

ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE CHS Certification Report

IRW-CERT-2017-004

Date: 2017-03-25

Table of Contents

TA	BLE	OF CONTENTS	. 2
1.	GE	NERAL INFORMATION	.3
2.	SC	OPE	.3
3.	SC	HEDULE SUMMARY	. 4
	3.1	VERIFICATION SCHEDULE	4
	3.2	OPENING AND CLOSING MEETINGS.	. 4
4.	RE	COMMENDATION	.5
5.	DE	CISION	.5
	APF	PEAL	. 6
6.	BA	CKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ORGANISATION	.7
	6.1	GENERAL	. 7
	6.2	ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	.7
	6.3	WORK WITH PARTNERS	. 8
	6.4	CERTIFICATION OR VERIFICATION HISTORY	. 8
7.	SAI	MPLING	. 9
	7.1	RATIONALE FOR SAMPLING	.9
	7.2	Interviews	.9
8.	RE	PORT	11
	8.1	OVERALL ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE	11
	8.2	SUMMARY OF NON-CONFORMITIES	11
	8.3	STRONG POINTS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	12
9.	OR	GANISATION'S SIGNATURE	16
ANI	NEX	1. EXPLANATION OF THE SCORING SCALE	17
	WH	AT DO THE SCORES STAND FOR?	18

1. General information

Organisation Name;	Islamic Relief Worldwide	Certification Ref / No:	IRW-CERT-2017- 004
Type of organisation: ☐ National ☐ International ☐ Federated ☐ Membership/Network		Organisation Mandate: Humanitarian Development Advocacy Verified Mandate(s)	
☑Direct assistance ☑	Through partners		
Organisation size: (Total number of programme sites/ members/partners)	Total No. staff globally (including 230 at HO): 2500 Total No. Country Offices: 30 No. Partners: 24	Legal Registration:	UK Charity Commission: 06 April 1989
Head Office Location:	Birmingham, UK	Programme Sites verified:	Bangladesh & Ethiopia
Date of Head Office visit:	31.01 - 02.02.2017	Date of Programme Site visit:	Bangladesh: 12- 16.02.2017 Ethiopia: 20- 24.02.2017
Lead Auditor:	Claire Goudsmit	2 nd Auditor's Name: (Indicate if Trainee) Observer's Name and Position	

2. Scope

Independent verification initial audit	Ш	Mid term Audit
Certification initial audit		Recertification audit

3. Schedule summary

3.1 Verification Schedule

Name of Programme sites/members/partners verified	Location	Mandate (Humanitarian, Development, Advocacy)	Number of projects visited	Type of projects
Bangladesh	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Humanitarian, Development, Advocacy	3	Humanitarian, Development
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Humanitarian, Development	2	Development, Humanitarian

3.2 Opening and closing meetings

3.2.1 At Head Office

	Opening meeting	Closing meeting
Date	31.01.2017	02.02.2017
Location	Birmingham, UK	Birmingham, UK
Number of participants	20	14
Any substantive issue arising	none	Number of various change processes currently being implmeneted

3.2.2 At Programme Site:

	Opening meeting	Closing meeting
Date	12.02.2017	16.02.2017
Location	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Dhaka, Bangladesh
Number of participants	45	16
Date	20.02.2017	24.02.2017
Location	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
lumber of participants	_ 24	14
Any substantive issue arising	none	none

4. Recommendation

In our opinion Islamic Relief Worldwide conforms to the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard Certification is recommended.

Detailed findings are laid out in the rest of this report.

Lead Auditor's

Claire Goudsmit

Date and

25.03.2017

Place:

UK

Name and Signature:

5. Decision

Quality Control by:	Quality Control finalised on:
Elissa Goucem	First Draft: 2017-03-28
Pierre Hauselmann	Final: 2017-05-09

Certification	Intermediate audit
☐ Certified☐ Preconditioned (Major CARs)	☐ Maintenance of certificate ☐ Suspension of Certificate (Major CARs)
Fulfilment of corrective actions: 08 MAY	7 2019
Follow up and verification of conformity Maintenance audit: before 08 MAY 2018	
Triannenance additi delete de tria la Bollo	

Certification Decision	Date:
Humanitarian quality assurance Initiative	09 MAY 2017

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the conclusions and/or decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 30 days after the final report has been transmitted to the organisation.

HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 15 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform in writing HQAI within 15 days after being informed of the proposed solution of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will take action immediately, and identify two Board members to proceed with the appeal. These will have 30 day to address it. Their decision will be final.

The details of the Appeal Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeal and Complaints Procedure

6. Background information on the organisation

6.1 General

Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) is an international faith based humanitarian and development organisation founded and registered in Birmingham UK in 1984. It works in more than 40 countries offering humanitarian relief, development and advocacy support, aiming to reach the most vulnerable communities. IRW's four global strategic goals are: Reducing the impact of conflicts and natural disasters; empowering communities; mobilising people and funds; strengthening the IR global family.

6.2 Organisational structure and management system

IRW is the global implementing and coordinator partner of the Islamic Relief family made up of national partners and overseas country offices. National partner offices are registered as independent legal entities predominately focused on raising funds for overseas projects and implementing domestic programmes. National partner offices include IR: USA, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Kenya, the Russian Federation and Spain. In other countries where IR family members operate, IRW as a foreign NGO is the legally registered entity in that country. There are also operations in Mauritius and Ireland registered as branches of IRW.

IRW coordinates and monitors project implementation in Country Offices; identifies funding opportunities; overseas emergency response by the IR family members; supports members' marketing and media materials; responsible for legal registration and compliance in operational countries; fundraising where no IR office exists; coordinates multi-national and other international institutions e.g. ECHO, UN, ECOSOC; represents IR family in international forums and develops and coordinates the global strategy and programme policies.

Currently the Board of Trustees of IRW (seven members) is responsible for the governance of the organisation, with responsibility for managing the day to day running of the organisation delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO chairs the Board of Directors (Senior Management Team), made up of the division directors (nine members) to ensure implementation of policy and to support the work of IRW staff and volunteers. A new governance structure (Fig. 1) has been agreed by the IR Family to accommodate its growth and development and aims to have: a closer IR Family working efficiently and quickly globally; greater transparency and accountability at all levels; IR Family members participate in the operations of IRW; and IR operating to the highest standards across the world. IRW is in the middle of a 4 years transition strategy to establish its new structure, including developing a collective IRW International Assembly (AI) made up of representatives from eligible IR organisations and a newly elected Board made up from the IA membership.

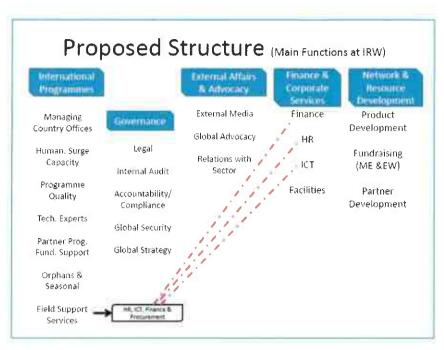


Figure. 1

6.3 Work with Partners

IRW predominately implements its projects directly through its Country Offices, with a small percentage through formal agreements with local or international partner organisations in country. As part of its project work IRW works with local government authorities and with civil society organisations at the community level. IRW's strategic aim is to increase its work with local actors by 2021.

Procedures for the selection and screening of partners are included in IRW Financial Guidelines under Anti-Terrorism. The International Programme Department has a Partnership Policy and systems for partner assessments, Partner Agreement formats and reporting are in place.

6.4 Certification or verification history

IRW was certified with People In Aid in (2008). IRW conducted a CHS self- assessment at its HO and Kenya, Bangladesh, Lebanon and Pakistan Country Offices in 2016.

