

# Oxfam International

## Mid-Term Audit – Summary Report MTA 2021/06/06

### 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
<b>Head office location</b>	Global	
<b>Total number of country programmes with humanitarian responses</b>	60	<b>Total number of staff</b> Approx. 220 staff in OI Secretariat and 5,500 staff across the Oxfam confederation (as of April 2020).

#### 1.2 Audit team

<b>Lead auditor</b>	Sarah Kambarami
<b>Second auditor</b>	Claire Goudsmit
<b>Third auditor</b>	--
<b>Observer</b>	--
<b>Expert</b>	--
<b>Witness / other</b>	--

#### 1.3 Scope of the audit

<b>CHS Verification Scheme</b>	Certification
<b>Audit cycle</b>	First Audit Cycle
<b>Phase of the audit</b>	Mid-Term Audit
<b>Extraordinary or other type of audit</b>	N/A

#### 1.4 Sampling\*

Randomly sampled sites	Included in final sample	Replaced by	Rationale for sampling and selection of sites	Onsite or remote
Syria	Yes	N/A	Syria was selected as it is one of Oxfam's priority countries for increased humanitarian programming in fragile contexts and provides geographical representation for the Middle East Region. Due to security risks and visa issues, Syria was not selected for an on-site visit. The project site selected is a large project in the Northern Hub being implemented with a national partner organisation, with a focus on responding in a conflict context in WASH and EFSVL sectors.	Remote Assessment
Nigeria	No	Kenya	Nigeria was not selected as it is transitioning to an influencing office. It was replaced by Kenya as it is a large programme with a mix of projects implemented directly and with partners and will be transitioning to a new Oxfam affiliate. The project selected has the largest budget in-country, focused on COVID-19 response and is being	Remote assessment

			implemented with a mix of direct implementation and work with partners.	
Honduras	No	Colombia	Honduras was not selected because the programme size is relatively small and, in the future, it will be reconfigured to become part of the Central America Cluster. Colombia was chosen to replace Honduras because it provided the same characteristics as Honduras, including geographical representation in the LAC region, having Oxfam Spain (OES) as the EA and implementation primarily with partners. It also has a much larger programme size than Honduras. The sites selected were chosen based on size of project budget, migration response and mix of partners. The quality of internet connection also became an important criterion once it became clear that on-site visits would be conducted remotely due to COVID travel restrictions.	Onsite (later adjusted to remote on-site due to COVID travel restrictions)
DRC	Yes	N/A	DRC was selected as it has a large programme size, provides geographical representation of HECA (Horn, East and Central Africa) region, and is one of Oxfam's priority countries for increased humanitarian programming in fragile contexts. It was chosen for an on-site visit which later changed to remote onsite visit due to COVID travel restrictions. Oxfam in DRC primarily implements directly, and OGB is the EA which provides a good contrast to Colombia. The project sites selected were chosen based on criteria such as size of project, partner vs direct implementation and the quality of internet connection. They included a large emergency response programme in Eastern DRC focused on WASH and Protection for conflict affected displaced populations as well as a DRR project which worked with local partners to strengthen Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL).	Onsite (later adjusted to remote on-site due to COVID travel restrictions)
Mauritania	No	N/A	Mauritania country programme is being phased-out, so was not included in the sample.	N/A
Uganda	No	N/A	Uganda was sampled in the initial audit, so was excluded.	N/A
Somalia	No	N/A	Somalia was not included in the final sample because there was already strong geographical representation of programmes from the HECA region.	N/A
Philippines	Yes	N/A	The Philippines was included in the final sample because it provided geographical representation from Asia Region and is a country programme that fully implements through partners. It will be transitioning to a new Oxfam affiliate in the future. The project selected was the Super Typhoon Goni response, providing an example of a response to a natural disaster, and is Oxfam's largest response in The Philippines currently.	Remote assessment

#### Any other sampling performed for this audit:

Executing Affiliates (EAs): Initially, the plan was not to select OGB or ONL in the sample of two EAs for the MTA, as these had been covered in the Initial Audit. However, the auditors were informed by Oxfam that it was to transition to a new model for EAs. In the medium term, the number of EA is reducing from 7 to 3 (Great Britain OGB, Netherlands ONL and Spain OES). After initial discussions with Oxfam, it was decided that the two EAs sampled for the MTA should therefore be selected from these three. Both OGB and ONL were sampled in previous audits, so OES was chosen for the MTA. After cross referencing with the Country Programme sites that were sampled, OGB was selected as it is the EA for the majority of the Country Programmes selected.

Regional Platforms: The two Regional Platforms selected for the MTA corresponded to the two Country Programmes which were selected for the onsite visits - LAC for Colombia and HECA for DRC.

