hqai
HUMANITARIAN QUALITY
ASSURANCE INITIATIVE

Nusaned
Initial Audit – Summary Report - 2025/12/12

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified
☐ International ☒ National ☐ Membership/Network ☒ Direct Assistance ☐ Federated ☒ With partners	☒ Humanitarian ☒ Development ☐ Advocacy	☒ Humanitarian ☒ Development ☐ Advocacy
Legal registration	587/2020	
Head Office location	Beirut	
Total number of organisation staff	31	

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Nancy Vallejo
Second auditor	-
Third auditor	-
Observer	-
Expert	-
Witness / other participants	Interpreter

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS:2024 Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit Cycle	First cycle
Type of audit	Initial Audit
Scope of audit	Whole organisation
Focus of the audit	All thematic areas of Nusaned's work: Shelter, Livelihoods and Social Stability, Basic Assistance, Food Security and Agriculture and WASH.

1.4 Sampling*

Sampling unit	Projects
Total number of sampling units	7
Sample size	4
Total number of onsite visits	4
Total number of sampling units for remote assessment	0
Sampling Unit Selection	

Random Sampling — onsite/remote	Purposive Sampling — onsite
Lebanon Humanitarian Fund 34688 (Humanitarian: Food security, Basic Assitance, Shelter and WASH) **Zahrani** – Direct implementation – onsite	**UN Women** (Development: Livelihoods) **Beirut** – Direct implementation **Saida** – Al Moasat (Local implementation partner) - onsite

Expertise France (Development: Livelihoods) **Akkar** – Direct Implementation - onsite	**Christian Blind Mission (CBM)** (Humanitarian: Food security and basic assisstance/Development: Livelihoods) **Akkar** – CIS (Local partner implementation) - onsite
Any other sampling considerations: In addition to ensuring that the sample included both humanitarian and development projects, two projects were purposefully sampled to ensure inclusion of projects being implemented with local implementing partners.	
Sampling risks identified: No specific sampling risks identified. The auditor is confident in the findings and conclusions of this audit based on the sample.	

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 Opening Meeting

Date	2025/10/20	**Number of participants**	27 (14 F, 13 M)
Location	Online	**Any substantive issues arising**	No

2.2 Locations Assessed

Locations	**Dates**	**Onsite or remote**
Head Office – Beirut, Lebanon	**20th to 26th October 2025**	Onsite and remote
Project Sites – Saida, Lebanon	**27th October 2025**	Onsite
Project Sites – Zahrani, Lebanon	**27th October 2025**	Onsite
Project Sites – Beirut, Lebanon	**28th October 2025**	Onsite
Project Sites – Akkar, Lebanon	**29th October 2025**	Onsite

2.3 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	**Number of interviewees**		**Onsite or remote**
	Female	**Male**	
Head Office			
Management	4	4	Remote
Staff	3	1	Remote
Sampling Unit (Project Sites)			
Management	2	2	Onsite
Staff		3	Onsite
Partner staff	7	2	Onsite
Others (Cluster coordinators, funding partners)	1	4	Onsite
Total number of interviewees	17	16	Total: 33

2.4 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Group discussion #1: trainees women - Livelihood in partnership with Al Moasat, Saida Lebanon	2		Onsite
Group discussion #2 Men hosted in shelters, humanitarian, direct implementation, Zahrani , Lebanon		14	Onsite
Group discussion #3 Women hosted in shelters, humanitarian, direct implementation, Zahrani , Lebanon	16		Onsite
Group discussion #4: trainees women, Livelihood, direct implementation, Beirut, Lebanon	16		Onsite
Group discussion #5: trainees women – Humanitarain/Livelihood in partnership with CIS, Akkar, Lebanon	9		Onsite
Group discussion #6: Trainees men Wash/Livelihood, direct implementation, Akkar, Lebanon		6	Onsite
Group discussion #7: Trainees women Wash/Livelihood, direct implementation, Akkar, Lebanon	6		Onsite
Group discussion #8: Well owners and beneficiaries, WASH, direct implementation, Akkar, Lebanon	1	5	Onsite
Total number of participants	50	25	Total: 75