7. Sampling

7.1 Rationale for sampling

From the information provided by IRW in the Programme Site Selection Form and by its website a number of Country Offices were shortlisted based on factors that would make them relevant and suitable to visit, including Bangladesh, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sudan and Ethiopia. OPT and Sudan both presented complications in terms of access to projects in country and visa/permission requirements. Therefore the following Country Offices were selected, which represent different contexts and focus areas for IRW:

- Bangladesh 19 projects covering most mandates humanitarian, development, <u>DRR focus</u> and seasonal work; long-standing office since 1991 with 310 staff in country; good access and low insecurity, higher-level budget; poverty reduction, climate change, child welfare, livelihoods, DRR and emergency response projects.
- 2. <u>Ethiopia</u> 15 projects covering humanitarian, development and advocacy; office since 2000 with 197 staff in country; high budget; low insecurity and good accessibility; sustainable livelihoods, emergency nutrition and child welfare (protection) projects.

Projects were selected in dialogue with both Country Office teams to ensure that the locations were accessible within the set timeframe of the audit, that they represented the different mandates and project types that the office implemented. Staff selected for interview represent a range of IR staff roles and responsibilities e.g. management, programme support, project officers, operational and support staff at the Head Office and Country Offices.

7.2 Interviews

7.2.1 Semi-structured interviews (individual interviews or with a small group <6

Type of people intervie	ewed	Number of people interviewed
Head Office	Senior Management Team	5
	Managers	7
	Officers	7
Bangladesh	Management	9
	Staff	19
	Committee (WASH)	4
Ethiopia	Management	5
	Staff	16
	Committee (District Health Authority)	3
	Total number of participants	75

7.2.2 Focus Group Discussions (interviews with a group >6

Type of Group	Number of participants:		
	Female	Male	
Bangladesh			
Self-Help Community Group	19		
Child / Youth Group	9	2	
Community Group - camp	9		
WASH Community Committee		7	
Self-Help Community Group	12	3	
Disaster Management Committee		8	
Community Group	12	5	
Ethiopia			
Mothers Self-Help Group (Child Sponsorship)	14	3	
Mothers Self-Help Group (Child Sponsorship)	6	2	
Mothers Group (Emergency Nutrition)	14		
Mothers Group (Emergency Nutrition)	11		
Mothers Group (Emergency Nutrition)	13		
Total number of participants	107	30	

8. Report

8.1 Overall organisational performance

IRW has performed extremely well against the CHS, shows high level of commitment to continually improve accountability to the communities it works with and aims to support, and to establishing strong internal quality management and control systems. IRW has been an active member of the development of the Core Humanitarian Standard from its previous engagement with HAP International, People in Aid and the Joint Standards Initiative. IRW has supported the translation of the CHS into Arabic and other languages e.g. Bangla in the Bangladesh Country Office. IRW has provided CHS training to its staff and has integrated the standards into some of its programme policies and guidelines. IR Country Offices are staffed predominately by national staff and local staff at the project level, and IRW is committed to increase its work with local actors. IRW's commitments to accountability and transparency, community empowerment and resilience, to research, innovation and change, staff training and development, and to establishing a strong quality management system for its operations are IRW's key strengths in delivering the CHS.

However, IRW is also undergoing much change and development. Policies, guidelines and systems are being updated, revised and introduced at a high rate, which presents challenges in mainstreaming and resourcing these across all departments, Country Offices and projects. Effectively sharing key learning from the outcomes or impact of IRW's work to Country Offices and between Country Offices is also a challenge for IRW, although improvements to this are planned. Weaknesses in IRW support to Country Offices in some key areas i.e. internal audit, MEAL, CRM systems, were also found.

8.2 Summary of non-conformities

Non-conformities	MINOR	Time for resolution
Commitment 4 4.1. IRW does not ensure that information is communicated to all stakeholders, especially to vulnerable and marginalised groups.		2 years
Commitment 5	5.3. IRW does not ensure complaints are managed in all Country Offices in a timely, fair and appropriate manner, prioritising the safety of the complainant and those affected at all stages.	2 years
Commitment 7	7.5. IRW does not facilitate access to knowledge and experience throughout the organisation and Country Offices	2 years
TOTAL Number	3	

8.3 Strong points and areas for improvement

Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant



Policies and procedures articulate IRW commitment to impartiality, needs based assistance and to take diversity of communities into account in its work. In-depth contextual and stakeholder analyses, including social mapping and a review of primary and secondary data, form the basis of programme and project plans and designs. Systematic procedures that include the review and assessment of local capacities and constraints and people's risks and vulnerabilities are in place. Methodologies for including community members and local leaders in the processes of analysis provide a high level of assurance that activities are relevant and appropriate to their needs. Locally based project staff and visits by Country Office staff to communities ensure that the context is continually reviewed and understood, and that changes can be identified early.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 1

Communities are clear on the assessment and analyses processes, knowledgeable about the selection criteria and the processes conducted. Communities and outreach workers are often directly involved in conducting these procedures and ongoing assessments.