#### Sampling risk:

There is high confidence that the sample selected represents the diversity of Oxfam's humanitarian work around the world. The most significant sampling risk with the MTA is that the two country programmes selected for onsite visits had to be remotely audited due to the COVID-related travel restrictions. While valuable information was gathered from the communities in both Colombia and DRC using remote methods, the inability to meet face to face had some

limitations, particularly on occasions where the connection only enabled audio communication, not visual via video. On the other hand, however, the benefit of using remote methodologies meant it was possible to consult with communities that under normal circumstances would likely be inaccessible by the audit team, given security and logistical considerations. Despite this, creating an enabling environment whereby communities feel comfortable to discuss sensitive issues is compromised when using remote methodologies, which poses a risk to the audit findings. Therefore, onsite visits to Oxfam's country programmes, with a focus on community consultations, need to be prioritised as part of the next audit, as soon as it is safe to do so.

*\*It is important to note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's country programmes, its documentation and 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
Head Office - OI, GHT, OGB, OES, HECA & LAC Regional Platforms	2020/11/30 - 2020/12/04 & 2021/04/16 - 19	Remote
Colombia Country Office	2021/03/08 - 12	Remote onsite
DRC Country Office	2021/03/22 - 26	Remote onsite
Kenya, Philippines & Syria Country Offices	2021/03/28	Remote assessments

### 2.2 Interviews

Position / level of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
<b>Head Office</b>			
OI Secretariat, including Global Humanitarian Team (GHT)	10	7	Remote
Executing Affiliates, including OGB and OES	6	2	Remote
Regional Platforms, including HECA and LAC	3	2	Remote
<b>Country Programmes</b>			
Staff	10	11	Remote
Partner staff	6	1	Remote
<b>Total number of interviewees</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Grand Total: 58</b>

### 2.3 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of participants		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
#1 "Citizenship and Care" project participants, response to impacts of COVID-19, Arauca, Colombia	7	0	Remote
#2 "Citizenship and Care" project participants, response to impacts of COVID-19, Arauca, Colombia	6	0	Remote
#3 Venezuelan migrants, at the Transit Centre on the "Protection Route", Bucaramanga, Colombia	7	0	Remote

#4 Venezuelan migrants, at the Transit Centre on the "Protection Route", Bucaramanga, Colombia	0	5	Remote
#5 "Citizenship and Care" project participants, response to impacts of COVID-19, Arauca, Colombia	0	6	Remote
#6 Emergency Response project participants, IDP Camp, Kikumbe, Tanganyika, DRC	5	0	Remote
#7 Emergency Response project participants, IDP Camp, Kikumbe, Tanganyika, DRC	0	5	Remote
#8 DRR project participants, Oicha, Beni, DRC	5	0	Remote
#9 DRR project participants, Oicha, Beni, DRC	0	4	Remote
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Grand Total: 50</b>

## 2.4 Opening meeting

<b>Date</b>	2020/11/30
<b>Location</b>	Online
<b>Number of participants</b>	22
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	No

## 2.5 Closing meeting

<b>Date</b>	2021/04/12
<b>Location</b>	Online
<b>Number of participants</b>	25
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	No

## 2.6 Programme sites

### Briefing

<b>Date</b>	2021/03/08
<b>Location</b>	Colombia - online
<b>Number of participants</b>	17
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	No

### De-briefing

<b>Date</b>	2021/03/12
<b>Location</b>	Colombia - online
<b>Number of participants</b>	17
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	No

### Briefing

<b>Date</b>	2021/03/22
<b>Location</b>	DRC - online
<b>Number of participants</b>	12
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	No

### De-briefing

<b>Date</b>	2021/03/26
<b>Location</b>	DRC - online
<b>Number of participants</b>	12
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	No

## 3. Background information on the organisation

### 3.1 General information

Oxfam International (OI) is currently working in almost 70 countries, with thousands of partners, allies, and communities, with the aim of saving and protecting lives in emergencies, helping people rebuild their livelihoods and campaigning for genuine, lasting change. Oxfam is in the early stages of implementing its 10-year Global Strategic Framework (2020-2030) which focuses on four strategic areas: Just Economies, Gender Justice, Climate Justice and

Accountable Governance. The consolidated income across the Oxfam Confederation for the year 2018-2019 was €1,018 million. Out of a total programme budget of €670, €238 million was allocated to humanitarian work, responding to emergencies caused by conflict, disasters and climate change.

