ATAD-IA-2025

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hqai
HUMANITARIAN QUALITY
ASSURANCE INITIATIVE

Alliance Technique d'Assistance au Développement (ATAD) Initial audit - Summary report - 2025/04/01

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Checked
☐ International ☒ National ☐ Membership/netw ☒ ork Direct ☐ assistance ☒ Federated With partners	☒ Humanitarian ☒ Development ☒ Advocacy	☒ Humanitarian ☒ Development ☒ Advocacy
Legal registration	ATAD is a not-for-profit association incorporated under Burkinabe law.	
Seat location social	Kaya, Burkina Faso	
Total number of staff in the organisation	107	

1.2 The audit team

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

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS:2014 Verification scheme	Benchmarking
Audit cycle	N/A
Type of audit	Benchmarking
Scope of the audit	The organisation and all its projects (humanitarian and development)
Purpose of the audit	N/A, the whole organisation is considered for this first audit.

1.4 Sampling

Sampling unit	Projects
Total number of ATAD sites included in sampling	8
Total number of sites for on-site visits	1
Total number of sites for remote assessment	2
Selecting the sampling unit	

Random sampling - on-site/remote/unselected	Purposive sampling (none)
Multisectoral Assistance WASH-Nut - not selected	
PCRSS (World Bank) - remote	
WAHAFA: Welthungerhilfe Anticipation Humanitarian Action Facility / Mécanisme d'action humanitaire anticipée: Centre-Nord et Sahel - remote	
Strengthening resilience on the Kaya-Dori axis (humanitarian) - non selected	
WASH Protection Social Cohesion (DANIDA) - on site (Kaya)	

Any other sampling considerations: Random sampling was sufficient to identify the four projects to be included in the audit. No purposive sampling required
Sampling risks identified : The auditor did not identify any sampling-related risks.

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

2. Activities of the audit team

2.1 Opening meeting

Date	2024/12/02	**Number of participants**	8
Location	A distance	**Any substantive issues raised**	No

2.2 Locations assessed

Location of sites	**Dates**	**On-site or remote**
Kaya (head office)	**2024/12/02 - 2024/12/04**	A distance
DANIDA project: Kaya	**2025/02/03 - 2025/02/5**	On site
PCRSS project: Nine communes in the Centre-Nord region	**2025**	A distance
WAHAFA project: Centre-North and Sahel	**2025**	A distance

2.3 Interviews

Level / Position of respondents	**Number of people interviewed**		**On-site or remote**
	Woman	**Men**	
Head office			
Management		2	A distance
Staff	2	4	A distance
Sampling unit: Projects			
Management			
Staff	2	4	On site
Partner staff			
Donor partners		2	A distance
Regional administration		1	On site
Total number of respondents	4	13	19

2.4 Community consultations

Type of group and location	Number of people interviewed		On-site or remote
	Woman	**Men**	
DANIDA: Accountability Committee			On site
DANIDA: mixed group	8	2	On site
DANIDA: Accountability, Complaints and Protection Committees	3	7	On site
DANIDA: Women's Community Committee	10		On site
DANIDA: Women's IDP	10		On site
Total number of participants	31	9	40

2.5 Closing meeting

Date	2025/02/13	**Number of participants**	10
Location	A distance	**Any substantive issues raised**	No

