

# Mission East

## Renewal Audit – Summary Report – 2024/03/22

### 1. General information

#### 1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Federated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
<b>Legal registration</b>	Mission East is registered under the Danish Business Authority with CVR number 14 72 36 92.	
<b>Head Office location</b>	Copenhagen and Brussels	
<b>Total number of organisation staff</b>	Total staff: 123 Head Office: 22 Country Offices: 101	

#### 1.2 Audit team

<b>Lead auditor</b>	Joanne O’Flanagan
<b>Second auditor</b>	
<b>Third auditor</b>	
<b>Observer</b>	
<b>Expert</b>	
<b>Witness / other participants</b>	

#### 1.3 Scope of the audit

<b>CHS Verification Scheme</b>	Certification
<b>Audit cycle</b>	Third cycle  This Renewal Audit is a transition from the 4-year audit cycle to the 3-year audit cycle. The Recertification Audit was conducted in 2021 with a Mid-term Audit due in 2023. After discussion with the organisation, it was agreed to transition to the 3-year audit cycle through a Renewal Audit.
<b>Coverage of the audit</b>	The audit covers the whole organisation including Head Offices in Copenhagen and Brussels and Country (CO) Offices, as well as all development and humanitarian programming implemented globally, both directly by Mission East (ME) and with partners. This includes programmes implemented through partners in countries where ME does not have a CO.

#### 1.4 Sampling\*

<b>Total number of Country Programme sites in scope</b>			10
<b>Total number of sites for onsite visit</b>			1
<b>Total number of sites for remote assessment</b>			3
<b>Name of country programme/ site</b>	<b>Included in final sample (Y/N)</b>	<b>Rationale for sampling and selection / de-selection decision</b>	<b>Onsite or Remote</b>

<b>Random sampling</b>			
Syria	N	Syria was originally included in the final sample as it is an example of a programme that ME had been supporting without a Country Office (CO) since 2019, working with partners. Since the last audit ME opened a CO and has staff present in the country. Due to the crisis in Gaza, Israel and the wider region, the planned onsite visit was cancelled and Syria was replaced by Tajikistan for the onsite visit.	
Lebanon	N	Lebanon was not included as Syria was sampled for the onsite visit and Lebanon is in the same region.	
Nepal	Y	Nepal was included in the final sample as it is an example of a well-established ME programme working in very remote and hard to reach locations.	Remote
Iraq	N	Iraq was not included in the final sample as the CP had been sampled in three previous audits.	
Nigeria	N	Nigeria was not included in the final sample as ME is working through 1 partner in Nigeria which is already CHS certified.	
<b>Purposive sampling</b>			
Armenia		Armenia was selected to replace Lebanon. Armenia is an example of a small and well-established longer term development programme of ME delivered through partners. ME does not have a CO in Armenia and supports the programme remotely from HO.	Remote
Afghanistan		Afghanistan was selected to replace Iraq. Afghanistan is ME's largest programme and is a good example of a large scale humanitarian programme implemented both directly and with partners.	Remote
Tajikistan		Tajikistan was selected as a replacement for Syria for the onsite visit. Due to the changing security context in the region the auditor and the organisation agreed that travel to Syria was no longer feasible. Tajikistan was selected as it is a well-established programme of ME implementing both humanitarian and development projects, directly and through partners.	Onsite
<b>Any other sampling performed for this audit:</b>			
<p>One of the projects sampled for the onsite assessment in Tajikistan includes children with disabilities; the auditor considers that all children and persons with a disability may be considered vulnerable as they may rely on others for their care; while not all children or persons with a disability will be exposed to risks which exploit their vulnerability, situations of isolation and poverty can expose them to higher risks of exploitation, abuse and other forms of harm. The CHS requires an organisation such as Mission East to ensure that it fulfils its commitments, as described in the standard, to children and persons with a disability and their parents and guardians, in its programmes. For this reason, the auditor included consultations with the parents and guardians of children and young people with a disability as well as other adult programme participants to generate appropriate evidence to inform audit findings.</p>			
<b>Sampling risks identified:</b>			
<p>No specific sampling risks identified notwithstanding the late change from Syria to Tajikistan for the onsite visit. The auditor is confident in the findings and conclusions of this audit based on the sample.</p>			

*\*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 direct observation. Findings are analysed to determine an organisation's systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across different contexts and ways of working.*

## 2. Activities undertaken by the audit team

### 2.1 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
Copenhagen and Brussels	8-9 November 2023	Remote / Onsite
Tajikistan	13-17 November 2023	Onsite
Afghanistan	28-30 November 2023	Remote
Armenia	21-22 November 2023	Remote
Nepal	23-24 November 2023	Remote