Humanitarian response is effective and timely



Policies and procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of IRW activities and capacities to deliver its work and to ensure that emergency response is delivered in a timely manner. Establishing project offices with staff who are from the local communities and locality, and close coordination with other stakeholders (local authorities, other indirectly stakeholder and other organisations) enables IR to act in a timely manner. Systematic processes for ongoing and periodic monitoring of project activities and outputs against its plans are in place, monitoring against outcomes is in pace in some projects only but is included in new project management tools and training. Observation around limited capacity and systems in place within the IR Ethiopia to effectively monitor all activities, and identify and address poor performance, especially considering overall scope of its operations and the number of targeted beneficiaries.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 2

Communities were satisfied that their needs were met, that they were consulted by IR staff and that activities were delivered in a timely manner. Communities were clear on the assessment and analyses processes, knowledgeable about the selection criteria and the processes conducted. Communities and outreach workers are directly involved in conducting assessments and determining the inputs and are therefore content that projects are realistic, safe and appropriate.

Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects



Policies are designed to prevent programmes having negative effects. Programmes are built on local capacities, designed to benefit the local economy, promote early recovery and develop resilience. Risk assessment processes are developed as part of all project planning and design processes, however the risks and potential and unintended negative effects of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by staff are not systematically identified and acted upon in all projects.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 3

In general communities stated that they felt stronger and resilient as a result of the work of IR in their communities. They were stronger in their groups and all expressed their intention to continue working to improve their community and society, and support one another.

Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback



IRW has a strong commitment to transparency and participation and a range of policies and guidelines promote participation and inclusion in its work. IRW assures that communities are portrayed in a dignified, accurate and respectful manner in all information materials that it produces. Systems are in place and designed to ensure that sensitive information is safeguarded and training is provided to staff on these issues and the use of social media. Systems to consistently monitor that all members of the communities receive information are not in place in all project locations.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 4

In general communities were informed of their rights and entitlements, are involved, feedback and participate in project decisions. Communities were satisfied that IR staff ensured that all groups of the community were represented and involved in the work, either directly or through their community leadership structures. However, there were some communities, especially vulnerable members, who did not receive ongoing and up to date information or were not informed about IR, its principles or plans of the project activities or how to provide feedback.

Complaints are welcomed and addressed



IRW promotes its openness to complaints and takes complaints seriously. Its complaint mechanism is well embedded amongst staff and staff receive training on the CRM and are staff facilitated to make complaints freely. Complaints received at Head Office are managed appropriately, in a fair and timely manner. IR Bangladesh has a strong complaints mechanism in place and manages complaints from communities and stakeholders in an appropriate manner and systematically across its projects. IR Ethiopia does not have a Country Office complaint system to receive and manage complaints in place. Some efforts have been made to establish ways for communities to make complaints, but these are ad hoc and not all project staff understand IRW complaint policy or system.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 5

Communities in Bangladesh are well informed, involved in the set-up and monitoring of complaints to IR staff and understand how complaints would be handled. Project Community Leaders in Ethiopia were

aware of how to contact and make complaints to IR staff, but most other community members were not informed or did not know how to make a complaint. Communities understand how they expect IR staff to behave and about prevention of fraud, however communities are unaware of provisions on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by staff.

Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary



IRWs commitment to coordination and collaboration with others, including with local actors and partner organisations, is clearly articulated in a number of policies and procedures. IRW is engaged in many interagency initiatives and international alliances e.g. the START Network, Charter4Change, ADCAP. IRW acts as a coordination body for the IR Family and has developed systems in place to facilitate IR partners to sponsor and support projects globally. Country Offices work in close coordination with other actors to ensure coordination and complementarity of activities including with national and local government authorities, other NGOs and CBOs, UN agencies and Cluster System, INGO Forums, local level community management and committee groups. Country Offices are involved with inter-agency needs assessments, joint evaluations and consortium projects with other INGOs.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 6

Communities did not identify any gaps or duplication in the assistance they received.

Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve



IRW has a strong commitment to contributing to learning within the humanitarian sector and with its peers, and shares learning externally through its website, publishes research papers and participates in learning fora at the global and country levels. Policies and procedures demonstrate a willingness to learn from monitoring and evaluation exercises and the IR Academy is an efficient training and information resource for all staff, however internal key learning across the organisation and IR Country Offices is not well facilitated by its current systems or equally accessible to all staff.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 7

Communities were involved in exercises to review project activities and understood how the information would be used, e.g. to improve practices, but the results of exercises were not shared with communities.

Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably



IRW has human resources and personal development policies in place that are in line with legal requirements, are fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory and cover staff safety, security and wellbeing, and are understood by staff. Performance appraisal processes take place in a regular manner and staff make use of these to set work objectives and plan personal development goals on an annual basis. A global IRW Code of Conduct is in place and IR Country Office have locally contextualized versions, with specific reference to PSEA obligations in the IRW Child Protection Policy. Some staff, especially newly recruited, were not clear on obligations to PSEA in relation to adults. IRW and IR Country Offices make effort to ensure that they have the capacity to fulfill its commitments and this is shown by its investment in the development of the IR Academy. However not all staff are aware or use the most up to date version of policy or procedure at the country level, likely due to the high amount of change that IRW presently experiences.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 8

Communities were satisfied and complementary of IR staff behaviour, attitudes and their approach to working with their communities.

Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose



IRW has invested significantly in the development of policies and procedures to ensure that resources are managed and used responsibly, ethically and efficiently across all of its Country Offices and projects. IRW has good financial governance systems, procurement procedures, anti fraud and corruption policy and procedures, risk management mechanisms and IQMS audit processes and delegated staff with clear responsibilities and budgetary control in place.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 9

Communities were aware of IRW commitment to transparency and anti-fraud and corruption and understand what they should do if they identify any misappropriation of resources.

9. Organisation's signature

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings	
(Organisation representative – please cross where appropriate)	- 2
I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit	
I accept the findings of the audit	g
I do not accept some/all of the findings of the audit	
Please list the requirements whose findings you do not accept	

Organisation's Representative Name and Signature:

Naser Haghaned

Date and Place:

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Annex 1. Explanation of the scoring scale

In line with the CHS's emphasis on continuous learning and improvement, rather than assessing a pass/fail compliance with the CHS requirements, the CHS Verification Scheme uses a scoring system. It is graduated from 0 to 5 to determine the degree to which organisations apply the CHS and to measure progress in this application.

Be it in the framework of a self-assessment or in a third-party assessment process, it is key to have detailed criteria to evaluate (score) the degree of application of each requirement and commitment of the CHS. A coherent, systematic approach is important to ensure:

- Transparency and objectivity in the scoring criteria;
- Consistency and reliability between one verification cycle and another, or between the different verification options;
- Comparability of data generated by different organisations.

This document outlines a set of criteria to orient the assessment process and help communicate how the respective scores have been attributed and what they mean.

While verification needs to be rigorous, it needs also to be flexible in its interpretation of the CHS requirements to be applicable fairly to a wide range of organisations working in very different contexts. For example, smaller organisations may not have formal management systems in place, but show that an Organisational Responsibility is constantly reflected in practices. In a similar situation, the person undertaking the assessment needs to understand and document why the application is adequate in the apparent absence of supporting process. It is frequent that the procedures actually exist informally, but are "hidden" in other documents. Similarly, it is not the text of a requirement that is important, but whether its intent is delivered and that there are processes that ensure this will continue to be delivered under normal circumstances. The driving principle behind the scoring is that the scores should reflect the normal ("systematic") working practices of the participating organisation.

What do the scores stand for?

