

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

Renewal Audit – Summary Report – 2023/05/12

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
Legal registration	International Non-Government Organisation (church)	
Head Office location	Oslo, Norway	
Total number of organisation staff	156 Head Office 716 Country staff	

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Catherine Blunt
Second auditor	Julle Bergenholtz-Foglander
Third auditor	
Observer	
Expert	
Witness / other participants	

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit cycle	Third cycle – Renewal Audit
Coverage of the audit	The entire organisation and all of its offices and programmes, including those implemented by partner organisations.

1.4 Sampling*

Total number of Country Programme sites included in the sampling			5
Total number of sites for onsite visit			2
Total number of sites for remote assessment			3
Name of Country programme/project site	Included in final sample (Y/N)	Rationale for sampling and selection / de-selection decision	Onsite or Remote
Random sampling			
Pakistan	No	Country considered unsafe for auditors by NCA	
South Africa, Haiti	No	Included in remote sampling 2021	
Kenya	No	Programme not large enough to sample	
Ukraine	Yes	Emergency response humanitarian programme that is implemented by a partner and located in Europe. Managed by NCA Humanitarian Division.	Remote
Somalia	Yes	Development and humanitarian programmes. Country has never been included in an audit. Suitable for a	Remote

		remote audit. Managed through the East Africa Division NCA.	
Sudan	Yes	NCA Country Office presence that has never been included in a HQAI audit. Development and nexus humanitarian programmes that are managed through the East Africa Division NCA.	Onsite
Purposive sampling			
Malawi		Joint Country Office presence (NCA lead) that has development and advocacy programmes. Managed by the Southern Africa Division NCA.	Onsite
Afghanistan		Humanitarian and development programmes that have never been included in a HQAI audit. Managed through Middle East/Asia Division NCA.	Remote
Any other sampling performed for this audit:			
<p><i>Additional time in the field</i></p> <p>In total two country programmes have been audited onsite in NCA's previous audit cycles. The sampling rates have increased since NCA's Initial Audit in 2017 with organisations of NCA's size now requiring two onsite visits. In addition, due to the pandemic, there was no onsite audit at the Recertification Audit in 2021. For this reason, the full sampling was conducted and an additional day in each country visited onsite was recommended by the lead auditor, enabling three partners to be included in the audit in each country.</p>			
Sampling risks identified:			
<p>The auditors have a high degree of confidence in the audit findings given the comprehensive sampling, the number of interviews conducted with NCA and partner staff, and the range and number of community members interviewed. However, the sample is almost exclusively biased toward programmes implemented through partners, which constitute 68% of NCA's programmes. This was done as HQAI has a risk-based approach to audits and implementing through partners is generally riskier from a quality assurance perspective than direct implementation.</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
Oslo	31 st October 2022 – 9 th November 2022	Remote
Sudan	29 th January 2023 – 2 nd February 2023	Onsite
Malawi	6 th – 10 th February 2023	Onsite
Ukraine	February 20 th 2023	Remote
Afghanistan	February 20 th 2023	Remote
Somalia	February 21 st 2023	Document review

2.2 Interviews

Position / level of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Head Office			
Management	6	3	Remote
Staff	6	4	Remote
Country Programme Office(s)			
Management	2	6	Onsite & remote
Staff	6	6	Onsite
Partner staff	15	14	Onsite
Others	3	2	Onsite
Total number of interviewees	38	35	

2.3 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Community leaders - Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women's Studies (BBSAWS), Naivasha, Sudan		5	Onsite
Project volunteers - Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women's Studies (BBSAWS), Naivasha, Sudan	7		Onsite
Project beneficiaries - Babiker Bedri Scientific Association for Women's Studies (BBSAWS), Naivasha, Sudan	7		Onsite
Committee representatives - Nuba Women for Education and Development Association (NuWEDA), Kosti, Sudan	8	3	Onsite
Focus group women - Emergency Relief Rehabilitation and Development Agency (ERRADA), Kadugli, Sudan	9		Onsite
Focus group men - Emergency Relief Rehabilitation and Development Agency (ERRADA), Kadugli, Sudan		9	Onsite
Focus group volunteers - Emergency Relief Rehabilitation and Development Agency (ERRADA), Kadugli, Sudan	1	2	Onsite
Focus group committee members - Emergency Relief Rehabilitation and Development Agency (ERRADA), Kadugli, Sudan	3	4	Onsite
Matrons and patrons - Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA), Dowa, Malawi	6	6	Onsite
Children focus group - Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA), Dowa, Malawi	6	6	Onsite
Girl focus group - Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA), Dowa, Malawi	12		Onsite