### 2.2 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite/ Remote
	Female	Male	
<b>Head Offices</b>			
Management	2	2	Onsite/remote
Staff	7	4	Onsite/remote
Board Members		1	Remote
<b>Country Programmes</b>			
Management	1	10	Onsite/remote
Staff	2	2	Onsite/remote
Partner staff	5	5	Onsite
Stakeholders		1	Onsite
<b>Total number of interviewees</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>

### 2.3 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of participants		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Group discussion with parents and guardians of children with a disability - Panjakent, Tajikistan	3		Onsite
Group discussion with community support network – Panjakent, Tajikistan	3		Onsite
Group discussion with parents and guardians and their children – Amondara, Tajikistan	6		Onsite
Consultation with family – Dushanbe, Tajikistan	2		Onsite
Consultation with family – Dushanbe, Tajikistan	2		Onsite
Consultation with family – Dushanbe, Tajikistan		1	Onsite
Consultation with family – Dushanbe, Tajikistan	1	1	Onsite
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	

## 2.4 Opening meeting

<b>Date</b>	2023/11/08
<b>Location</b>	Brussels
<b>Number of participants</b>	15
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	None

## 2.5 Closing meeting

<b>Date</b>	2023/12/14
<b>Location</b>	Remote
<b>Number of participants</b>	37
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	None

## 3. Background information on the organisation

### 3.1 General information

Mission East is an international relief and development organisation which works to help vulnerable populations, supporting communities' capacities to organise and assist themselves, through activities ranging from disaster relief to development assistance. It was established in 1991 with an original focus on former Soviet republics. The organisation has Head Offices in Copenhagen and Brussels with more than 120 staff worldwide across its Head Offices, Regional Hub, and five Country Offices (CO) in Afghanistan, Nepal, Syria, Tajikistan and Ukraine. An office in Iraq was closed in 2023 although Mission East continues to implement projects through local partners. In 2021, with the aim of creating a more agile and efficient organisation, with decision-making closer to its programmes, Mission East has started a process of moving more HO positions to the global south. This has led to an overall reduction in the number of HO staff from 31 in 2020 to 22 in 2023. The Regional Hub has been located in the CO in Tajikistan hosting HO administrative and technical functions. Mission East works directly with local communities and through local and international partners.

Mission East is inspired by Christian values, humanitarian principles and human rights; its vision is for thriving and empowered people and communities who have lifted themselves out of poverty and marginalisation and who now experience justice for all. The organisation's mission is to work with communities and partners to provide humanitarian response and development aid to vulnerable people and fragile communities affected by crisis so that they can thrive.

Together In Compassion 2022-30, articulates Mission East's strategy and sets out a number of key aspirations and goals. Among its main aspirations for the period are:

- To reach more than 600,000 people through its programming by expanding into new geographies and partnerships.
- To support communities to adapt to the climate crisis.
- To increase its focus on localisation and shifting the power.
- To improve operational effectiveness through investments in its culture, organisation and new technologies to maximise impact.

Across its six goals for the strategic period 2022-30, Mission East seeks to prioritise the most vulnerable and marginalised people in the hardest-to-reach areas:

1. Conflict- and disaster-affected communities receive timely and relevant humanitarian responses.
2. Marginalised and vulnerable populations lead healthy, dignified lives, and experience social justice in inclusive and resilient communities.
3. At-risk communities take effective action to adapt to changing climate, and engage in restorative environmental practice to protect themselves and creation.
4. Investment in quality partnerships and capacitates local leadership
5. Diversification of its funding base and effective popular engagement.
6. Being a vibrant and fit-for-purpose organisation.

Mission East has five areas of programmatic expertise: Humanitarian emergency response; Water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH); Food and livelihood security (FSL); Protection; and Climate and environment crisis action.

To facilitate the achievement of its strategic ambitions, Mission East has identified a number of strategic enablers that direct and inform its programmatic approach: localisation; working

across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus; inclusion and rights-based approaches; greening; community engagement; and innovation.

Mission East is a member of a number of networks and alliances, including Integral Alliance, EU-Cord, the Charter for Change (C4C) and Voice. As part of Integral Alliance, Mission East often works in partnership with its members.

Until recently, Mission East programming was geographically focussed in post-Soviet states, the Middle East and Asia. Following amendment of its statutes in 2021, which removed the geographical mandate restrictions, and in line with its strategic ambition to expand into new geographies, Mission East's first programme in Africa was started in 2021 in North-East Nigeria implemented through an Integral Alliance partner, funded under its Strategic Partnership Agreement with Danida.

At the current time, Mission East funds programmes in 10 countries. Aside from the five country programmes with a CO, the organisation is supporting projects, delivered through partnerships with national and international organisations, in Armenia, Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar and Nigeria. An office in North Korea has remained closed since the COVID-19 pandemic with no current operations.