2.5 Closing Meeting

Date	2025-11-05	**Number of participants**	22 (12 F, 10 M)
Location	Remote	**Any substantive issues arising**	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information	Nusaned is a national Lebanese non-profit community-based humanitarian and development organisation, that is apolitical and impartial and believes in the power of collaboration to create a faster and stronger impact.
	The organisation initiated its work in December 2019 and was registered in May 2020 as an association under Lebanese law. Its vision is to empower marginalised Lebanese communities throughout Lebanon to live sustainably, based on a non-biased, egalitarian, and value-based needs assessment process with the ultimate goal of these communities becoming self-sustaining.
	Nusaned's mission is to support under-served communities to become self-sustaining by offering access to food security, building shelter, and providing ongoing opportunities for productive economies. Nusaned favours innovative and effective partnerships with communities as well as locally engaged international organisations and donors.
	As a young organisation with a strong volunteer base, Nusaned is growing rapidly and it's processes are in constant evolution. Nusaned was certified against ISO 9001 in 2022 and is now looking for certification against the CHS.

Nusaned's work covers the whole of Lebanon and its annual turnover was 371'860'725'000 Lebanese pounds (about 4.2 million USD) in 2024.

3.2 Governance and management structure	Nusaned's Governance Structure is composed of a General Assembly of Members, a Board of nine Directors, an Executive Director reporting to the BoD and leading a Secretariat.
	The Executive Director oversees the overall strategic direction of the organisation and ensures alignment across departments while maintaining accountability to the Board of Directors.
	The Secretariat is divided into three main departments, each led by a Department Head who reports directly to the Executive Director:
	• The Programmes Department is responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all projects and field activities.
	• The Strategic Development Department oversees strategic planning, quality assurance, donor engagement, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning (MEAL), and external communications.
	• The Operations Department ensures the effective functioning of the organisation. It includes financial management, procurement, administrative support, logistics, human resources (HR), and compliance with internal policies and external requirements, including from donors.
3.3 Work with partner organisations	Nusaned implements about 70% of projects directly. However, it is committed to partnerships and these are ruled by clear Contractual Agreements that promote mutual respect, responsibility and accountability in project planning and delivery. This includes joint project design, budgeting, decision-making and monitoring.
	As necessary, Nusaned provides capacity building to its partners, in particular, but not limited to, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassement (PSEAH) and safeguarding.
	Local implementation partners consider Nusaned a flexible and generous, yet rigorous and effective partner.
	Donor partners commend Nusaned's reliability, responsiveness and effectiveness.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms	Nusaned has a well developed management system which is certified under ISO 9001. This management system covers all aspect of Nusaned's work. The system includes annual internal risk assessments at organisation and project levels and monitoring of conformity with internal and external norms, including but not limited to safeguarding, PSEAH, anti-fraud, anti-corruption, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism measures.
	Nusaned's values and commitments are signed up to by all staff at the time of signature of the employment contract. This applies as well to volunteers, partners and contractors. The organisation implements a regular training programme to build, maintain and/or update the capacity of its staff and volunteers and implementing partners.
	Nusaned visits project sites on a regular basis to assess the quality of implementation and engages with project participants and other local stakeholders to asses risks on an on-going manner. These visits are complemented by continuous coordination meetings with partners to review progress, address challenges, and ensure alignment with project objectives and standards.

To manage Lebanon's volatile security situation, Nusaned coordinates with all relevant national and local actors to assess and mitigate security risks, including ensuring the security of staff, partners and communities.

Finances are managed according to high standards, including a multi layered signature requirement to engage fiancial resources above specific thresholds. The implementation is controlled through annual internal and external audits, including by donors in relation with projects. Financial statements are independently audited annually.

Corrective actions are implemented as needed.

4.2 Level of application of the CHS	Nusaned is a young organisation that, from its inception was built taking the CHS as a reference point. The CHS is referenced at all levels of the organisation. Strong points include:

- Coordination with international, national and local structures to align with Lebanon's national needs and priorities assessements;

- Joint need and vulnerability assessments with communities and local authorities to jointly tailor projects and activities to local context;

- Consistent and relevant information sharing with communities;

- Strong MEAL mechanisms, accompanied by flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and needs of communities;

- Strong presence in, and acceptance by, communities;

- Efficiency and effectiveness in responding to emergencies thanks to its strong volunteers base and a culture of innovation.

- Strong implementation partnerships, although not many, are based on mutual respect, joint programming and participatory decision-making;

- Proactively seeks external training opportunities to better deliver projects.

However, Nusaned has to work within the boundaries of needs assessments and priorities established at the national level by the government and sectorial clusters. This limits its ability to adapt projects and design exit strategies to strengthen resilience building of communities in the long term. While some communities feel frustrated by this, all are very positive of Nusaned's work and most consider their resilience has increased thanks to Nusaned.