Religious, community and youth mentors - Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM), Malenga, Malawi	3	12	Onsite
Door to door counsellors - Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM), Malenga, Malawi	4		Onsite
Community action groups and community journalists - Malawi Human Rights Resource Center (MHRRC), Dowa, Malawi	4	10	Remote
Total number of interviewees	70	57	

2.4 Opening meeting

Date	2022/10/31
Location	Remote (Oslo)
Number of participants	20
Any substantive issues arising	None

2.5 Closing meeting

Date	2023/02/01
Location	Remote (Oslo)
Number of participants	22
Any substantive issues arising	None

2.6 Programme site

Briefing

Date	2023/01/29
Location	Onsite (Khartoum)
Number of participants	18
Any substantive issues arising	None

De-briefing

Date	2023-02-02
Location	Onsite (Khartoum)
Number of participants	11
Any substantive issues arising	None

Briefing

Date	2023/02/06
Location	Onsite (Lilongwe)
Number of participants	30
Any substantive issues arising	None

De-briefing

Date	2023/02/10
Location	Onsite (Lilongwe)
Number of participants	26
Any substantive issues arising	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) continues to be an independent diaconal organisation providing emergency assistance in disasters and working for long-term development with local communities to address the root causes of poverty. NCA Head Office (HO) is legally registered as a diaconal organisation in accordance with Norwegian legislation. Country Offices (CO) are registered as non-profit organisations according to relevant national laws and regulations.

NCA was established in 1947 and is headquartered in Oslo, Norway. It is mandated by Norwegian churches and Christian organisations to eradicate poverty and injustice based on its values of the integrity of creation, human dignity, global justice, inclusive communities and compassion. NCA's global strategy, Faith in Action, remains unchanged since the Recertification Audit in 2021 and articulates its commitment to international ecumenical cooperation, development effectiveness and the Sustainable Development Goals. NCA currently operates in 27 countries.

NCA's new Programme Framework (2020 – 2030) puts strengthening civil society at its core and aims to increase synergies between thematic areas, promoting co-localisation of activities in the same geographical area and integrating humanitarian, advocacy and long-term development assistance. There are three categories of programmes in the Framework:

- Global Programmes - thematic areas of established organisational strength such as Gender Based Violence, Climate Resilient Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Peace Building.
- Strategic Initiatives - emerging methodologies such as Climate Smart Economic Empowerment, Faith-Based Climate Action, and Fighting Inequality.
- Contextual Projects – primarily relevant at Country Office level.

NCA has its own Sustainability Standards on which all projects must report. These include the rights-based approach, gender and conflict sensitivity, anti-corruption, environmental impact and accountability.

NCA is affiliated with the World Council of Churches and is a founding member of the ACT Alliance, comprised of more than 110 faith-based organisations working in long-term development and humanitarian assistance. The organisation aligns its Programme Framework with the strategic goals of the Alliance and works with members of ACT Alliance whenever possible, particularly in newly emerging crisis where NCA may not have established partners in the field.

NCA's income for the 2021 financial year was NOK 1.186 million (EU 104 million). During the same period NCA increased its staff by 11% over the previous financial year, employing 872 people, 156 in Norway and the remainder overseas. Of those overseas, 89% were national staff. The senior management team comprises 50% female and 50% male. The Board consists of 58% women and 42% men.

NCA now works with 211 partners across 27 countries, a 9% reduction in partners since the previous audit report. Currently 68% of all of programmes operated by NCA are implemented through partners, with approximately 35% of its humanitarian funds channelled through national or local partners.