In 2022, Mission East reported a global income of almost 134,000,000 DKK, with expenditure of 130,000,000 DKK. The organisation supported around 500,000 people with humanitarian and development assistance. At the current time, Afghanistan is the largest programme in the portfolio, representing almost 50% of total programmatic expenditure. The programmatic split between humanitarian and development expenditure is around 83%/17%; the higher than average proportion of humanitarian spending on previous years is attributed, in particular, to crises in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

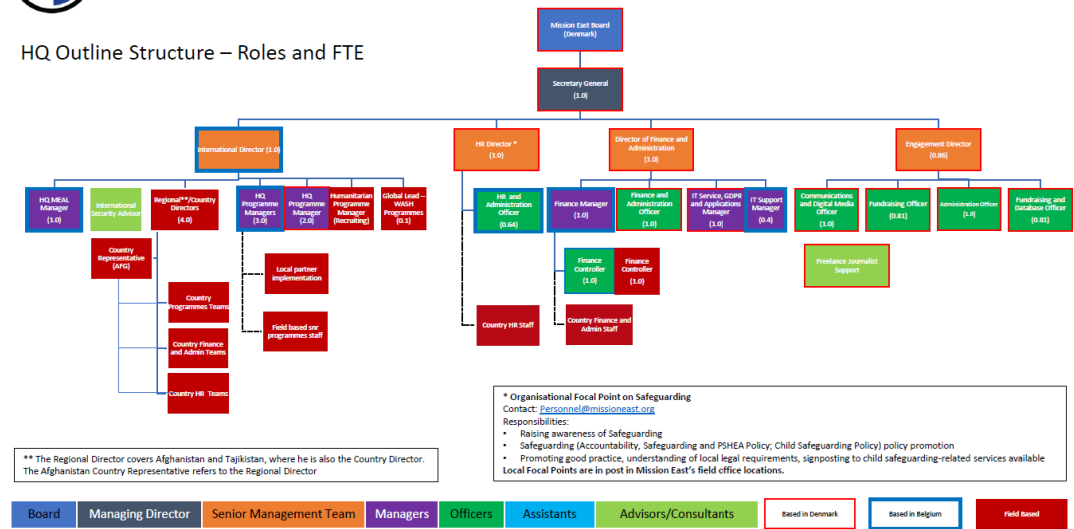
### 3.2 Governance and management structure

Mission East is governed by a Board comprising five members; a new Chair was appointed in 2023. Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for a period of 2 years. Current Board member areas of expertise include financial management, aid and development (including evaluation) and ICT. As of 2023 a member of Mission East staff (employee elected) acts as a Representative to the Board in a technical capacity. The Board acts in a strategic capacity and is responsible for appointing the Managing Director (MD). The Board meets four times per year with the MD in attendance. The Chair and MD meet together on a bi-weekly basis; speaking points are shared with the other members. There is a standing agenda for board meetings across the calendar year with a number of fixed tasks, including review of annual organisational performance; review of risk; review of complaints; approval of draft annual financial report and quarterly financial reports; approval of organisational budget, strategy and key policies. The annual financial audit report is approved at the AGM.

The organisational structure has changed slightly since the last audit. The Senior Management Team (SMT) currently comprises: the Managing Director, International Director, HR Director and Administration and Finance Director along with a representative from the Engagement team. Mission East's Head Office (HO) has staff based across 2 offices in Copenhagen and Brussels. A separate Mission East sister organisation that focused on fundraising in Germany, with an office in Berlin, was closed at the end of 2022. As part of its commitment to shifting the power, Mission East is in the process of establishing a Regional Hub with administrative and programmatic functions in Tajikistan. Staff in the hub are contracted as HO staff in line with Mission East's vision of a more geographically dispersed HO that does not concentrate all positions in its European offices.

Mission East's team in Copenhagen remains primarily focused on Administration, HR, Finance, IT, Communications, Fundraising and Engagement; the Managing Director is also based there. The Programme team has an operational and programmatic focus and is dispersed across three offices - Copenhagen, Brussels and Tajikistan. It comprises the International Director (Brussels) who oversees global programming and manages the programme team; Programme Managers (PM) who are generally responsible for a portfolio of several country programmes which may include those with a CO and those that are solely implemented through partners and managed remotely; and the MEAL Manager. There are six PMs located in Brussels (x 3), Copenhagen (x 2) and Tajikistan (x 1). At the CO level, Country Directors (CD) are overall responsible for programme quality and implementation but receive support from the relevant PM. CDs report to the International Director. In addition to their programme management and support responsibilities, individual PMs also act as thematic leads/experts to support the organisation in relation to specific strategic enablers, as identified in the strategic plan, in relation to localisation, climate, HDP Nexus and innovation.

HQ Outline Structure – Roles and FTE



### 3.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

Mission East continues to have well established internal quality assurance and risk management systems.