3. General information about the organisation

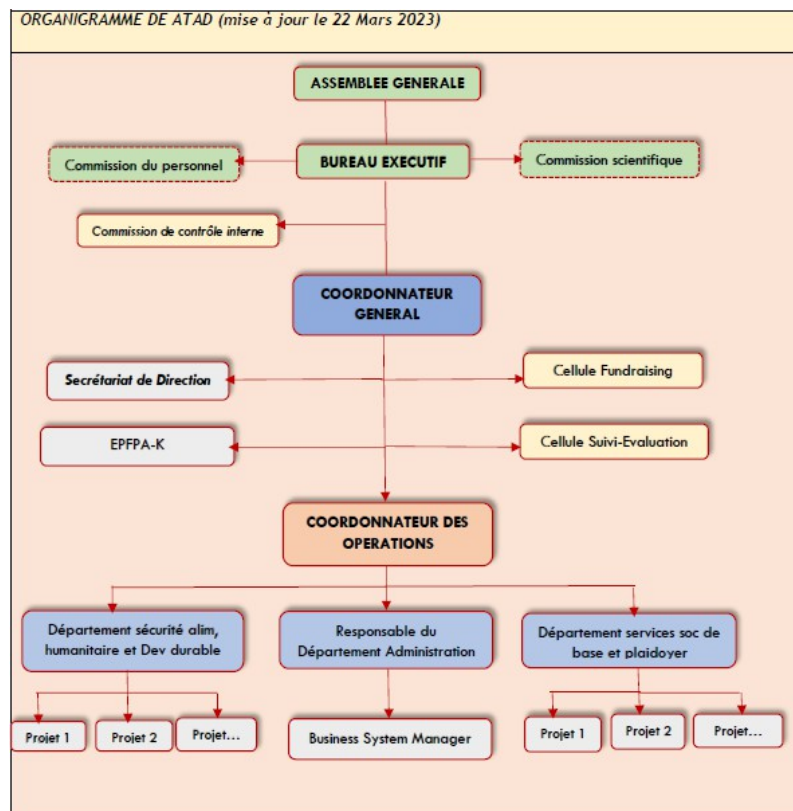| **3.1 General information**	Initially an informal association of consultants, the Alliance Technique d'Assistance au Développement (ATAD) was created in December 2000. ATAD is a non-profit association under Burkinabe law, with its head office in Kaya (Sanmatenga Province) and representative offices in Gorom-Gorom, Dori, Ouagadougou, Arbollé and Tougouri.
	With around 100 registered staff and as many seasonal staff, ATAD focuses on projects to support, raise awareness and strengthen communities so that they become more involved in the management of development initiatives that affect them. ATAD also supports communities and local associations with education and capacity-building activities. ATAD's projects focus on women, who make up the vast majority of beneficiaries.
	ATAD's vision is to contribute to building a tolerant society for sustainable and inclusive community development through responsible and committed actors. This vision is broken down into six missions covering political, social and economic participation, the strengthening of technical knowledge, the promotion of peace, justice and human rights, and the values of solidarity and accountability.
	ATAD has both humanitarian and development projects, the two often being linked. In addition, it responds to a government request that humanitarian activities have a development component. ATAD also advocates (either as a separate activity or as part of a project) to local authorities for the rights of affected people 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 general objective is to support local community initiatives to make the most of the natural and non-natural resources of their environment, in order to promote genuine local development. This is achieved by facilitating reflection on constraints/potential, the search for the most appropriate solutions and the means and methods of implementation.

At the time of this audit, ATAD was working in the Centre-Nord, Nord, Plateau Central, Plateau du Sahel and Boucle du Mouhoun regions. Depending on needs and opportunities, ATAD will also intervene in other regions of Burkina. ".

3.2 Governance and management structure

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

The organisational components of ATAD are
- A General Meeting of 30 members, chaired by the Chairman of the Association, which meets once a year in ordinary session and in extraordinary sessions when necessary.
- The 7-member Executive Board: Chairman, General Secretary, General Treasurer, Secretary for External Relations, Secretary 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 check that actions comply with the association's policies and values.
  o A personnel committee that participates in the recruitment, monitoring and appraisal of staff.
- Coordination for the implementation of projects and programmes, with the following sub-bodies
  o General coordination led by a general coordinator and supported by a secretariat responsible for monitoring and evaluation
  o Coordination of operations
  o Three departments with a department head and project managers
    ▪ A food security, humanitarian and sustainable development department
    ▪ A social sectors and advocacy department
    ▪ An administrative management, finance and accounting department
- The administrative, financial management and accounting department includes a logistics unit and eight accountants, each of whom manages the resources of one to three projects.
- A fundraising unit to raise funds

3.3 Working with partner organisations	ATAD is committed to training and capacity building for local organisations and associations, in particular through the Local Humanitarian Leadership structure. Collaboration with local structures is governed by collaboration agreements based on ATAD's expectations. However, these agreements do not mention the accountability requirements to which ATAD adheres. Within the framework of Local Humanitarian Leadership, ATAD helps to strengthen local organisations and associations, particularly with regard to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), and to support them in their responses to calls for tender. ATAD also regularly responds to calls for tender in partnership with a local structure.