NCA has a variety of country presences that have different types of steering documents, management structures and reporting lines. This audit included: Country Office (CO) - NCA representation overseeing a programme in one country (Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia); a Joint Country Office/Programme - NCA's presence in a country together with one or more ACT Alliance agencies (Malawi – joint with Danish Church Aid, NCA lead); Humanitarian operations - Emergency response in countries where NCA does not have a permanent representation/office. This may be administered by NCA alone, by NCA as a consortium lead, or under another ACT Alliance lead agency (Ukraine).

NCA has three geographic Divisions for the management of programmes. All three of these were included in the sample audited.

3.2 Governance and management structure

The General Secretary reports quarterly to the Board of Directors, continuing the Quarterly Reporting initiated during the Recertification Audit (REC2021) which includes a section on complaints and one on risk management. Reporting based on a risk register will be

implemented in 2023. The General Secretary is supported by five Departmental Heads as outlined in the organogram below.

An Internal Controller has been operative at NCA for two years, reporting to both the Head of Finance and the General Secretary. Her annual work plan is based on risk, with a proposal made to the General Secretary and the Head of Finance and then approved by the Senior Management Team. Her mandate covers internal control and compliance both at Head Office (HO) and country levels.

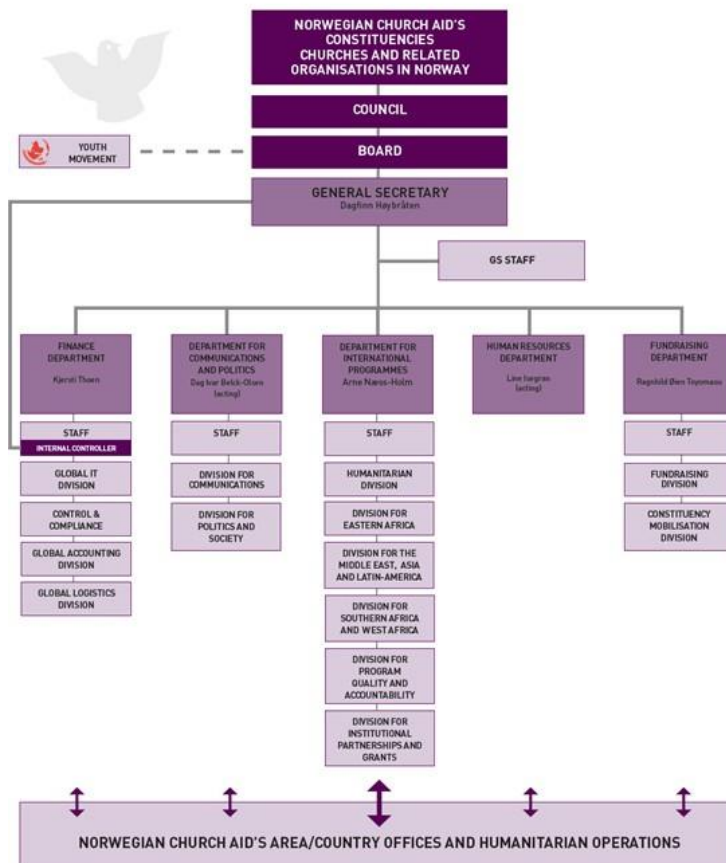
The Department of International Programmes works on a matrix model, with line management of Country Offices (CO) occurring through geographic regional divisions and other reporting lines occurring across the Humanitarian team, Programme Quality and Accountability and Partnership and Grants.

Full-time staff that were planned for at the REC2021 are now recruited, with NCA hiring additional staff for the Programme Quality and Accountability Division that includes a Team Leader for Programme Quality, and a full time Senior Advisor on Climate and Environment has been recruited for the Global Logistics Division.