Oxfam is currently undergoing a number of strategic changes as follows:

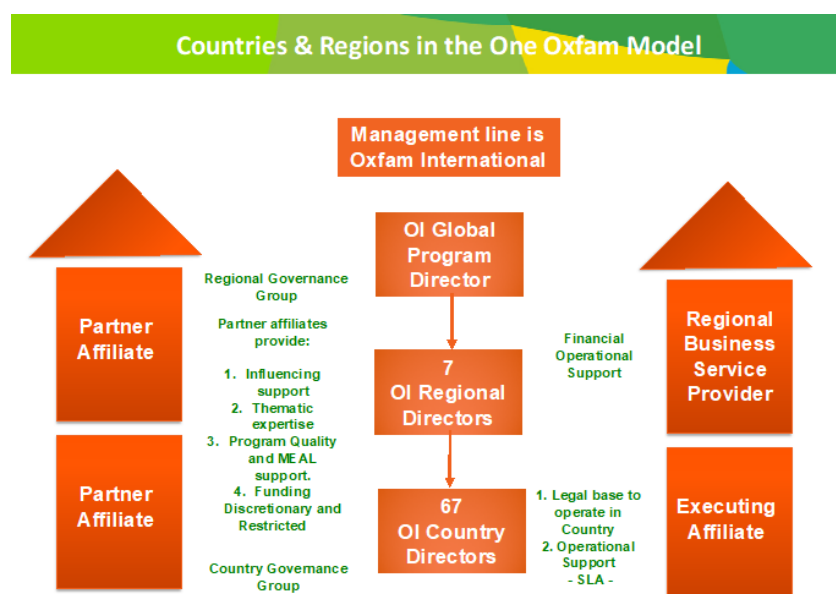
- i) Country Presence Review – In May 2020, the Executive Board communicated the decision to focus on a smaller number of countries in which Oxfam maintains physical presence. Oxfam will phase out of having a physical presence in 18 countries, a full country presence will be retained in 8 countries while others will transition to new Oxfam affiliates (5), influencing offices (6), regional clusters (14) and a focus on fragile countries (10).
- ii) Executing Affiliates (EAs) Unification Process – In 2020 a decision was made to work towards EA Unification. In the medium term this means reducing the EAs from seven to three (GB, Spain, Netherlands), working in a single unit to be managed by OI.
- iii) Restructuring – Following the financial impacts of the COVID pandemic, significant restructures are taking place in many parts of the confederation, including in the Global Humanitarian Team (GHT) and key humanitarian affiliates including Oxfam GB (OGB) and Oxfam Intermón (OES), both of which were sampled for this audit.

### 3.2 Governance and management structure

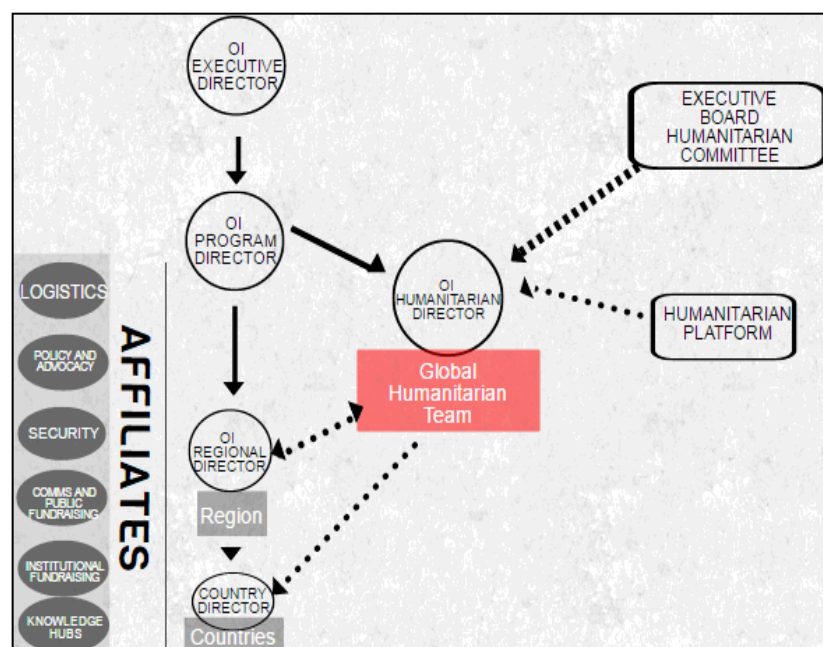
Two boards govern OI – The Executive Board and the Board of Supervisors. Each is made up of representatives from every affiliate. The Executive Board is chaired by the OI Executive Director. Each affiliate has one member, usually their Executive Director. It manages the foundation and organises the shared undertakings of the affiliates. The Board of Supervisors has an independent Chair, a Treasurer, and a representative from each affiliate's board (usually their Chairperson). It is entrusted with the oversight of the foundation's activities and the work of the Executive Board: approving their reports, policies, programmes, and financial accounts. They also appoint the Executive Director.

There are currently 20 member organisations (affiliates) of the OI confederation (Oxfam). The Oxfam International Secretariat (OIS) leads, facilitates and supports collaboration between Oxfam's affiliates to increase their impact on poverty and injustice. The GHT sits within the OIS.

The management responsibility for all of Oxfam's humanitarian work runs from the OI Programme Director through the OI Regional Director (RD) and then the OI Country Director (CD). They are responsible for a "One Programme" approach which links long term, resilience building programmes with campaigning and emergency response. The OI Humanitarian Director is managed by the Programme Director and is Oxfam's most senior humanitarian role. The Humanitarian Director leads the delivery, effective management, monitoring, evaluation and learning of Oxfam's overall Humanitarian Agenda, and manages the GHT. The GHT exists to support Regional and Country teams respond to crises that are too large or complex for them to manage alone.



