ATAD has an organisational culture in which complaints are taken seriously. Communities are often involved in designing complaints mechanisms and committees. ATAD records feedback and complaints from its projects and responds to them within the established timeframes. Complaints that do not fall within ATAD’s remit are referred to the relevant authority.</p> <p>However, not all communities know how to access the complaints mechanism, and some say they are not consulted on the follow-up to the complaints management process.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities say that ATAD listens to them. However, some say that the organisation does not follow up with them in the event of complaints.</p>	
<p>Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.</p>	<p>2.8</p>
<p>ATAD coordinates with local, regional and national authorities in accordance with the laws of Burkina Faso. The organisation also works closely with other international, national and local organisations and is involved in advocacy activities for the rights of affected communities. Partnerships between ATAD and international organisations, as well as local structures, are governed by clear agreements.</p> <p>ATAD participates in local coordination meetings, including cluster meetings and multi-partner projects, and benefits from the exchange of information during these meetings.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities have indicated that they find ATAD’s projects complementary to other aid projects.</p>	

Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve	2.3
<p>The evaluation of projects and programmes is systematic and policy-based. This includes a periodic review of feedback and complaints received from communities. However, ATAD's policies and guidelines do not require that feedback and complaints be included in the learning process. This learning is shared within the organisation, but not systematically with sector actors and the communities themselves, particularly those involved in emergency projects.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities report that they do not receive feedback on evaluation and learning outcomes.</p>	
Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their work effectively and are treated fairly and equitably.	2.7
<p>ATAD has the policies, skills and human resources to implement its programmes in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner. However, staff mention the high workload.</p> <p>ATAD complies with local labour laws and has clear job descriptions and working procedures, with contracts and annual plans. Every employee signs the code of conduct and is familiar with its contents, including the sanctions for breaching the code.</p> <p>ATAD has procedures in place to ensure that staff work in accordance with its mandate, values, and performance objectives and standards.</p> <p>ATAD has procedures and a safety policy for staff. However, staff wellbeing is not explicitly mentioned in the policy. This poses the risk that, in a context of high workload, measures to ensure wellbeing may not be consistently implemented in the future.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities say that ATAD staff are honest and competent.</p>	
Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	2.7
<p>ATAD has an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy and procedures for procurement and contract implementation. However, its approach to avoiding conflicts of interest is underdeveloped.</p> <p>ATAD manages and uses its funds responsibly, ethically and lawfully. Programme and project resources are used efficiently, striking a balance between quality, cost and speed.</p> <p>ATAD ensures that waste and the environmental impact of its projects are minimised. Indeed, the environment plays a central role for ATAD, which is often active in situations affected by climate change.</p> <p>ATAD carries out ongoing internal controls, focusing on financial, budgetary and procurement procedures. The organisation is audited annually. It does not have a comprehensive audit approach, nor a comprehensive risk management approach.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities: Communities say that ATAD manages its resources responsibly and that this includes respect for the environment. They consider ATAD staff to be honest and incorruptible.</p>	

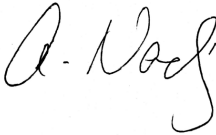
* Note: Average scores are the sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each commitment, unless one of the indicators in a commitment receives a score of 0 or several scores of 1 on the indicators in a commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-compliance/weakness at the commitment level (in both these cases, the overall score for the commitment is 0).

5. Summary of weaknesses

Weaknesses	Type	Status	Resolution timeframe
2025 – 2.5: ATAD does not systematically monitor the activities, outcomes and impacts of humanitarian responses in order to adapt programmes and address underperformance.	Minor	New	By 2028

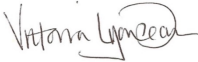
2025 – 3.4: ATAD does not systematically plan a transition or exit strategy from the outset of the programme or project.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 3.6: ATAD does not systematically identify the actual or potential negative impacts of the actions covered by this indicator, in order to address them in a timely and systematic manner.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 4.5: ATAD does not have information-sharing policies in place to promote a culture of open communication.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 4.6: ATAD does not systematically apply its policies to engage communities and reflect their priorities and the risks they identify throughout all phases of the intervention.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 5.1: ATAD does not systematically consult communities on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints management processes.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 5.2: ATAD does not systematically receive and record complaints that should be brought to its attention, and does not systematically provide information on how to access the mechanism and its scope	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 5.4: ATAD does not ensure that the complaints management process for communities and individuals affected by crises is systematically operational.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 7.3: ATAD does not systematically share lessons learnt and innovation with communities.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 8.4 2025 – 8.4: ATAD lacks the skills and human resources to systematically implement its programmes to the required standard.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 – 9.6.e: ATAD does not have policies or procedures in place to enable it to assess, manage and mitigate risks in a systematic and continuous manner.	Minor	New	By 2028
Total number of open weaknesses	11		

6. Lead auditor’s recommendation


<p>INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION</p> <p>In our opinion, ATAD demonstrates a high level of commitment with the Core Humanitarian Standard for Quality and Accountability (CHS), and its inclusion in the independent verification scheme is justified.</p>	
<p>Name and signature of the lead auditor:</p> <p>Aninia Nadig</p> 	<p>Date and place:</p> <p>Geneva, 28 February 2025</p>

7. HQAI Decision

<p>Registration in the Independent Verification cycle:</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Granted</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Refused</p>
<p>Next audit by: 1 April 2028</p>	

<p>Name and signature of the HQAI Quality Assurance Manager:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Victoria Lyon Dean.</p>	<p>Date and place: 01/04/2025</p>
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8. Endorsement of the report by the organisation

<p>Space reserved for the organisation</p>	
<p>Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any comments regarding the conduct of the HQAI audit team:</p> <p><i>If yes, please specify:</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Acknowledgement and acceptance of the findings:</p> <p>I acknowledge and understand the audit findings <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>I accept the audit findings <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Name and signature of the organisation’s representative:</p> <p>Le Secrétaire Général : Dr Mamoudou TRAORE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>Date and place: 28/05/2025</p>

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the quality assurance decision, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 workdays after being informed of the decision.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will confirm that the basis for the appeal meets the appeals process requirements. The Chair will then constitute an appeal panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. The panel will strive to come to a decision within 45 workdays.

The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeals Procedure

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p>Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: major weakness. • Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issue or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: minor weakness • Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020