The main governance and management changes instituted in 2021 and bedded down in 2023 are the clearer governance process between HO and COs with the formalisation of expectations via the Annual Assignment Letter which are mutual commitments between the HO and each CO. These contain a mix of organisational wide strategic priorities and ones that are country specific. The Annual Assignment letters are approved by the Secretary General and the Director of International Programmes. All Country Offices are required to have an Annual Plan which is linked to the Assignment Letter. These are tied in with the Multi-Year Country Strategy which are redone every five years.

The organogram below shows the governance and management structure of NCA. Changes since the REC2021 include the establishment of the Institutional Partnerships and Grants Division in 2022, and the Programme Quality and Accountability Division which replaces the former Partnerships and Strategic Solutions Division.

NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID'S ORGANISATION CHART AS OF 01.09.2022



3.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

NCA internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms occur on a matrix model throughout the organisation, led in part, via the Program Quality and Accountability Division which has responsibility for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Program Quality and the collection of standardised data on programmatic objectives and achievements via the Programme Management Information System (PIMS). This Division facilitates co-ordination, resource planning and information sharing related to programming between HO and CO via the Global Annual Calendar. The latter offers an overview of what happens, when, and who is involved, including responsibility for sign-off and approval, with embedded links to relevant documents and processes. The calendar is accessible to all NCA staff.

The new Programme Quality Team Leader position has responsibility for co-ordinating the thematic work undertaken by NCA, ensuring programmes meet NCA's Sustainability Standards, those of the CHS and the cross-cutting theme of civil society development. This position recently established a Programme Quality Coordination Group to discuss, plan and co-ordinate the work of NCA's 25 Thematic Advisors which aims to reduce the silos between each thematic area.

The Operations Manual (OM) containing the policies, processes and tools of NCA's quality management system and operational procedures has been overhauled, a two-year long process which is now coming towards an end. The manual is laid out with templates and associated tools as attachments to the main policies, which are summarised in plain language, with links to the policy itself.

NCA employs 11 Country Advisors for its 23 country programmes. They accompany and support the CO Directors and their Senior Management Teams, advising on country issues and quality assuring reports and proposals forwarded by COs to HO. They do not have line management responsibility for the COs.

The Internal Controller reports to the General Secretary and the Head of Finance and has an annual plan that addresses the agreed main risks facing the organisation. Her Scope of Work includes compliance with legal, donor and NCA requirements, and includes reviews of internal control procedures and practices both at head and country levels. These reviews can be undertaken across functional areas such as management, finance, human resources, and grant, partner and project management.

Country Offices are required to include a Risk Assessment and Risk Action plan in the Workbook attached to their Annual Plan.

3.4 Work with partner organisations

Civil society is at the core of NCA's goals to save lives and seek justice. This is articulated in its Programme Framework 2020-2030 and the Civil Society Partnership Policy (2020). NCA adopts a rights-based approach and states its means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are through strong, equitable and sustainable partnerships.

NCA's focusses on partnering with faith actors who NCA sees as key agents of change and who are preferably members of the ACT Alliance, which has standardised quality processes as membership thresholds.

NCA works with 211 partners globally (2022), a 9% reduction since the REC2021, which is in line with NCA's partnership goals. NCA's aim is to have a maximum of 10 – 15 partners in any CO to ensure sufficient resources to manage partnerships according to its quality standards and processes. At the Renewal Audit 2023 (RA2023), 40% of country portfolios meet this target. Almost half of the NCA partnerships are in the Southern and West Africa Division, 40% are in the Eastern Africa region and the remainder are in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America Division. Some partners are 'accompanied', which means that NCA manages the finances for the organisation, the aim being to progress these partners to full status when they are ready.

At REC2021, Partnership MOUs, Partnership Assessment Tools and the Partner Project Proposal template had been recently revised to meet the CHS standard and were in the process of being rolled out to COs.

All relationships with partners occur through the COs, with Thematic Advisors occasionally providing training remotely and in country, to partners upon request from the CO.