Countries are the key unit for the design and delivery of Oxfam's programmes and as such, play the primary role in humanitarian responses. They are required to be resourced adequately to prepare for and respond to local emergencies (Category 3 crises) in addition to running their ongoing programmes. Country Teams should maintain levels of humanitarian capacity appropriate to the likelihood of disasters occurring, as part of preparedness plans.



### 3.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

Oxfam International (Oxfam) is increasingly moving towards harmonising its internal quality assurance mechanisms across the confederation supporting the One Oxfam model. During 2020, Oxfam put in place common Internal Audit Standards, a common Internal Audit Charter and a common Internal Auditors Code of Ethics. Confederation wide Control Self Assessments (CSAs) take place annually and Annual Reports and Financial Statements are externally audited. Oxfam has global policies and standards for monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL), including an evaluation policy (with a Humanitarian Evaluation Policy annexed), MEAL Strategy and minimum standards, and a commitment to



undertake Real Time Reviews (RTRs), as outlined in Oxfam's Humanitarian Commitments and Expectations.

Oxfam has an integrated risk management framework, implemented in early 2017 which serves as the basis for managing risk across all of Oxfam's geographic levels, functions, projects, programs, and daily activities. The purpose of Oxfam's Integrated Risk Management Framework is to establish a consistent approach to managing the breadth of risk impacting the Oxfam Confederation and the successful achievement of its strategic plan. As part of the implementation of the Framework, Oxfam established a quarterly Global Risk Report, which is discussed in the Oxfam International Management team and at Oxfam's Executive Board and Board of Supervisors meetings.

Oxfam's Safe Programming approach, is embedded throughout its humanitarian work at the Country level and provides a guide to managing risk which is supporting all Oxfam humanitarian responses to include proactive measures to ensure its actions do not inadvertently cause harm to people, nor undermine the values, standards and norms that underpin Oxfam's work.

### **3.4 Work with partner organisations**

Working in partnership with national and local organisations in humanitarian response is a key part of Oxfam's Humanitarian Commitments and Expectations. Oxfam has short and long term global, regional and in-country partnerships with various humanitarian actors. Oxfam is a member of the START Network and is a signatory to the Charter for Change.

Oxfam is committed to conducting its humanitarian programme work in a way that supports the capacity of local organisations and is committed to building relationships with local partners and strengthening their capacity to take on leadership in effective and efficient humanitarian preparedness and response. Guided by its Humanitarian Approach, Oxfam ensures that staff can work in a consistent manner with partners. This includes a range of guidelines and tools available on the Partnership Road Map (with specific sections on humanitarian partnerships) and embedding the partnership approach within the OI's framework of strengthening Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL).

The extent to which partnership has become the primary mode of implementation varies across the confederation. In some country programmes, the majority of projects are implemented in partnership with local organisations and entities. In other country programmes, the majority of projects are implemented directly by Oxfam and there is only a small amount of work with partners. Work with implementing partners is governed by partnership agreements and capacity support is based on the findings of partner assessment processes and ongoing dialogue between Oxfam and partner teams.

## **4. Overall performance of the organisation**

### **4.1 Effectiveness of the governance<sup>1</sup>, internal quality assurance and risk management of the organisation**

Oxfam's Executive Board Humanitarian Committee (EBHC) is a subset of the Executive Board of Affiliate Directors and governs all of Oxfam's humanitarian work on behalf of the Executive Board. The EBHC took the initial decision to apply for CHS certification based on a recommendation by, and in consultation with, Oxfam's Humanitarian Platform. Through the EBHC, Oxfam's governance bodies effectively engage with and oversee the CHS certification process and are regularly updated on the key findings of audits and main areas of work being undertaken as part of Oxfam's improvement plan.

Common Internal Audit Standards, an Internal Audit Charter and an Internal Auditors Code of Ethics are now in place across the confederation. As work progresses towards EA unification, an independent internal auditing network will be established. The confederation wide Control Self Assessments (CSAs) are now in place and conducted by all countries annually and a CSA dashboard has been launched to provide increased transparency to all EAs.

<sup>1</sup> The scope of work to establish the effectiveness of the governance system is confined to those areas relevant to the implementation of the CHS, such as the level of engagement and overview of the highest governance bodies over the certification/verification process and the plans for resolution of CARs/weaknesses.

Oxfam continues to implement its global policies and standards for monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) consistently. The recent GHT restructure has strengthened MEAL and Knowledge Management teams, further increasing capacity to support humanitarian responses teams. MEAL and technical staff monitor activities and outputs and track indicators and results against each project logframe and Oxfam staff at GHT, ROs and COs monitor activities and outputs of Oxfam's operations and programmes. Periodic reporting mechanisms are in place (monthly, quarterly, bi-annual and annual) with review and analysis conducted at regional and global levels as well as at the country and project level. Partners participate in regular monitoring activities (fortnightly or monthly) with Oxfam staff which enables the responses to address poor performance and adapt as needed.