Score	Key actions	Organisation responsibilities		
0	 Operational activities and actions systematically contradict the intent of a CHS requirement. Recurrent failure to implement the necessary actions at operational level. A systemic issue threatens the integrity of a CHS Commitment (i.e. makes it unlikely that the organisation is able to deliver the commitment). 	 Policies and procedures directly contradict the intent of the CHS requirement. Complete absence of formal or informal processes (organisational culture) or policies necessary for ensuring compliance at the level of the requirement and commitment. 		
	Score 0 means: The organisation does not work currently towards the systematic application of this requirement/commitment, neither formally nor informally. This is a major weakness to be corrected as soon as possible.			
1	Some actions respond to the intent behind the CHS requirement. However: • There are a significant number of cases where the design and management of programmes and activities do not reflect the CHS requirement. • Actions at the operational level are not systematically implemented in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.	 Some policies and procedures respond to the intent behind the CHS requirement. However: Relevant policies exist but are incomplete or do not cover all areas of the CHS. Existing policies are not accompanied with sufficient guidance to support a systematic and robust implementation by staff. A significant number of relevant staff at Head Office and/or field levels are not familiar with the policies and procedures. Absence of mechanisms to ensure the monitoring and systematic delivery of actions, policies and procedures at the level of the commitment. 		
	Score 1 means: The organisation has made some efforts towards application of this requirement/commitment, but these efforts have not been systematic. This is a weakness to be corrected.			
	Actions broadly respond to the intent behind the CHS requirement:	Some policies and procedures respond to the intent behind the CHS requirement. However: Relevant policies exist but are incomplete or do not		
2	Actions at operational level are broadly in line with the intent behind a requirement or commitment. However: Implementation of the requirement varies from programme to programme and is driven by	 cover all areas of the CHS. Existing policies are not accompanied with sufficient guidance to support a systematic and robust implementation by staff. A significant number of relevant staff at Head 		

Score	Key actions	Organisation responsibilities		
	 people rather than organisational culture. There are instances of actions at operational level where the design or management of programmes does not fully reflect relevant policies. 	Office and/or field levels are not familiar with the policies and procedures. • Absence of mechanisms to ensure the monitoring and systematic delivery of actions, policies and procedures at the level of the commitment.		
	Score 2 means: The organisation is making systematic efforts towards application of this requirement/commitment, but certain key points are still not addressed. This is worth an observation and, if not addressed may turn into a significant weakness.			
3	Actions respond to the intent of the CHS requirement: The design of projects and programmes and the implementation of activities is based on the relevant policies and reflects the requirement throughout programme sites. Staff are held accountable for the application of relevant policies and procedures at operational level, including through consistent quality assurance mechanisms.	Policies and procedures respond to the intent of the CHS requirement: Relevant policies and procedures exist and are accompanied with guidance to support implementation by staff. Staff are familiar with relevant policies. They can provide several examples of consistent application in different activities, projects and programmes. The organisation monitors the implementation of its policies and supports the staff in doing so at operational level.		
	Score 3 means: The organisation conforms with this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time.			
4	 As 3, but in addition: Field and programme staff act frequently in a way that goes beyond CHS requirement to which they are clearly committed. Communities and other external stakeholders are particularly satisfied with the work of the organisation in relation to the requirement. 	 As 3, but in addition: Policies and procedures go beyond the intent of th CHS requirement, are innovative and systematically implemented across the organisation. Relevant staff can explain in which way their activities are in line with the requirement and can provide several examples of implementation in different sites. They can relate the examples to improved quality of the projects and their deliveries. 		
	Score 4 means: The organisation demonstrates innovation in the application of this requirement/commitment. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.			

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Score	Key actions	Organisation responsibilities
5	 As 4, but in addition: Actions at all levels and across the organisation go far beyond the intent of the relevant CHS requirement and could serve as textbook examples of ultimate good practice. 	 As 4, but in addition: Policies and procedures go far beyond the intent of the CHS requirement and could serve as textbook examples of relevant policies and procedures. Policy and practice are perfectly aligned.
	Score 5 means: On top of demonstrating conformity and innovation, the organisation receives outstanding feedback from communities and people. This is an exceptional strength and a score of 5 should only be attributed in exceptional circumstances.	