Work has recently commenced on the Global Resource and Support Analysis (GRASA) which will analyse the requirements of the Country Offices and their capacity to comply with NCA's quality processes and partner management requirements.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

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

NCA has invested significant resources in improving its governance, internal quality assurance policies and processes, and the risk management of the organisation. The benefits include a strong accountability culture, an awareness of pressure points in the organisation and the development of strategies to address them.

As noted at the REC2021, the governance arrangements between the HO and CO have been formalised into the Global Management Dialogue (GMD) which revolves around the Annual Assignment Letter from HO to CO, and two GMD meetings per year between the HO senior management (including the General Secretary) and the Country Director and members of the CO Senior Management Team. This has continued to be refined. Given the new role of the Programme Quality Team Leader, and the increased use of the Project Information Management System (PIMS), data on partnerships can be shared and discussed openly with those accountable at these forums (see below). Staff at both HO and CO find the Assignment Letter an effective strategic and management tool, guiding them to work on both global and country specific priorities and incorporate these into their Annual Plans. These are consistently completed.

NCA's primary tools for its quality management system is the Operations Manual (OM) and PIMS. The OM is a living document hosted on NCA's intranet with new tools or revisions easily incorporated. It is highly accessible and user friendly, containing all the significant policies and accompanying resources of the organisation. Each chapter indicates who and when the policy has been approved. Its roll-out has been well planned, with trainings and newsletters distributed containing user updates. Main policies (such as the Code of Conduct, the PSEAH and Child Safeguarding) are translated into French and Arabic. Staff at both HO and CO appreciate the clarity and usability of the format, a sentiment echoed by the auditors who were given access to it throughout all stages of the audit.

NCA's use of an Internal Controller provides a significant risk management role to the organisation, with the provision of planned reports and the ability to conduct analyses of organisational risk in an ongoing way. Her Scope of Work includes compliance with legal, donor and NCA requirements, and includes reviews of internal control procedures and practices both at head and country levels. These reviews can be undertaken across functional areas such as management, finance, human resources, and grant, partner and project management.

However, this audit found that despite the thoroughness of governance, internal quality assurance and risk management processes, there are gaps in how NCA supports partners to manifest these quality processes in their programmes. COs struggle to implement some requirements (e.g. the Partnership Assessment Tool). This is known by NCA, due to PIMS, and as mentioned, a review is being conducted to analyse CO needs in greater detail. In addition, some key tools of the organisation's quality assurance system devised to meet the specific requirements of the CHS and used as a reason to close corrective actions or address observations at the REC2021, are not systematically used by COs and partners, reducing the effectiveness of the quality system overall.

4.2 Level of implementation of the CHS and progress on compliance

NCA continues to demonstrate its commitment to the CHS across all aspects of its work and to strengthen its management structures and processes for quality and accountability.

NCA has included compliance with the standard at the core of many of its quality management processes. NCA had no corrective actions coming into this RA2023. It had a number of observations, including one on considering the impact of the environment in programmes, which it has comprehensively addressed through policy commitments, employment of staff and practical measurements of carbon use at COs and HO. Many of the observations from the previous audit, however, have not been addressed and therefore are now reported as minor non-conformities. These mainly relate to the support and monitoring provided to partners in the CHS Key Actions.

Overall, NCA performs best on the CHS in how it manages and uses resources responsibly for their intended purpose (C9); and how it co-ordinates and complements the assistance provided (C6). Training is regularly provided to partners on financial management, logistics and procurement. NCA is well linked in with networks globally, regionally and locally. The CHS is also well implemented in how humanitarian actors learn and improve (C7) and how staff are supported to do their job effectively (C8). NCA has strong internal mechanisms for learning and a well-honed Human Resources (HR) system which keeps management and

staff at HO and CO up to date on what processes are required and when. NCA has structured programme design and implementation processes supporting it to meet commitments 1 and 2 (Humanitarian Response is appropriate and relevant and effective and timely). In these areas, however, the lack of a policy framework on disability and inconsistent partner monitoring hinders its application of the CHS. A strong commitment to strengthen civil society and policies for engaging communities and share information are evident but the level of compliance with the CHS is reduced by insufficient partner support on safeguarding personal information, ensuring feedback on the level of satisfaction is disaggregated and supporting partners to communicate the behaviours expected of staff. The weakest area for NCA in the level of implementation of the CHS is supporting and monitoring partners to ensure that complaints are welcomed and addressed.