The Mission East Finance Manual (updated 2023) describes financial systems and procedures and outlines the broader control environment. The core framework of control includes segregation of duties; authorised signatories; physical controls; access controls; monitoring and independent checks; resource ownership controls; reporting procedures; and independent confirmation such as bank reconciliation. Controls may be adapted to different offices and contexts based on assessment of risk. Finance roles are clearly defined with line management and assigned responsibilities.

Mission East does not have an internal audit function however, staff are alert to the requirement for close monitoring and HO finance staff regularly conduct onsite visits to carry out financial monitoring and checks, including spot checks at COs, and sampling of partner financial records. External statutory audits are conducted annually and for programmes as required by donors.

An organisational Risk Register is prepared by SMT and reviewed/ revised annually and formally shared with the Board for discussion and consideration of risk management and mitigation. Risks are assessed according to likelihood and impact and assigned a severity weighting (traffic light system). Mitigation and control measures are identified for all risks that are ranked moderate (amber) or severe (red). Risks are not clustered by category but cover areas including security, banking, reputation, fraud and corruption, SHEA, data security and staff wellbeing.

Mission East has a comprehensive policy framework that underpins requirements for organisational and staff integrity; key to this is the Code of Conduct (CoC) which forms an integral part of an employee’s contract and applies to staff, interns, volunteers and board members. The CoC includes prohibition of discrimination, SHEA and fraud, as well as commitments to Do No Harm with respect to people and the environment and respect for local culture, and values. Staff are required to report any breach in line with procedures. Policies and procedures are in place covering: child safeguarding; accountability, safeguarding and PSHEA; reporting, misconduct and whistleblowing; handling complaints and allegations; and discipline. Induction procedures cover these policies and procedures in detail. Refresher trainings are conducted annually.

Mission East’s Quality Commitment Framework, launched in 2017, provides an overarching framework for quality across all of the organisation’s work and includes external standards (such as the ICRC NGO Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief, CHS, Sphere and other sectoral standards) as well as internal standards (Code of Conduct, Accountability, (child) safeguarding and PSHEA, anti-fraud, MEAL, inclusion, data management policies, among others). A Quality and Accountability annual report, based on assessed performance, both where Mission East does and does not have COs, is presented to the Board annually.

A MEAL Policy sets out the broad principles and minimum standards for all programmes while detailed processes are outlined in Project Cycle Management guidance. A MEAL Manager at HO provides technical support to MEAL staff at the CO level and to PMs. Project workbooks are the primary tool for capturing project information and tracking progress, including M&E plans, indicators, activities, risks, lessons learned and complaints. These are updated on monthly basis and reviewed at CO level and/or by PMs. Programme Managers hold a key role in overseeing programme quality assurance and compliance with policies and standards for project implementation and reporting.

### 3.4 Work with partner organisations

There have been no major changes in how Mission East works with its partners since the Recertification Audit, 2021 (REC). However, Mission East has increased its strategic focus on localisation and commits, in its strategic plan, to address power imbalance and return local partners and civil society to the centre of humanitarian and development systems through increasingly equitable partnerships.

As articulated in its Partnership Framework, Mission East works with a wide range of partners and is committed to supporting civil society in the countries where it works. Its partnership approach extends to formal and informal community-based organisations, grassroots movements and groups. The organisation outlines key principles of partnership including open dialogue, transparency and trust; mutual accountability; respect for self-governance; and joint learning, reflection and sharing of knowledge and experience.

Partnership arrangements are defined and managed through established due diligence processes, strategic agreements and grant agreements, with clear terms and conditions. Terms and conditions include: the requirement for partners to have a CoC, aligned with the CHS and including at a minimum commitments to PSHEA; adherence to agreed quality and accountability standards; mechanisms for the prevention of fraud and corruption; and the establishment of formal complaint handling mechanisms.

Due diligence and partner assessment processes consider risks and capacities of potential partners. This includes determining that potential partners are not involved in illegal or terrorist activities, have a good reputation and local legitimacy amongst communities and stakeholders, and are neutral and impartial. The assessments also check if partners have appropriate legal status, adhere to child protection and safeguarding principles, have appropriate governance systems and relevant financial, procurement, HR, security, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management controls. Mission East strives to build the capacity of the local organisations with which it works. Partner capacity building is based on gaps identified through the partner assessments and ongoing monitoring. Mission East has developed specific induction material to introduce partners to the Mission East Code of Conduct and Accountability, Safeguarding and PSHEA policy.

Mission East works with around 20 partner organisations representing a broad range of civil society. While the organisation sometimes works through larger, international NGOs such as members of Integral Alliance, particularly in humanitarian contexts where it doesn't have an established presence, in general it focuses on partnerships with smaller, more locally rooted civil society organisations. As Mission East often works in very remote and hard to reach areas, it considers that smaller, local and grass roots organisations generally have higher levels of legitimacy amongst communities.