Oxfam's confederation-wide Safe Programming approach has enabled a harmonised system across the organisation for assessing, managing and mitigating risk at the programme level. At the Country level, risks are managed on a regular basis and reported quarterly using the Country Quarterly Management Report (CQMR). CQMR guidance encourages consideration of financial, fraud/corruption, human resources, information systems, legal/compliance, operational, partner, political, program management, public fundraising, reputational, safeguarding, security/safety and strategic risks. However, risks related to the environment are not consistently assessed. Country Governance Groups analyse identified key risks at a country level and ROs review risk management issues with country programmes regularly, including with partners. Effective systems for context analysis also support the management of external risks on an ongoing basis.

#### **4.2 How the organisation applies the CHS across its work**

Oxfam continues to demonstrate significant commitment to quality and accountability in its humanitarian work across the confederation. CHS Commitments are embedded into confederation-wide policies, processes and practices and are communicated effectively to partners. Oxfam has invested significantly in a number of strategic change processes over the last few years which have resulted in a more harmonised and consistent approach to implementing the CHS across the confederation.

Oxfam has established a more enabling environment to take forward a confederation-wide approach to safeguarding which is reflected in changes to internal processes (organisational structures, recruitment, induction, training, staff appraisal etc), as well as in promoting safe programming. Oxfam continues to demonstrate particular strengths in ensuring that humanitarian responses are appropriate and relevant, strengthen local capacities, are coordinated and complementary, and that they are based on communication, participation and feedback.

This audit has highlighted the need for Oxfam to continue to strengthen community-based complaints-handling processes, particularly by ensuring that they are contextualised through consultations with communities and people affected by crisis. Additionally, whilst it is clear that it will take time to institutionalise and build trust in Oxfam's new practices, some staff do not perceive that an organisational culture in which complaints are taken seriously and acted upon is in place, leading in some cases to a breakdown in trust in the system. Finally, given that the new Global Strategy Framework 2020-2030 focuses on Climate Justice as one of its four main strategic ambitions, this audit has highlighted the need to put policies and processes in place across the confederation governing how Oxfam uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way.

#### **4.3 PSEA**

Oxfam continues to work hard to build trust in the organisation and to put robust systems in place to prevent SEAH from occurring across the organisation and partners. OI has a detailed map of where weakness and risks lie in its systems and mitigation plans are in place. Resources are invested which prioritise its Safeguarding and Culture Change strategies. Oxfam continues to take a lead role in the sector to influence change and highlight where improvements need to be made. Processes are in place to ensure all staff and partners are fully aware of and signed-up to its policies of zero-tolerance of SEAH, safe programming, protecting communities and affected populations, and of promoting the highest standards of behaviour. All staff and partners responded with clarity about Oxfam's PSEA commitments and on their obligations to report misconduct.

Oxfam continues to invest in building trust among its staff by clearly illustrating that it is living up to its safeguarding commitments and that it takes complaints seriously and acts upon them appropriately. Oxfam reports transparently, both internally and externally, on all open and closed allegations of misconduct received e.g., number and types of complaints, numbers of finalised and ongoing investigations, actions taken etc. A robust confederation-wide shared service for Safeguarding, with global Standard Operating Procedures, reporting protocols and a Global Case Management System, is in place. Safeguarding Focal Points are in place at



all levels of the organisation, providing support and expertise to country teams to establish safeguarding measures, including responsive community-based complaint processes.

Safeguarding teams are equipped and skilled to manage investigations, prioritising confidentiality and a survivor-centred approach. Striking the right balance between the need to report transparently on actions taken on the one hand, and to maintain confidentiality on the other, presents challenges which can sometimes lead to a breakdown in trust in the system by staff. Oxfam is systematically developing and ensuring that safe referral pathways and networks are in place in all countries where it works (this is an ongoing process).

#### 4.4 Localisation

Oxfam's Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) Strategy, Feminist Principles and its commitments to the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change, are integrated into Oxfam's Humanitarian Approach. Response strategies and plans show evidence of how these have influenced humanitarian teams to design programmes to increasingly allocate resources to local actors. Activities are also taking a localisation approach to enable and empower local communities to participate in local decision-making structures, to act as champions in communities for protection, to advocate for rights, and take an active role in disaster preparedness planning.

#### 4.5 Gender and diversity

Oxfam's Feminist Principles, Gender Justice, women's rights and empowerment are prominent drivers across the Oxfam Confederation. Staff are motivated to consider how humanitarian action can be inclusive and address power imbalances across local structures. A number of Oxfam global policies and guidelines commit both to taking the diversity of communities into account as well as to collecting disaggregated data.