Cross Cutting Issues

PSEAH: NCA demonstrates strong performance against the Organisational Responsibilities across the CHS commitments which contribute to the PSEAH score, including policies for information sharing; participation; engagement on risks identified by the community; out of scope complaints referral; and the policies that are in place for the security and well-being of staff. Similarly, it consistently demonstrates undertaking Key Actions identified under the commitments including how corruption is managed; staff work to the agreed values of the organisation; how information is shared with others; and how stakeholders are mapped. There are, however, areas of weakness which reduce the PSEAH score including the Organisational Responsibility to safeguard personal information collected from communities and how partners are supported to ensure communities are aware of the commitments made on PSEAH. Areas of weaknesses in the Key Actions include the lack of consultation with communities in complaints processes and the lack of support and monitoring of partners to provide information to communities on the expected behaviour of staff.

Localisation: NCA support the localisation agenda through its consistent agreements with partners; building on local capacities; ensuring that humanitarian response complements that of others and its use of existing risk assessments.

Gender and Diversity: NCA's commitment to this area is demonstrated through ensuring the engagement of communities in programmes at all stages of the work. It lacks, however, a policy commitment to collect disaggregated data on disability and does not provide enough support or sufficient monitoring of partners to obtain disaggregated feedback from communities on their level of satisfaction with the assistance received.

4.3 Performance against each CHS Commitment

Commitment	Strong points and areas for improvement	Feedback from communities	Average score*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	NCA's key steering documents and systems that ensure impartial assistance, taking into account the diversity of communities and appropriate analyses of context remains largely unchanged at this audit. The Country Strategies and Annual Plans assure that both external and internal factors are taken into consideration when assessing the context, while reporting mechanisms such as the Quarterly Monitoring Reports are able to capture contextual changes and how to handle those. Partners perceive NCA as a flexible organisation that is able to adapt to changing needs and that supports partners to design impartial programmes based on the needs of the communities. NCA has well-developed systems in place for assessing risks and needs as well as disaggregating data based on gender and age. Areas requiring attention include the systematic inclusion of risk assessment in partner programme proposals as well as including the	Communities indicate that projects are based on their needs and that different societal groups are included within the projects. Communities also perceive programmes adapt based on their changing needs.	2.5

	assessment of the needs and capacities of people with disabilities in programme design and implementation. Additionally, NCA does not have a policy commitment to collect disaggregated data on the basis of disability.		
Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	<p>NCA responds in a timely way to partners when crises occur and is seen as a responsive partner based on established emergency preparedness procedures. NCA is also able to use its Sustainability Standards and sectoral technical standards to assure qualitative practice within its programmes. Programme commitments are in line with organisational capacities through procedures involving country strategies and CO annual plans. Internal organisational reports ensure that results and learnings from programmes are used to adapt and improve them. NCA has established policy commitments relating to monitoring and evaluation of programmes, with templates and workflows established to meet CHS requirements. Areas that require attention include systematically using programme design processes to ensure community safety and including PSHEA in monitoring templates. In addition, partner programme monitoring policies and processes (e.g., data verification, visiting programmes twice a year, using CHS compliant monitoring templates) are not consistently implemented in NCA programmes.</p>	Most communities express that programmes are realistic and safe for them to participate in and that they are visited regularly by programme staff.	2.6
Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects	<p>NCA continues to have strong policy frameworks on strengthening civil and avoiding negative effects, especially in PSEAH and the environment. These are activated through focal points and monitoring of NCA office environments. Programmes build on local capacities and aim to improve resilience and create sustainability through community empowerment. NCA builds capacity in all its partners via organised training and technical skill development. Areas needing attention are the consistent inclusion of exit strategies and environmental impact in programme proposals; more targeting of partner capacity building and the contextualisation of PSHEA materials. NCA does not generally support partners to identify the potential unintended negative effects of PSHEA in using volunteers and they generally do not have the systems in place to act upon sensitive complaints. Partners also lack support from NCA on the safeguarding of personal information collected from communities.</p>	Most communities say that the training they receive as volunteers or programme participants strengthens them and improves the way they farm, interact with government authorities or deal with issues related to gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. They generally say that the knowledge, skills and attitudes they obtain through NCA programmes will last their lifetime and this will not cease at the programme conclusion. Most say that a lot of things had changed for them since their involvement with the programmes. Some community leaders say that they have not been involved as much in the programme as they had been led to believe they would.	2.3
Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback	NCA continues to have global strategy documents and policies relating to open communication, community participation, usage of media and feedback. The Operations Manual and its associated templates and tools guide COs and partners on how to provide key information about project activities and expected staff behaviour. NCA also has clear	Communities indicate that they are able to participate meaningfully in all stages of the NCA supported projects through trainings and project meetings. They also feel informed about project activities and how to consult	2.3

