Christian Aid – UK & Ireland
Maintenance Audit 2 – Report - 2026/03/23

1. General information and audit activities

Role / name of auditor(s)	Lead Auditor / Sarah Kambarami	
Audit cycle	Third Cycle (CHS:2014)	
	Date / number of participants	**Any substantive issues arising**
Opening Meeting	2026/03/02 – 16 (11F/5M)	None
Closing Meeting	2026/03/09 – 16 (10F/6M)	None
Interviews	**Position / level of interviewees**	**Number**
	Head Office Staff	6

2. Actions and progress of organisation

2.1 Significant change or improvement since the previous audit

Over the last 2 years, Christian Aid has undergone a significant period of organisational transformation from a model based on country offices to a "multi-country cluster" (MCC) model, with five MCC hubs operating globally, located in Bogata, Abuja, Nairobi, Amman and Dhaka. The aim of this new model is to put more power and resources in the hands of local partners and communities. Christian Aid will continue to be operational in 24 priority countries, although this is no longer dependent on having a physical presence in-country. Additionally, Christian Aid plans to engage beyond the priority countries in 'radar' countries managed by the MCCs. 100% of the programme portfolio is now implemented with partners. Structurally, the organisation has also undergone significant changes. Since the Renewal Audit (RA) in early 2024, the number of staff at Christian Aid UK has reduced by 48% from almost 650 staff to approximately 340 positions (including vacancies). Four streamlined departments have been created with international programming managed by the Impact Department. Accountability roles have been merged with Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) roles. The majority of the new Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) roles are located in MCC hubs, with one additional global MEAL Advisor located in the Programme, Policy and Practice (PPP) Division. Programme quality, partnerships, thematic expertise and project cycle management roles are also located in the PPP Division. These changes represent a significant transformation for Christian Aid, with associated risks and opportunities for the quality and accountability work. While some aspects of the transformation are still underway at this Maintenance Audit, it is anticipated that the significant majority of the changes will have been implemented by the time the next Renewal Audit starts later in 2026.

Since the 2025 Maintenance Audit (MA), Christian Aid has streamlined its Programme Quality minimum requirements to reduce duplication and more closely align with the revised CHS (2024). Christian Aid has continued to monitor its progress in closing the gaps identified by the last renewal audit. The action plan was updated in line with the new structure, identifying new owners of tasks to ensure the work continued. In addition to tracking progress against the action plan, Christian Aid is also able to monitor the effectiveness of its corrective actions by generating management information using real time power BI dashboards linked to the integrated Programme Information Management System (iPIMS). In addition, an external corporate safeguarding review was conducted during 2025 with an accompanying action plan developed in January 2026. Four of the identified actions have already been completed.

In general, the gaps identified in the last RA have continued to be addressed by ensuring relevant guidance and tools are systematically available at project or partner level, and by monitoring the related minimum requirements to ensure effective uptake and to provide further support where gaps may still exist. All staff interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of the gaps identified in the RA and a strong commitment to addressing them at the programme level within the context of the new structure. Christian Aid is currently in the process of developing

its new 4-year Corporate Strategy (2026-2030). This will include a global review of the partnership portfolio and the development of signature programmes linked to thematic areas and humanitarian programming.