4. Overall organisational performance

4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms	ATAD has several internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms. Its policies cover a Code of Conduct, protection against exploitation and abuse, and the fight against 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, among other things, in a strict approach to the right to sign policies, reports and communications, and in detailed procedures for awarding and executing contracts. ATAD has an Internal Control Committee which assists the Executive Board. Internal control ensures the regularity and conformity 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. Procedures for awarding and executing contracts are supported by the Contract Award Committee. ATAD has an anti-corruption policy which covers the risk of fraud and corruption for the organisation, but also for projects. Some projects have a risk mapping approach, but this is not systematic. ATAD has a monitoring and evaluation system that covers the programme cycle. ATAD carries out regular evaluations and provides weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual discussion forums for monitoring certain key indicators and for exchanging and coordinating the various programmes and projects. This enables regular monitoring and learning at both project and organisational levels. ATAD's human resources system is in place and functional, with a transparent procedure. The code of conduct is signed by all employees and sanctions for breaches of the code are explicit.
4.2 Level of CHS application	ATAD has been working for several years with quality and accountability standards, focusing on community capacity building. Its approach to accountability focuses on the credibility of the organisation itself, which is reflected in its well-developed organisational structure. Its accountability framework includes communicating with communities, setting up a complaints mechanism and sharing 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. Within the framework of local humanitarian leadership, ATAD strengthens local organisations, particularly with regard to CHS. ATAD has trained and/or financed local organisations so that they can apply for tenders, or so that they can apply together.

ATAD's focus is on long-term change, building the capacity and resilience of communities themselves.

Highlights

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

ATAD has a policy of protection 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.

Weak points

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

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

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

ATAD's ambitions for the organisation are likely to exceed its human and financial resources.

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

4.3 Organisational performance against each CHS commitment

Strengths and areas for improvement	Average score* (%)
Commitment 1: The humanitarian response is adapted and appropriate.	2.8
ATAD has policies that commit it to providing impartial and capacity-based assistance to communities, taking 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 to changing needs, capacities and contexts. Nevertheless, ATAD does not sufficiently mention the importance of disaggregating the data collected in its policies and guidelines.	
Community feedback : The 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. The communities say that they were consulted during the initial assessments and during the implementation of the projects and that ATAD adapts the projects to changing needs or contexts.	
Commitment 2: The humanitarian response is effective and timely.	2.4
ATAD's systems for programming and monitoring, evaluating and adapting projects enable projects to be implemented on time, adapted to contextual constraints and without endangering communities. Its work is based on systematic monitoring of relevant standards and indicators, which also enable projects to be adapted if necessary. ATAD is well integrated into a network of organisations and is in contact with local and national authorities to ensure that any needs that the organisation cannot cover are referenced. Its projects are designed in such a way as not to endanger communities.	

ATAD's workload is in line with the organisation's capabilities. Nevertheless, the workload is high, particularly due to difficult security circumstances. There is therefore a risk that the workload will exceed ATAD's capacity, and that it will not systematically monitor projects and adapt them to changing needs.

Community feedback :
The communities say that the assistance is provided on time and does not pose any danger to them. They confirm that ATAD staff are competent. Nevertheless, some communities report a lack of follow-up by ATAD.