OI's Global Strategy Framework (2020-2030) highlights diversity. Working processes such as the Rapid Assessment Form used for the Global COVID response and the Sitrep Template ensure these policies are put into practice. Oxfam's staff handbook highlights the organisation's commitment to diversity and each individual's responsibility to help create an environment in which differences are valued and respected, promoting an inclusive workplace culture and staff team.

### 4.6 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Commitment	Strong points and areas for improvement	Feedback from communities	Average score*
<b>Commitment 1:</b> Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	<p>Oxfam continues to meet its commitments, at both the policy and practice level, to conduct ongoing and thorough context and stakeholder analyses and impartial needs assessments, from which humanitarian programmes are designed and implemented.</p> <p>Processes are in place to enable Oxfam to adapt programmes to changing needs, capacities, and context, as evidenced by the numerous adaptations required to programmes globally as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Oxfam takes into account the diversity of communities and collects disaggregated data to support this analysis.</p> <p>At times, the emphasis Oxfam places on providing impartial assistance means that partner staff and communities are not aware that there are clear selection criteria in place that ensure specific vulnerable groups within communities are being targeted.</p> <p>All sampled programmes are now being managed within the country programme structure which has improved the way in which Oxfam ensures that the emergency responses reflect more fully the context and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Communities consistently express a high level of satisfaction for the relevance of Oxfam's interventions, indicating that the assistance provided was appropriate to their needs. Communities confirmed their engagement in assessment processes and felt that the assistance provided was impartial.</p>	2.8

<b>Commitment 2:</b> Humanitarian response is effective and timely	<p>Oxfam continues to ensure that policy level commitments related to Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and to timely decision making are in place. There is continued evidence of relevant and contextualised technical standards consistently being used to plan and implement humanitarian programmes. Continued strong participation in relevant coordination mechanisms, and good knowledge of other organisations, means that unmet needs continue to be referred appropriately.</p> <p>Oxfam has improved its processes to ensure that humanitarian programmes are designed to be realistic and safe. This has been achieved by the consistent implementation, across the confederation, of the safe programming and feminist approaches, and process for assessing and mitigating risk. Oxfam has also strengthened the MEAL function at the country level, helping ensure that evidence is used to adapt and improve humanitarian programmes.</p> <p>At times, delays were noted in the transfer of funds to a Country Programme, resulting in delays to the implementation of emergency responses. This is particularly an issue when more than one affiliate is involved. Progress on the EA unification process should help to address this in the future.</p>	<p>Communities state that the project activities feel safe and realistic and can cite examples of how Oxfam had made specific adaptations to project activities to keep them safe.</p> <p>Communities express satisfaction with the timing of Oxfam's response activities and state that they participate in monitoring activities and are able to provide regular feedback to Oxfam and partner staff on project performance.</p>	2.9
<b>Commitment 3:</b> Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects	<p>Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) and Feminist principles are key components of Oxfam's Humanitarian Approach. These are reflected in Oxfam's global, and country strategic and response plans. Humanitarian teams are trained on LHL and humanitarian programming shows an increased allocation of resources to locally led humanitarian action, supporting a range of approaches e.g., capacity support to national organisations and structures; work with women's rights organisations, and community level protection and DRR committees.</p> <p>Assessing and mitigating the potential for Oxfam to pose risks to communities through its work are being systematically assessed and monitored, although assessing negative impacts on the environment and to the local economy needs to be further embedded.</p> <p>Activities are implemented focussing on empowering and facilitating people to engage in local level decision-making structures, to access their rights, and for national organisations and representatives to have a 'seat at the table' with international and government bodies.</p>	<p>Communities appreciated the resources they receive which empower them in their lives and equip them with tools to better manage their situations and cope with difficulties they experience. Communities felt informed of their rights, enabled to participate at the local level and to take on advocacy roles in their communities on issues around their rights, protection, DRR and preparedness.</p>	2.8
<b>Commitment 4:</b> Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback	<p>Oxfam applies a range of approaches to ensure that communities take an active role in its programmes. Guided by strong gender and protection mainstreaming, social accountability and Feminist principles, responses focus on community engagement.</p> <p>Information is provided to communities using a range of methods. Staff make significant effort to inform all stakeholders, including communities, of the Oxfam standards of behaviour that they follow.</p>	<p>Communities are satisfied with the range of opportunities that are provided to participate in project activities and to give feedback to Oxfam and partners. Most are well informed. Communities stated that they felt respected, and that Oxfam staff took time</p>	3