## 4. Overall performance of the organisation

### 4.1 Effectiveness of the governance, internal quality assurance and risk management of the organisation

Mission East's systems of governance, internal quality assurance and risk management are broadly comprehensive and effective. Over the period since the previous audit, Mission East has retained a strong focus on strengthening policies, procedures and mechanisms that underpin its commitment to the CHS, and the organisation continues to make improvements to aspects of its governance, quality assurance and risk management systems. Mission East's Board comprises five members and is complete; the schedule of meetings and agenda is clearly established. The Senior Management Team (SMT) is delegated by the board to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of organisational activities. A second senior management group, the Strategic Impact and Value-for-money Advisory (SIVA) group established in 2023, is delegated by the Secretary General to lead strategic and in-depth discussions and decisions related to quality performance of programmes in line with

established policies and standards. Both groups meet on a biweekly basis, and agreed actions and decisions are documented.

In 2023, the organisation developed a Value for Money (VfM) guidance document to embed VfM considerations into its programming, with a key focus on delivering on Mission East's strategic commitments. The commitment to VfM is partly reflected in recent investments in new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems. The new ERP system will replace the existing accounting system which is highly dependent on manual data entry and is anticipated to achieve significantly greater efficiency in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting.

Mission East Board and management demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to the CHS and its application however, there has been some loss of momentum due to staffing gaps (MEAL) between 2022/23 and sustaining the updating of CHS improvement plans at global and CO levels. Nonetheless, Mission East maintains strong performance in its application of the standard and the outstanding Minor CAR (4.1) is closed at this audit. See section 4.2 below.

Staff have a clear understanding of Mission East's Quality Commitments Framework and awareness and application are measured and reported on an annual basis to the Board, including plans to address gaps (including vis a vis application of the CHS) through the development of guidance, delivery of (refresher) trainings to staff and partners and translation of relevant policies into local languages.

Finance procedures are known and understood by staff and partners, and Mission East CO staff provide ongoing support and training, particularly to newer partners, to ensure accurate reporting and management of documentation. Partners express particular appreciation for support to develop and apply appropriate financial policies and procedures. At a global level the Board reviews and revises risks on an annual basis and risks should be captured at CO level in country strategies and at project level through project workbooks however, contextual risks at the country, partner and project levels are not systematically assessed, managed and mitigated on an ongoing basis in all contexts.

The Annual Accounts, Annual Report and Annual Complaints Handling Report are all published on Mission East's website.

#### **4.2 Level of implementation of the CHS and progress on compliance**

Mission East maintains a high level of active commitment to the CHS and the standard is systematically integrated into strategies, policies and procedures including those for programme quality and accountability. In public forums Mission East is a champion for the CHS, for example as part of its engagement with Integral Alliance members. Staff demonstrate a high level of familiarity with the standard and are actively engaged in ensuring that partners know and understand their responsibility to apply the standard through training and ongoing engagement on relevant policies and practices.

Mission East performs well in relation to gender equality notwithstanding some inequity in gender representation at CO level which is primarily determined by context and is outside of Mission East's control. Mission East's Gender Position Paper (updated 2023) outlines the organisation's commitment to progressing gender equality and is clearly articulated at the programme level. Mission East's Disability and Inclusion Policy affirms a longstanding commitment to disability inclusion, disability rights awareness and progressive attainment. This commitment was clearly evidenced at the operational level during the onsite audit assessment and communities confirm the relevance of programmes in terms of disability inclusion. Staff and partners demonstrate a shared commitment to women's participation and have the technical skills and capacities to deliver gender and disability sensitive programming.

Overall this audit finds that Mission East's projects are appropriate, relevant, safe and timely and are well coordinated with, and complementary to those of other actors, particularly government and local civil society entities. Mission East works collaboratively with its partners to assess, monitor and build capacities.

In general Mission East ensures that its support is based on communication, participation and feedback with and from communities affected by crisis. Mission East tracks and monitors all sensitive complaints including those related to SHEA and fraud and corruption and systems for complaints and whistleblowing are demonstrating increasing effectiveness. While communities are generally aware of available mechanisms to register complaints, they are not always clear about the scope of issues that complaint handling mechanisms can address.



Mission East and partners endeavour to ensure that communities affected by crisis are aware of their commitments on staff behaviour including zero tolerance of SHEA and fraud or corruption.

At this Renewal Audit, the Minor CAR (4.1) has been closed based on evidence from the sampled country programmes; this audit finds that Mission East continues to disseminate findings from previous audits to staff at all levels; maintains a focus on training for staff and partners on the core requirements of the CHS including in relation to information provision; supports the development of contextualised and translated information materials (at CO and partner levels). Evidence that such information is provided to communities affected by crisis, gathered during the onsite assessment is considered adequate to close the CAR. However, some minor gaps remain in ensuring that information on the Code of Conduct and PSHEA commitments is consistently provided across all project sites.