Nusaned is still growing and still has room to rationalise further the consistency of its formal and informal organisational approach at all levels of the organisation.

4.3 PSEAH	Nusaned's approach in dealing with PSEAH is well structured, effective and efficient. A strong component is communication and capacity building.

Communities are informed from the onset of interventions of Nusaned's commitments and the expected behaviour of staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers. Awareness sessions are also regularly organised to inform communities of their rights, and how to complain in case of breach. Regular monitoring at the project level checks that communities understand the mechanism to handle complaints.

Staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers are regularly trained on these topics.

Nusaned is building its capacity to handle SEAH investigations as the external processes it relied upon are not operational anymore.

4.4 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Strong points and areas for improvement	Average score*
Commitment 1: People and communities can exercise their rights and participate in actions and decisions that affect them.	2.5

Nusaned is committed to transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusiveness and develops and implements an organisational approach that recognises and emphasises the right of people and communities to be treated with dignity and to participate in decisions that affect them. This is backed by a strong MEAL mechanism. Special attention is provided to the most marginalised, who are identified through individual door-by-door vulnerability assessments. Projects implementation are based on a shared and informed decision-making.

Communication is provided in formats that are easily accessible for the people.

However the mechanism to identify vulnerabilities does not include the possibility to record other vulnerabilities than those that are listed, which creates the risk that some type of vulnerabilities are missed out in the assessment.

Feedback from communities:

- People and communities confirm they are treated with dignity and respect and that they have been properly informed about their rights and how to exercise them.
- Communities confirm they participate in decisions about the projects' planning and implementation, and feel confident that Nusaned provides the relevant information for their decision-making, including requesting consent before using pictures for communitcation material and, is responsive to their expressed needs.

Commitment 2: People and communities access timely and effective support in accordance with their specific needs and priorities.	3.0

Nusaned proactively engages with communities to understand their context and culture, and their diverse capacities, vulnerabilities, needs and risks. Programmes build upon, respect and and complement local knowledge, capacities, and existing actions.

The Vulnerability Assessment approach used to identify the people to support is fair, impartial and transparent.

The monitoring approach is well established, operated regularly, identifying changing need. As necessary programmes are adapted. A functioning referral mechanim is in place for addressing needs Nusaned has not the capacity to respond to.

Usaned applies relevant technical standards (e.g. Sphere, CHS, OECD DAC, GDPR; Washington Group on disabilities statistics questions).

Partners and stakeholders all recognise Nusaned's capacity to rapid and effective response during emergencies. It is clearly recognised as an actor present and well received locally. Nusaned is most frequently the first to respond to community needs, innovating to adjust to changing conditions.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities confirm that Nusaned's response is effective and timely.
- They appreciate the quality of services provided by Nusaned, compared with many other aid suppliers.

Commitment 3: People and communities are better prepared and more resilient to potential crises.	1.6

Nusaned engages with local authorities and communities in the projects assessment and implementation. It looks for collaboration with local actors, partners and volunteers to promote local ownership and sustainability of projects benefits. Nusaned's training and income-creating activities increase preparadness and resilience to potential crisis.

However, this is not happening within a coherent organisational approach. Limited by the fact it is strictly working within priorities set at the national level, Nusaned focuses its monitoring on quantitative indicators rather than on long-term impacts. This in turn limits its capacity to develop systematic strategies which woud contribute to long-term positive effects on people's lives, livelihoods, the local economy, and the environment beyond the lifespan of projets.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities are mostly very satisfied with the service they receive.

- Women acknowledge Nusaned as an organisation that empowers them, and helps them to gain self-esteem and increase opportunities to get an income.

- Some communities expressed frustration, however, for the incapacity to build ecomomic activities based on the training they received from Nusaned when projects end, thus minimising the potential to create long-term resilience.

Commitment 4: People and communities access support that does not cause harm to people or the environment.	2.2

Nusaned works in ways that protect the safety, security, rights and dignity of people and communities and prevent all forms of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation and harassment, whether by staff, volunteers, partners or suppliers, in line with recognised good practice.

Personal data is handled with due care, according to good practice.

Nusaned has a strong approach to identifiy, mitigate, and address any potential negative impacts of its programmes on people and communities to the extent that no actual negative effect is reported.