	<p>processes on photo consent and portraying communities respectfully in communication materials, which are established and used within country programmes.</p> <p>Areas needing attention are encouraging partners to display translated posters in the project site, not just at the office; and ensuring that volunteers are always identifiable with the organisation they are working for.</p> <p>Despite the systems created by NCA, improvements are needed on how the organisation ensures partners provide information to communities on expected staff behaviour. Established templates, designed to inform communities about expected staff behaviour, are not used in programmes implemented by partners. NCA also does not systematically and formally support and ensure that partners encourage and facilitate feedback from communities based on gender, age and disability.</p>	<p>with the partner about the project.</p> <p>Communities did not always know about the behaviours they could expect from staff.</p>	
<p>Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed</p>	<p>The complaints handling process at NCA COs is documented and generally in place, with systems advertised and processes well understood by staff to handle programmatic and sensitive complaints. NCA monitors whether partners have a Complaints Handling Mechanism (CHM) and the extent of its development and implementation.</p> <p>NCA generally supports partners to ensure that organisational commitments on PSEAH are explained to volunteers, community leaders and stakeholders at programme kick off.</p> <p>However, areas needing attention include NCA support to and monitoring of partners to ensure effective and functioning CHMs are in place for both programmatic and sensitive complaints and that these are acted upon according to their defined policies and procedures. Further strengthening is needed in NCA's provision of guidance on how to consult with communities on the design and implementation of complaints processes; how it ensures communities know about both NCA's and the partners commitments to prevention of PSEAH; and how it supports partners to communicate with communities on what to complain about and how.</p>	<p>Communities say they are told how the complaints process works but are not consulted in how it might work best for them. While some communities are clear on what to complain about and how, this is not consistent across communities.</p> <p>Generally, communities are not told about NCA or their partners organisational commitments to PSEAH. Communities generally did not know anyone who had made a complaint and so could not comment on whether complaints are managed fairly or in a timely manner.</p>	1.9
<p>Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary</p>	<p>NCA continues to have strong policy frameworks committing to co-ordination with humanitarian actors, the ACT Alliance, as well as relevant national and global forums and co-ordination platforms. This ensures that the organisation's humanitarian response is co-ordinated and complementary. NCA's agreements with partners are clear and consistent and respect each other's mandates and independence. Stakeholders are identified at programme inception and are kept involved or informed throughout.</p>	<p>Stakeholders state that NCA shares information such as mid and end line reports with them. Stakeholders report effective working relationships with NCA. Communities state that there is no overlap of services by other organisations.</p>	3.0
<p>Commitment 7: Humanitarian</p>	<p>Learning and innovation is one of the strategic priorities for NCA and this is embedded in agreements with COs and manifest in other strategic objectives to improve data collection at</p>	<p>No feedback obtained from communities on this indicator.</p>	2.8