Risk management processes are broadly effective and most, though not all projects ensure consideration of risks of potential negative effects to people and communities, including risks of SHEA or other forms of harm, in the different programme contexts.

Mission East is committed to the Grand Bargain (work stream 2 on localisation) and is a signatory to the Charter4Change (C4C). To support its localisation commitments, Mission East developed a Local Leadership Strategy 2022-2025 which outlines how it will strengthen local leadership through its work with local partners. Specific targets include the transfer of a minimum of 30% of funding to local partners by 2026, and 2% of its budget on partner capacity development. The organisation also commits to annual review of the diversity of its partner portfolio including through the gathering of grassroots views on the legitimacy and representation of local partners in external evaluations. At the current time, Mission East transfers around 23% of its programmatic budget to local partners.

Commitment	Strong points and areas for improvement	Average score*
<p><b>Commitment 1:</b> Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant</p>	<p>Mission East continues to have processes in place to ensure ongoing context analysis. Programmes and projects are based on assessments (needs, context, etc.) with a particular concern to understand the needs of more marginalised and excluded groups, particularly in hard-to-reach and underserved communities. Programme participation is impartial but targeted.</p> <p>Data is generally disaggregated on the basis of sex, age and ability/disability and the organisation places a strong focus on supporting the inclusion and participation of persons with a disability and their parents and caretakers.</p> <p>Examples are evident of how Mission East adapts projects to changing contexts based on engagement with and feedback from communities, monitoring activities and evaluations.</p> <p>An observation is recorded noting that project risk assessments do not consistently consider risks for different groups, including risks of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) or other forms of harm, in the different programme contexts.</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities indicate that the support from Mission East is relevant to their needs and that the organisation is providing support and services that are not otherwise available.</p> <p>Communities generally understand that they have gone through a selection process but are not always clear on the basis for targeting and selection; some expressed a sense of being lucky, rather than meeting objective criteria.</p>	2.8
<p><b>Commitment 2:</b> Humanitarian</p>	<p>Mission East programmes are generally safe and accessible and informed by the culture and context in which they operate.</p> <p>The organisation has policies and systems in place to track and monitor activities and outputs, including a strong culture of external evaluation and review to assess outcomes and impact.</p>	3.0

<p>response is effective and timely</p>	<p>Mission East tracks and monitors staff levels of knowledge of CHS, Sphere and other technical standards. Staff are skilled and competent in relevant other standards according to areas of responsibility (e.g. WASH, disability and inclusion, food security and livelihoods). Mission East works with partners' with specific areas of technical competence and expertise based on assessment of partner capacities.</p> <p>Mission East staff are aware of the organisational commitment to refer unmet needs and make efforts to do so where possible however, given that the organisation often works in very remote and low-resource settings, access to alternative supports and services is not always available.</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities consider support from Mission East and partners to be timely and effective.</p> <p>Communities perceive Mission East and partner staff to be skilled and technically competent.</p> <p>Communities confirm regular visits from Mission East and partner staff for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>Communities confirm that Mission East and partners refer them to other services and sources of support where possible/available.</p>	
<p><b>Commitment 3:</b> Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects</p>	<p>Mission East has a clear commitment to strengthening local capacities and has policies, procedures, and systems in place to do so. The organisation has enhanced its strategic commitment to working through local partners and supporting the development of local leadership capacity. However, planning and support for partner capacity development is not consistently in place.</p> <p>Mission East has data encryption protocols in place for sensitive and personal information and a system to trigger alerts for unauthorised access attempts. Partners are aware of data protection obligations.</p> <p>Project workbooks include prompts for the consideration of risks to people and communities, and to the environment, however, these are not consistently completed for all projects.</p> <p>Some, though not all, programmes and projects consider planning for transition or exit.</p> <p>Partners place significant value on the support of Mission East for the development of organisational competencies and capacity, particularly in relation to financial management and reporting processes including prevention of fraud and corruption, accountability (specifically the CHS) and CoC and PSHEA. However, partner capacity assessments are not consistently accompanied by partner capacity development plans and budgetary allocation in line with Mission East's strategic commitment to partner capacity strengthening and organisational development (CSOD).</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities expressed increased confidence and belief in their own coping capacities as a result of Mission East programmes.</p> <p>Those interviewed mentioned that trainings received made them feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ better prepared to address challenges and to be unafraid to speak up and act on behalf of others.</li> <li>▪ to cope and manage (dis)stress and to be better able to care for self and family.</li> <li>▪ to feel heard and seen (themselves and their children).</li> <li>▪ to feel confident dignified and empowered.</li> </ul> <p>Communities are not always clear how long support from Mission East will continue.</p>	<p>2.6</p>