	Feedback process are in place e.g. Post Distribution Monitoring, help desks, suggestion boxes, safe spaces and open dialogue.	to listen to their needs and concerns.	
<b>Commitment 5:</b> Complaints are welcomed and addressed	<p>Oxfam has dedicated significant resources to develop an enabling culture across the Confederation whereby complaints are welcomed and are managed appropriately in line with global standards and procedures; and that staff are compelled to report and feel able to do so; and that all external stakeholders are enabled to report concerns, complaints and incidents to Oxfam.</p> <p>Many changes have been made and new or revised policies introduced, and Oxfam reports transparently on complaints internally and externally. Safe and secure complaint and reporting mechanisms are in place for staff, partners and communities. These are situated at the global, country and community levels with clear guidance on how reports can be made, to whom, and when. Some weaknesses have been identified on response times to programmatic complaints, country level complaint logs and ensuring that community complaint processes are appropriately contextualised.</p> <p>When communicating and reporting on complaints, Oxfam ensures that confidentiality, privacy and the safety of the survivor are upheld. However, staff do not yet consistently perceive that there is an organisational culture whereby complaints are taken seriously and acted upon, leading in some cases to a breakdown in trust in the system.</p>	Communities are aware of how they can raise complaints about project activities or report misconduct incidents to Oxfam. Awareness of the expected behaviours of Oxfam staff and partners was known by most consulted.	2.3
<b>Commitment 6:</b> Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary	<p>Oxfam continues to clearly identify the roles and interests of different stakeholders and continues to show strong participation and leadership in relevant coordination bodies at local, national, regional and global levels. This helps ensure complementarity and collaboration with other actors, and also helps provide a forum for Oxfam to share necessary information.</p> <p>Oxfam has strengthened its capacity to work in a more consistent manner with partners on humanitarian programming by embedding its approach to partnerships within the framework of strengthening local humanitarian leadership. A Partnership Road Map, with specific sections on humanitarian partnerships, guides the work across the confederation.</p> <p>As new, innovative, non-traditional partnerships are starting to develop, there is some concern expressed by Oxfam staff over how to adapt the due diligence tools and processes to fit the new types of partnerships. This is especially an issue for humanitarian responses where the timeliness of decision making is important.</p>	Communities consistently stated that Oxfam coordinated with relevant local authorities and other organisations. They observed no duplication between Oxfam's activities and those of other organisations active in the area.	2.8
<b>Commitment 7:</b> Humanitarian actors continuously	Oxfam continues to contribute learning and innovation in humanitarian response amongst peers and within the sector. Oxfam invests in research and shares the results openly with the sector, both as published reports and also by actively engaging in global conferences and learning events. Oxfam is an active member of ALNAP and also shares innovation	Communities were generally satisfied with the work of Oxfam and their partners; however, they were often not aware of learning that had led to	2.3

learn and improve	<p>on WASH through its dedicated website (oxfamwash.org).</p> <p>Oxfam has invested in its global learning platforms; improving how knowledge and experience is recorded and made accessible to staff across the confederation. Increased sharing of lessons learned through these platforms and other mechanisms has resulted in programmes systematically being designed based on prior experience.</p> <p>Tools and systems are also now in place to consistently learn at a global level from complaints and feedback, including the global case management system, the One Programme Report and new sitrep templates. However, there is not yet a systematic approach to learning from complaints and feedback at the country level.</p> <p>Oxfam consistently shares learning internally and with partners, however, country teams consistently identify a gap in sharing learning with communities and people affected by crisis.</p>	improvement in project activities.	
<b>Commitment 8:</b> Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably	<p>Oxfam continues to have staff policies and procedures in place, including for security, which are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant with local employment law. Policies also continue to be in place to support staff to improve their skills and competencies, with a wide range of opportunities available to staff for personal development.</p> <p>Significant improvements have been made with increased awareness amongst Oxfam and partner staff at all levels of the organisation about the mandate and values of Oxfam and key policies. The emphasis on safeguarding, safe programming and culture change within Oxfam has been integrated into recruitment processes, induction, ongoing training and performance review processes. The new “Let’s Talk” approach to staff performance review has been welcomed by staff across the confederation.</p> <p>Oxfam has also strengthened its organisational capacity in safeguarding and MEAL and the obligations under the Code of Conduct, including PSEAH, are systematically made clear to staff, partners and suppliers.</p> <p>However, a consistent induction programme across the confederation is not yet in place and not all staff consistently receive their annual performance review or set goals for the coming year. Staff experience also varies in relation to the support they receive for wellbeing.</p>	Communities appreciate the technical competency of Oxfam and partner staff and value the positive way that staff interact with them. In most cases, Oxfam staff are perceived to be accessible and approachable, and community members consistently stated that they were satisfied with the behaviour of Oxfam and partner staff.	2.6
<b>Commitment 9:</b> Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	<p>Oxfam continues to have robust systems in place for the regular monitoring and reporting of expenditure against budget, and there is evidence of close financial monitoring processes in place with partners.</p> <p>The impact of Oxfam’s work on the environment is taken into consideration for water projects, although this is not consistently done for other aspects of Oxfam’s work. Climate Justice is now a key part of the new global strategy framework, but many staff expressed concern that there was not yet a</p>	Communities in general are very satisfied with the way Oxfam and its partners use resources (both staff and funds) for the intended purpose. They did not observe any waste at project level and some commented that they were impressed with how much was achieved with so little.	2.2