Commitment 3: The humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects	**2.5**

Through its policies, strategies and guidelines, ATAD ensures that projects do not have any negative effects, particularly with regard to people's safety, dignity and rights, sexual exploitation and abuse by ATAD staff, cultural, social and political issues, livelihoods, the local economy and the environment. Nevertheless, certain weaknesses have been identified that call into question the organisation's ability to systematically identify and respond to all negative impacts.

ATAD ensures that its projects strengthen local capacities (particularly economic) and community resilience. This last point 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 collecting, processing and storing information from communities in a secure manner.

ATAD makes its projects sustainable. However, the organisation does not systematically ensure that projects have a transition or exit strategy.

Community feedback :
The communities appreciate ATAD's support in strengthening their capacities. They say that ATAD's projects have no negative impact on them.

Commitment 4: The humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback	**2.3**

ATAD is making efforts to promote a culture of open communication. However, external communication policies and processes are not sufficiently developed.

ATAD involves communities in establishing their priorities and the risks they identify, and in encouraging them to express their level of satisfaction with the project. However, this involvement is less rigorous and systematic for emergency projects.

ATAD's external communications are factual, ethical and respectful of the dignity of communities.

Community feedback :
The communities say they are happy with ATAD's assistance. Nevertheless, some communities say that their views on the projects and their needs have not always been sought.

Commitment 5: Complaints are well received and dealt with	**2.0**

ATAD has policies and approaches for managing complaints, including any abuse of power by the organisation. However, this approach is not systematically operational.

ATAD has an organisational culture in which complaints are taken seriously. Communities are often involved in the design of complaints mechanisms and committees. ATAD records feedback and complaints from its projects and responds within established timeframes. Complaints that do not fall within ATAD's remit will be referred to a competent party.

However, not all communities know how to access the complaints mechanism, and some say they are not consulted on the monitoring of the complaints management process.

Community feedback :
The communities say that ATAD listens to them. However, some say that the organisation does not come back to them with complaints.

Commitment 6: The humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary	**2.8**

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. ATAD's partnerships with international organisations and local structures are governed by clear agreements.

ATAD participates in local coordination meetings, including clusters and projects with several partners, and benefits from the exchange of information at these meetings.

Community feedback :
The communities have indicated that they find ATAD's projects complementary to other assistance projects.

Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors learn and improve continuously	**2.3**

The evaluation of projects and programmes is systematic and policy-based. This includes a periodic review of comments and complaints received by communities. However, ATAD's policies and guides do not require comments and complaints to be included in the learning process. This is shared within the organisation, but not systematically with sector stakeholders and the communities themselves, particularly those in emergency projects.

Community feedback :
The communities say that they do not get feedback on evaluation and learning results.

Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their jobs effectively and are treated fairly and equitably.	**2.7**

ATAD has the policies, skills and human resources to implement its programmes in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner. Nevertheless, staff report a heavy workload.

ATAD obeys local labour laws and has clear job descriptions and work procedures, with annual contracts and plans. Each employee signs the code of conduct and is familiar with its contents, including the penalties for breaching the code.

ATAD has procedures in place to ensure that staff work in accordance with its mandate, values, objectives and performance standards.

ATAD has procedures and a security policy for staff. However, staff welfare is not explicitly mentioned in the policy. This poses the risk that in a context of high workloads, measures to ensure well-being will not be regularly applied in the future.

Community feedback :
The communities say that ATAD staff are honest and competent.

Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	**2.7**

ATAD has an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy and procedures for awarding and executing contracts. However, its approach to avoiding conflicts of interest is poorly developed.

ATAD manages and uses its funds responsibly, ethically and legally. Programme and project resources are used efficiently, striking a balance between quality, cost and speed.

ATAD takes care to minimise waste and the impact of its projects on the environment. Indeed, the environment plays a central role for ATAD, which is often active in situations affected by climate change.

ATAD carries out ongoing internal controls, focusing on financial, budgetary and procurement procedures. The organisation is audited annually. It does not have a global audit approach, nor a global risk management approach.

Community feedback :

> The communities say that ATAD manages its resources responsibly and that this includes respect for the environment. They consider ATAD staff to be honest and non-corruptible.