<p><b>Commitment 4:</b> Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback</p>	<p>Mission East has well established participation, engagement and feedback mechanisms in place and makes particular efforts to ensure these are inclusive.</p> <p>Staff are committed to ensuring communities are aware of Mission East's CoC and expected behaviours of staff and consistent efforts are made to ensure that communities are provided with information in languages, formats and media that are appropriate for different groups.</p> <p>However, the provision of information on the CoC and on PSEAH commitments is not consistent across all project sites and Mission East's monitoring activities do not routinely include confirming that information is shared with communities about expected behaviour of staff and commitments to PSEAH.</p> <p>A culture of open and transparent communication is demonstrated through policy commitments and practice, and external communications are ethical and respectful and represent communities in a dignified way.</p> <p>Mission East's partners consider that communication with the organisation is open, respectful and transparent.</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities indicate that Mission East and partners listen to them, are responsive to their feedback and provide explanation for what they can and cannot support.</p> <p>Communities express confidence to participate in Mission East projects and activities and to provide feedback on support whether positive or negative.</p> <p>Communities confirm they are asked to provide consent before photographs are taken.</p>	2.9
<p><b>Commitment 5:</b> Complaints are welcomed and addressed</p>	<p>Mission East continues to strengthen its culture in relation to accepting and managing complaints at all levels, including at the partner level. The organisation's complaint handling system is documented, well understood by staff and accessible throughout the organisation. Staff, partners and communities express confidence to use available mechanisms.</p> <p>Communication on BCMS at the community level is largely effective and efforts are made to consult communities on the design of feedback and complaint mechanisms and make them accessible to all programme participants. Although communities are not always clear about the scope of issues that complaint handling mechanisms can address and do not always have an explicit understanding of Mission East's and partner's commitments on PSHEA. Mission East has not established procedures to routinely confirm community-level awareness of commitments on the expected behaviour of staff and on PSHEA.</p> <p>Partnership agreements do not consistently reflect Mission East's requirement for partners to have a documented complaint handling process in place.</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities are generally aware of complaint mechanisms including contact numbers for Mission East and partner staff as well as other mechanisms to complain.</p> <p>Communities are not always aware of the distinction between general feedback, programme-related complaints and sensitive or serious complaints (e.g. concerns related to CoC violations, SEAH, fraud and corruption), nonetheless they expressed confidence to use available channels and to raise serious concerns should they arise.</p>	2.6
<p><b>Commitment 6:</b> Humanitarian</p>	<p>Mission East has a clear commitment to coordination and complementary programming. It works in collaboration with members of IA and other forums.</p>	3.0

<p>response is coordinated and complementary</p>	<p>Evidence from staff and partners at the CO level demonstrate a strong commitment to coordination and engagement with relevant institutional actors and structures to support programming and enhance sustainability.</p> <p>Mission East engages and collaborates with government authorities, partners and community structures.</p> <p>Mission East's work with partners is governed by consistent agreements.</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities do not report any duplication of support or services with other organisations.</p> <p>Communities described how Mission East's programmes effectively connects them to related services.</p> <p>Community level stakeholders provided evidence of clear linkages between Mission East programmes and existing services.</p>	
<p><b>Commitment 7:</b> Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve</p>	<p>Mission East endeavours to learn from previous experience and to include learning from experience in the design of new programmes. The organisation takes advantage of available feedback, monitoring, external evaluations and other lessons learned recorded in project workbooks to improve its work and innovate, although not all project workbooks provide completed lessons learned sections.</p> <p>Where available, learning is shared in inter-agency working groups and with government stakeholders and informs broader programming strategies.</p> <p>Evidence indicates good examples of capturing and sharing lessons learned at country programme level as well as significant investment in developing, piloting and testing innovative solutions.</p> <p>Partners appreciate monitoring visits and capacity building support received from Mission East and the learning that is associated with close interaction with staff.</p> <p>Mission East encourages partners to participate in learning events and engage in assessment and other learning opportunities.</p> <p>Partners indicate that they feel supported to reflect on their work and to continuously improve.</p> <p><b>Feedback from communities</b></p> <p>Communities expressed appreciation for attaining new knowledge.</p>	<p>2.7</p>
<p><b>Commitment 8:</b> Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably</p>	<p>Mission East has clear staff rules and regulations in place which reflect values of fairness and equity and staff are clearly oriented on Mission East's mission and values. Mission East has open and fair recruitment processes in place and comprehensive induction procedures for staff at all levels. The principles, mandate and values of Mission East are foundational to the work of staff and inform their day to day activities.</p> <p>Staff demonstrate high levels of awareness of key policies and are guided by Mission East's Code of Conduct (CoC) and, in particular, to its commitments to Do No Harm and inclusion. Staff and partners understand expectations in terms of professional behaviour and understand potential consequences for CoC violations. Ongoing training, mentoring and on-job support helps to ensure relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Performance management procedures are established and followed. While staff indicate that budgets for staff development are somewhat constrained, in general they express feeling supported to develop skills and competencies.</p>	<p>3.0</p>