actors continuously learn and improve	the programmatic level. NCA has recently revised its Evaluation and Research Policy. It publishes a quarterly Evaluation and Research Bulletin which contains snapshots of evaluations undertaken. Knowledge is shared and learning improved via an annual meeting with COs and HO staff and the operation of communities of practice in technical areas. It learns from and publicly reports on sensitive complaints. It shares learning with partners. An area requiring attention is the capture of learning from partners complaints.		
Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably	NCA continues to have robust human resources policies which are rigorously applied and monitored. Staff at HO and CO have position descriptions, receive regular Performance Development Reviews, and understand how the organisation supports them to develop and use required competencies to do their jobs. PSEAH and Code of Conduct (CoC) training is provided regularly, and recorded by HR software managed centrally. The Leadership Programme has been expanded to include non-executive staff. Areas needing attention include ensuring that the CoC signed by partner staff is in the local language; and volunteers understand that it applies to them, and they are required to sign it.	Communities and stakeholders mostly say that staff are professional and respectful. Not all volunteers in programmes understood that the organisation's CoC applies to them.	2.8
Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	NCA continues to have policies and processes in place governing the use and management of resources. The continued employment of an internal controller at HO and the increase in support to partners for procurement and logistics training are powerful tools for ensuring resources are managed and used responsibly. Changes include NCA's Climate and Environment Policy which aims to integrate NCA's approach to environmental sustainability and meet the organisation's commitments under the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, signed in 2021. Staff have been employed specifically to oversee the implementation of NCA's environmental sustainability standard. The Risk Policy has been endorsed by the Board and emphasises the constant assessment of organisational risk.	Most communities say that NCA partners are not wasteful. Communities mostly say that programmes are run in a timely way using appropriate resources.	3.0

* *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 closed out
<i>2023-1.5: NCA does not have a policy commitment to take account of and collect disaggregated data on disability across its programmes.</i>	Minor	2026-04-06	New	
<i>2023-3.8: NCA does not adequately require, monitor and support partners to put systems in place to safeguard personal information collected from communities that could put them at risk.</i>	Minor	2026/04/06	New	
<i>2023-4.1: NCA does not support and monitor partners to ensure that information about expected staff behaviour is systematically provided to communities and volunteers.</i>	Minor	2026/04/06	New	
<i>2023-4.4: NCA does not systematically ensure that partners encourage and facilitate communities to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received, paying particular attention to the gender, age and diversity of those giving feedback.</i>	Minor	2026/04/06	New	
<i>2023-5.1: NCA does not support partners to consult with communities on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.</i>	Minor	2026/04/06	New	
<i>2023-5.2: NCA does not support partners to communicate how complaint handling mechanisms can be accessed and the scope of issues they can address.</i>	Minor	2026/04/06	New	
<i>2023-5.6: NCA does not support or monitor partners to ensure that communities and people affected by crisis are fully aware of the expected behaviour of humanitarian staff, including organisational commitments made on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.</i>	Minor	2026/04/06	New	
Total Number of open CARs	7			


6. Recommendations for next audit cycle

Specific recommendation for sampling or selection of sites or any other specificities to be considered	NCA directly implements 32% of its programmes. The auditors recommend that sampling from programmes directly implemented by NCA should be included in the next audit according to this proportion. Include a humanitarian emergency response preferably as an onsite visit, or as a remote audit with increased staff interviews.
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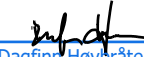
7. Lead auditor recommendation

<p>In our opinion, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) has demonstrated that it continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.</p> <p>We recommend maintenance of certification.</p>	
<p>Name and signature of lead auditor:</p>  <p>Catherine Blunt</p>	<p>Date and place:</p> <p>Canberra, Australia 4th April 2023</p>

8. HQAI decision

Certificate renewed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issued <input type="checkbox"/> Preconditioned (Major CARs)
Next audit: before 2024/05/12	
Name and signature of HQAI Deputy Director: Désirée WALTER 	Date and place: Geneva, 12 May 2023

9. 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: <i>If yes, please give details:</i>	<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:  Dagfinn Høybråten (May 25, 2023 09:26 GMT+2)	Date and place: May 25, 2023 , Oslo

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

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020