	<p>confederation-wide policy or strategy to ensure that Oxfam manages its resources in an environmentally responsible way.</p> <p>In other aspects of resource management, however, significant improvements have been made across the confederation in harmonising policies and processes, including internal audit, control self-assessments and anti-terrorism policies. Processes for assessing and managing risk are now also well established and in place across all levels of the organisation.</p> <p>A confederation-wide anti-fraud and corruption policy is now in place and the Global Case Management System for Misconduct went live in July 2020 where all cases of misconduct, including safeguarding, fraud and terrorism financing are tracked. Teams are in place at the EA level to investigate, and take appropriate action as necessary, to reported cases of fraud and corruption.</p>	Communities are aware of Oxfam's commitments on fraud and corruption and indicate that they would report any observed cases.	
--	--	--	--

\* *Note: Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each commitment.*

## 5. Summary of non-conformities

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)	Type	Resolution due date	Status / Date closed out
2018 – 2.6: OI does not ensure that capacities are in place to consistently and effectively meet its programme commitments in emergency response.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed 2021/05/17
2018 – 3.6: OI does not have a consistent approach to identifying and acting upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner across all EAs, Country Offices and humanitarian programmes.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed 2021/05/17
2018 – 5.1: OI does not ensure that programmes have systems in place to consistently consult with communities and people affected by crisis on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed 2021/05/17
2021 – 5.1 : OI does not ensure that complaints-handling processes are contextualised through consultations with communities and people affected by crisis.	Minor	2023/05/24	New
2018 – 5.3: OI does not ensure that complaint mechanisms are consistently established in a timely manner, and that complaints are consistently and appropriately managed in line with its global guidelines.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed 2021/05/17
2018 – 5.6: OI does not ensure that communities are aware of its commitments on PSEA and the expected behaviour of Oxfam and partner staff	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed 2021/05/17
2018 – 7.1: OI does not ensure that humanitarian programmes are systematically designed based on the learning and experiences from previous work.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed 2021/05/17
2018 – 8.4: OI does not ensure that it has the management and staff capacity and capability to deliver its programmes consistently.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed




			2021/05/17
2018 – 9.6: OI does not ensure consistent policies and processes governing the use and management of resources are in place across all EAs.	Minor	2020/07/03	Closed
2021 – 9.6: OI does not ensure consistent policies and processes are in place across the confederation governing how Oxfam uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way.	Minor	2023/05/24	New
<b>Total Number of Open CARs</b>			<b>2</b>

## 6. Sampling recommendation for next audit

<b>Sampling rate</b>	It is recommended that the sampling rate for the next audit is in line with HQAI procedures. Given that the main risk to the audit findings was due to the limitations experienced in conducting the community consultations remotely (see section 1.4), it is recommended that the next audit has an increased focus on gathering evidence from community consultations and at least one of the countries initially planned for an on-site visit in the MTA is considered for an onsite visit at the recertification audit.
<b>Specific recommendation for selection of sites</b>	<p>Site selection should take into account the following specific elements to confirm that systems continue to be in place and in different contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational progress towards EA unification, and global Culture Change and Safeguarding strategies;</li> <li>• Progress towards implementing a global induction programme;</li> <li>• The impact of high turnover of HSPs on the quality and efficiency of humanitarian response and in systematically sharing knowledge and learning;</li> <li>• Consistent use of safe programming risk assessments;</li> <li>• Systematic consideration of impact on the environment;</li> <li>• Measures to ensure community-based complaint mechanisms are contextually appropriate and safe for people to use;</li> <li>• Consistent mapping of referral pathways at the country level.</li> </ul>


## 7. Lead auditor recommendation

<p>In our opinion, Oxfam International has demonstrated that it continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.</p> <p>Based on the evidence obtained, we confirm that we have received reasonable assurance that Oxfam International is implementing the necessary actions to close the minor CARs identified in the previous audits and continues to meet the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.</p> <p>We recommend maintenance of certification.</p>	
<b>Name and signature of lead auditor:</b>  SARAH KAMBARAMI 	<b>Date and place:</b>  2021/05/17, Johannesburg, RSA

## 8. HQAI decision

<b>Certificate:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certification maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate suspended	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate reinstated <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate withdrawn
<b>Next audit:</b> Surveillance audit before 2022/07/03	
<b>Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:</b>  Pierre Hauselmann	<b>Date and place:</b>  22nd June 2021, Geneva

## 9. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

<b>Space reserved for the organisation</b>	
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
<b>Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:</b> 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
<b>Name and signature of the organisation's representative:</b>   Nigel Timmins	<b>Date and place:</b>  18th June 2021 London, UK

## 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>• <b>Independent verification:</b> major weakness;</li> <li>• <b>Certification:</b> major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of certificate.</li> </ul>
	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>• <b>Independent verification:</b> minor weakness</li> <li>• <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>• <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>• <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