	<p>Evidence from this audit indicate that Mission East places significant importance on the wellbeing, safety and security of staff and partners and has effective systems in place to support this.</p> <p>Partners appreciate support for improving organisational and individual skills and capacities: administrative, technical and operational.</p>	
	<b>Feedback from communities</b>	
	Communities perceive Mission East and partner staff as respectful, professional and competent.	
<b>Commitment 9:</b> Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	<p>Mission East continues to have policies and procedures in place to ensure responsible use of resources with effective anti-fraud and corruption policies and controls in place which are known and followed by staff. Finance systems and processes for monitoring the use of funds are well established and followed at all levels. Mission East maintains a strong control environment and staff understand their responsibilities and limits of authority and are committed to following correct procedures. Staff demonstrate awareness of VfM principles and the importance of using resources responsibly.</p> <p>Staff demonstrate an understanding of Mission East's Greening agenda, Environment Policy and strategic commitment on restorative environmental practice however, consideration of the environmental impact of programmes and operations is not consistent across all contexts.</p>	2.7
	<b>Feedback from communities</b>	
	<p>Communities did not report any concern regarding misuse of resources and understand that Mission East does not tolerate corruption.</p> <p>Communities expressed confidence in the integrity of Mission East and partner staff.</p>	

\* *Note: Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each Commitment, except when one of the indicators of a commitment scores 0 or if several scores 1 on the indicators of a Commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-conformity/ weakness at the level of the Commitment. In these two cases the overall score for the Commitment is 0.*

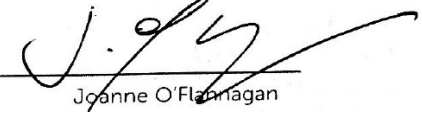
## 5. Summary of open non-conformities

Corrective Action Request (CAR)	Type	Resolution due date	Status & date	New resolution due date (if applicable)
2021- 4.1: ME does not systematically ensure that information about how the organisation expects its staff to behave is communicated to communities and people affected by crisis.	Minor	2022/10/25	Closed	
<b>Total Number of open CARs</b>	0			

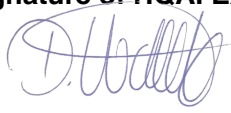
## 6. Recommendations for next audit cycle

<b>Specific recommendation for sampling or selection of sites or any other specificities to be considered</b>	<p>As per normal sampling recommendations.</p> <p>It is recommended that the onsite assessment includes projects implemented directly by Mission East as well as those implemented by partners.</p>
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## 7. Lead auditor recommendation

<p>In my opinion, Mission East has demonstrated that it continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.</p> <p>I recommend maintenance of certification.</p>	
<p><b>Name and signature of lead auditor:</b></p>  <p>Joanne O'Flanagan</p>	<p><b>Date and place:</b></p> <p>16th February 2024, Belfast</p>

## 8. HQAI decision

<p><b>Certificate renewed:</b></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issued <input type="checkbox"/> Preconditioned (Major CARs)
<p>Next audit: before 2025/03/22</p>	
<p><b>Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:</b></p> <p>Désirée Walter </p>	<p><b>Date and place:</b></p> <p>Geneva, 22 March 2024</p>

## 9. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

<p><b>Space reserved for the organisation</b></p>	
<p>Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team:</p> <p><i>If yes, please give details:</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:</b></p> <p>I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit</p> <p>I accept the findings of the audit</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Name and signature of the organisation's representative:</b></p>  <p>Betina Gollander-Jensen, Secretary General</p>	<p><b>Date and place:</b></p> <p>Hellerup, 26.03.24</p>

## Appeal

In case of disagreement with the decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 days after being informed of the decision. HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 10 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform HQAI in writing within 30 days after being informed of the proposed solution, of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will constitute a panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. These will strive to come to a decision within 30 days.

*The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeal 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><b>Score 0:</b> 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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Independent verification:</b> major weakness.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Certification:</b> major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issue or immediate suspension of certificate.</li> </ul>
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p><b>Score 1:</b> 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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Independent verification:</b> minor weakness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Certification:</b> minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).</li> </ul>
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p><b>Score 2:</b> 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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Independent verification and certification:</b> observation.</li> </ul>
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><b>Score 3:</b> indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Independent verification and certification:</b> conformity.</li> </ul>
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><b>Score 4:</b> indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

\* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020