

Christian Aid (UK and Ireland)

Maintenance Audit 1 – Report – 2025/04/29

1. General information and audit activities

Role / name of auditor(s)	Jorge Menéndez Martínez	
Audit cycle	Third Cycle	
Opening Meeting	Date / number of participants	Any substantive issues arising
	07/04/2025	21
Closing Meeting	15/04/2025	20
Interviews	Position / level of interviewees	Number
	Head office	6

2. Actions and progress of organisation

2.1 Significant change or improvement since the previous audit

Since the Renewal Audit (RA) in 2023, Christian Aid UK and Christian Aid Ireland (CA) have demonstrated a strong and ongoing commitment to enhancing programme quality, accountability, and localisation. CA has updated its approach to humanitarian response, placing locally-led action at the core of its strategy. At the centre of this approach is CA's humanitarian model, the Supporting Community-Led Response (SCLR). SCLR is grounded in the CA's belief that communities are best positioned to understand and address their own needs. It focuses on supporting, amplifying, connecting, and accelerating mutual aid efforts, while ensuring that external support does not cause harm or undermine local initiatives.

After the RA, CA developed a detailed Action Plan to address the Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and observations identified during the audit. This plan outlines the assigned staff responsibilities and specifies the actions to be taken to resolve each CARs and observation. At the time of this audit, CA has made significant progress in implementing key components of the action plan to address the CARs:

- The Needs Assessment Guidance for Development and Advocacy Projects and the Needs Assessment Guidance for Humanitarian Projects have been rolled out. These tools are available in English, Spanish, and French, ensuring accessibility across diverse contexts.
- The Environmental Policy has been formally approved and is currently being rolled out across all programmes and projects. This policy mandates environmental assessments for projects exceeding £50,000 or lasting longer than two years.
- CA has integrated market questions into the needs assessment to ensure that, in the case of small-scale interventions, CA is aware of the market situation and ensures that communities express a willingness to receive cash or other assistance. For large-scale interventions, CA will conduct full market assessments.
- CA continues to strengthen its approach to safeguarding, offering ongoing training for staff and partners, supported by regional focal points, and developing user-friendly guidance materials to help teams and partners effectively assess and mitigate safeguarding risks.

CA shows a high level of commitment to addressing the issues raised at the Renewal Audit and has made relevant progress in addressing the non-conformities. The CARs require further verification at programme and community levels, which will be carried out at the Renewal Audit with project visits when direct feedback from country staff and communities will be gathered.

2.2 Summary on corrective actions

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)	Type and resolution timeframe	Progress made to address the CAR and in response to the findings of the indicator	Evidence (doc no., KII)
2022-1.2: CA does not ensure that projects are systematically based on an analysis of the needs of vulnerable groups.	Minor / by 2027 RA	<p>Since the RA, CA has rolled out the Needs Assessment guidance for Development and Advocacy Projects and the Needs Assessment Guidance for Humanitarian Projects. Both guidances are available in English, French and Spanish.</p> <p>The Minimum Standards require all programmes and projects to conduct a needs assessment before beginning implementation.</p> <p>CA has a dashboard that enables staff to monitor which projects have not yet completed this requirement. At the time of this audit, the dashboard indicates that 18% of projects have not yet conducted a needs assessment.</p>	638 639 640 641 642 643 644
2023 – 3.6: CA does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects.	Minor / by 2027 RA	<p>Since the RA, CA has undertaken several initiatives to ensure that unintended negative effects are properly identified and addressed across its programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA has integrated market questions into the needs assessment to ensure the small-scale interventions do not have negative effects on the market, given that for these small interventions, the full market assessment would not be necessary. The Environmental Policy has been approved, requiring an environmental assessment for all projects with a budget exceeding £50,000 or a duration of more than two years. In support of this, CA has developed an Environmental Risk Screening (ERS) tool to help staff and partners identify potential negative environmental impacts. Staff and partners may also choose to use alternative assessment tools, such as NEAT+ or other context-appropriate methodologies, to meet this requirement. CA has launched a Preliminary Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist, providing clear guidance for identifying and addressing safeguarding risks. CA has developed a guidance for safeguarding in advocacy, policy, and research projects. <p>Also, CA continues to support its staff and partners by building their capacity to assess potential risks, including safeguarding, environmental, and market-related impacts.</p>	624 625 626 627 629 630 631

3. Summary of non-conformities

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)	Type	Status	Resolution timeframe
2022-1.2: CA does not ensure that projects are systematically based on an analysis of the needs of vulnerable groups.	Minor	Open	By 2027 RA
2023 – 3.6: CA does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects.	Minor	Open	By 2027 RA
Total Number of open CARs		2	


4. Claims Review

Claims Review conducted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Follow-up required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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5. Lead auditor recommendation

In our opinion, Christian Aid UK and Christian Aid Ireland have demonstrated that it is taking necessary steps to address the CARs identified in the previous audit(s) and continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.


We recommend maintenance of certification.

Name and signature of lead auditor:  Jorge Menéndez Martínez	Date and place: Buenos Aires, 28 April 2025
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6. HQAI decision

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certificate maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate suspended	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate reinstated <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate withdrawn
Surveillance audit before: 2026/03/19	
Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:  Désirée Walter	Date and place: Geneva, 29 April 2025

7. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation	
Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team: If yes, please give details:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings: I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit I accept the findings of the audit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative: <div style="text-align: right;">  Ray Hasan </div>	Date and place: London 7th May 2025

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 issued 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