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	By Maintenance Audit 1 (2025) Christian Aid had finalised the Needs Assessment Guidance for both humanitarian and development programmes in English, French and Spanish. This guidance continues to be rolled out and systematically used across Christian Aid's programming portfolio. The first revised Programme Quality Minimum Requirement is that *Programmes/Projects are based on a needs assessment that considers gender and power, conflict, environment and existing capacities of communities, as well as safeguarding risks.* Christian Aid monitors compliance with this requirement using iPIMS. Currently, 97% of active projects demonstrate evidence of having a needs assessment. This has increased from 82% at the 2025 Maintenance Audit and demonstrates the significant progress Christian Aid has made in ensuring that project designs are systematically based on an analysis of the needs of vulnerable groups. For humanitarian programming, a range of methods are used to ensure programmes are based on an understanding of the needs of vulnerable groups. This includes needs assessments as well as the "Survivor and Community Led Response" (SCLR) approach which aims to keep decision-making power in communities. In turn this gives communities and people the autonomy to identify, prioritise, and address their own needs.	Documents: 638-643 653 655 Staff interviews Christian Aid website
2023-3.6: CA does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects.	Minor / by 2027 RA	Since the 2025 Maintenance Audit, Christian Aid has continued to strengthen a number of tools and guidance to support project owners to systematically identify potential unintended negative effects in a range of areas, including safeguarding, the environment, and the local economy. Safeguarding: • Specific guidance was developed to facilitate safeguarding risk assessments for advocacy/campaigns and research work. • A Preliminary Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist for Safeguarding is in place for use within the first 45 days of a humanitarian response. • There are plans to consider transferring from a project-based to a partner level safeguarding risk assessment to support partners embed organisational, rather than project specific, practice. High risk project interventions would continue to use project level safeguarding risk assessments.	Documents: 624 626 627 646 651 656 657 661 665 Staff interviews

		- Compliance with the minimum requirement related to completing safeguarding risk assessments and putting mitigation measures in place is measured through iPIMS. Currently compliance is 71% globally with significant variation across different country programmes. This data is regularly reviewed and follow up is made with countries showing lower compliance rates. The environment: - CA's Environmental Management Group continued to meet, discussing strategic issues at the organisational level related both to the impact of operations on the environment (e.g. monitoring reduction in carbon footprint) as well as at programme level. A decision was made in the October 2025 meeting to update both the Environment Policy and the Environmental Programme Policy to reflect Christian Aid's new structure and ways of working. - The Environmental Policy and Guideline for Programmes clearly includes the commitment to 'Do No Harm' to the environment and includes guidance for programme teams on Environmental Risk Screening (ERS). - Support to partners on minimising risk to the environment is built in throughout the project cycle, particularly in the design phase and during monitoring visits. Relevant support and accompaniment for partners is provided to help meet CA's environment commitments. Local economy: - As noted in the previous MA report, the needs assessment guidance now includes basic questions about cash and market access. - The cash guidance highlights the importance of considering the impact of cash or in-kind distributions on local markets. Guidance on appropriate ways to conduct a market analysis are outlined in order to prevent distortion of local markets. - Partners are encouraged to contribute to harmonised monitoring and assessment tools from the Cash Working Group when part of harmonised Multi Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) programmes. The extent to which these different initiatives ensure that potential and actual negative impacts of Christian Aid's programmes on people, communities and the environment are identified, prevented, mitigated and addressed in practice, will be assessed at the next Renewal Audit.	-3-

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 Renewal Audit
2023-3.6: CA does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects.	Minor	Open	by 2027 Renewal Audit
Total Number of open CARs	2		

4. Claims Review

Claims Review conducted	☒ Yes ☐ No	**Follow-up required**	☐ Yes ☒ No

5. Lead auditor recommendation

In my opinion, Christian Aid has demonstrated that it is taking necessary steps to address the CARs identified in the previous audits and continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

I recommend maintenance of certification.

Name and signature of lead auditor:	Date and place:
Sarah Kambarami	19th March 2026 Bonn, Germany

6. HQAI decision

☒ Certificate maintained ☐ Certificate suspended	☐ Certificate reinstated ☐ Certificate withdrawn
Surveillance audit before: 2027/03/21	
Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director: Désirée Walter	Date and place: Geneva, 23 March 2026

7. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation	-5-
Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team: If yes, please give details:	☐ Yes ☑ No
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings: I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit I accept the findings of the audit	 ☑ Yes ☐ No ☑ Yes ☐ No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative: Ray Hasan	**Date and place:** 27th March 2026 London, UK

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.	**Score 0:** indicates a weakness that is 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 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.	**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: • 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.	**Score 2:** indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to: • 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.	**Score 3:** indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to: • 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.	**Score 4:** indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020