* Note: The 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 scores 0 or if several scores of 1 on the indicators in a commitment lead to the issue of a major non-conformity/weakness at commitment level (in these two cases, the overall score for the commitment is 0).

5. Summary of weaknesses

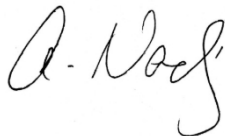| Weaknesses	Type	Status	Resolution period
2025 - 2.5: ATAD does not systematically monitor the activities, results and consequences of humanitarian responses in order to adapt programmes and correct inadequate performance.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 - 3.4: ATAD does not systematically plan a transition or exit strategy from the start of the programme or project.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 - 3.6: ATAD does not systematically identify the actual or potential negative effects of the actions covered in this indicator, in order to be able to respond to 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 involve communities and reflect their priorities and the risks they identify during 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 forwarded to it, 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 people affected by crises is systematically operational.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 - 7.3: ATAD does not systematically share lessons learned and innovation with communities.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 - 8.4 2025 - 8.4: ATAD does not have the skills and human resources to systematically implement its programmes with the required quality.	Minor	New	By 2028
2025 - 9.6.e: ATAD does not have policies or procedures in place to systematically and continuously assess, manage and mitigate risk.	Minor	New	By 2028
Total number of open weaknesses	**11**		

6. Lead auditor's recommendation

BENCHMARKING

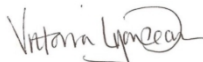| In our opinion, ATAD has demonstrated that it complies with the fundamental humanitarian standard of quality and accountability.		
Name and signature of lead auditor : Aninia Nadig		**Date and place :** **Geneva, 28 February 2025**

7. HQAI decision

Validity of the calibration report :	2025/04/01 until 2026/04/01	
Name and signature of the person responsible for quality assurance at HQAI : **Victoria Lyon Dean.**		**Date and place:** **01.04.2025**

8. Recognition of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation	
Any reservations about the results of the audit and/or comments about the conduct of the HQAI audit team: *If yes, please specify :*	☐ Yes ☒ No
Acknowledgement and acceptance of conclusions : I acknowledge and understand the audit findings I accept the audit findings	☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ No
Name and signature of organisation representative : The General Secretary, Dr Mamoudou TRAORE	**Date and place:** Keya on 28/05/2025

Call

In the event of disagreement with the quality assurance decision, the organisation may appeal to HQAI within 14 working days of being informed of the decision.

HQAI will forward the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaints Committee who will confirm that the basis for the appeal meets the requirements of the appeals procedure. The Chair will then appoint an Appeals Panel consisting of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. The panel will endeavour to reach a decision within 45 working days.

Details of the appeals procedure can be found in document PRO049 - Appeals procedure.

Appendix 1: Explanation of the rating scale* (in French)

Scores	Meaning: for all options in the verification scheme	Technical significance for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation is not working to implement the CHS commitment.	**Score 0:** indicates a weakness so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to : • **Independent verification:** major weakness. • **Certification:** major non-conformity leading to a request for major corrective action (CAR) - No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of the certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts to apply this requirement, but these efforts are not systematic.	**Score 1:** indicates a weakness which does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment, but which must be corrected if the organisation is to continue to respect it. This leads to : • **Independent verification**: minor weakness • **Certification:** minor non-conformity, giving rise to a request for minor corrective action (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts to apply this requirement, but some key points are still not being addressed.	**Score 2:** indicates a problem that warrants special attention but does not currently compromise compliance with the requirement. This leads to : • **Independent verification and certification:** observation.
3	Your organisation complies with this requirement and the organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time - the requirement is met.	**Score 3**: indicates full compliance with the requirement. This leads to : • **Independent verification and certification:** compliance.
4	The work of your organisation goes beyond the objective of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way throughout the organisation, and the organisational systems ensure that a high level of quality is maintained throughout the organisation and over time.	**Note 4:** indicates exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.

* AMSC 2020 verification system rating scale