Nusaned include the care of the environment in its strategy. However, operational tools do not allow to systematically identify, prevent, mitigate and address potential and actual negative impacts of programmes on the environment.

Feedback from communities:

- All interviewed participants in Nusaned's project feel safe and trust that Nusaned takes the appropriate measures to avoid negative effects.

- However some report that Nusaned has not dealt with the environmental wastes produced by projects.

Commitment 5: People and communities can safely report concerns and complaints and get them addressed.	2.5

Nusaned has developed and implements a strong approach to complaints handling. It consistently organises awareness sessions with communities regarding the expected behaviour of staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers, their right to complain and how to do it. Safe, accessible, and appropriate ways for community members to report concerns and complaints related to SEAH are implemented in line with good practice. The MEAL mechanisms check that people understand their right to complain and the mechanism to do so. Staff are trained and aware of PSEAH mechanisms and the Code of Conduct (CoC).

However, Nusaned is still in the process of building its capacity to handle SEAH investigations as the external processes it relied upon are not operational anymore. This currently limits its capacity to ensure any concern and complaint is acted upon in a timely and appropriate manner.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities feel well informed on how to complain or report misconduct or the misbehaviours of the organisation and its staff, volunteers, partners or suppliers in relation to SEAH. They also know their right to receive an appropriate and timely response.

- However, some communities were not informed they could give feedback or make requests through the same mechanism as for SEAH.

Commitment 6: People and communities access coordinated and complementary support.	2.8

Nusaned's works is rooted in a strong coordination with national and local authorities, as well as UN agencies including OCHA and Sectoral Clusters.

Partnerships are based on a commitment to equitable decision-making and resource sharing as well respect of the characteristics, roles and responsibilities of each other. This includes regular interactions that allow Nusaned to assess the quality of the partnership and provide access to training as necessary

Nusaned is recognised by partners and stakeholders as a very collaborative partner that proactively looks for coordination and complementarity with others.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities confirm that, to their knowledge, Nusaned coordinates well with local stakeholders and authorities.

Commitment 7: People and communities access support that is continually adapted and improved based on feedback and learning.	2.4

Nusaned regularly listens and responds to feedback and inputs from people and communities, and adapt programmes, as necessary. It continuously learns and improves actions and ways of working to better meet the needs of communities and its own commitments to quality and accountability.

Nusaned shares the analysis of data provided by communities with them and inform about potential changes, however, they do not systematically share the analysis of data from other sources.

Nusaned collects disaggregated data, however they do not consistently report in a disaggregated way nor make use of the disaggregated data in decision making beyond the initial stages of projects.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities report that Nusaned is very effective in reponding to their feedback and inputs, and quick to adapt activities.

Commitment 8: People and communities interact with staff and volunteers that are respectful, competent, and well-managed.	2.9

Nusaned's leadership, staff and volunteers promotes and demonstrate an organisational culture of quality and accountability. The organisation maintains a safe, secure and inclusive working environment to ensure staff and volunteers have the necessary support, and adhere to the CoC and other key policies. This includes a zero tolereance policy for SEAH and misuse of resources. Whistleblowing preocedures are in place, ensuring accessibility and confidentiality.

Nusaned manages human resources effectively in a fair, non-discriminatory, and transparent manner. Staff are supported in getting access to training whenever necessary. There is a low staff turnover.

Stakeholders confirm that Nusaned's staff is competent and respectful.

Nusaned's hiring process is fair and documented. However the frequent limitation of opening positions only to internal candidates may limit the the diversity of experiences and qualitfication brought into the organisation.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities confirm that Nusaned' staff is well trained, professional, capable and respectful.

Commitment 9: People and communities can expect that resources are managed ethically and responsibly.	2.5

Nusaned allocates and manages resources ethically and responsibly. It identifies, prevents, and manages risks of misuse of resources at all levels and takes action when appropriate. Financial waste is well controlled. Fundraising activities are in line with the values of the organisation.

Well qualified staff and a strong volunteer base ensure the capacity to meet the organisations commitments.

However, Nusaned's approach to manage non-financial waste and the impact on the environment of the organisation for all projects and activities is not well defined.

Feedback from communities:

- Communities report that Nusaned manages its resources ethically and for their intended purposes. However, some mention that Nusaned does not systematically address waste reduction and its impact on the environment.

* Note: Commitments are scored by taking the mean average score of the requirements, i.e. the sum of all the requirement scores in a commitment divided by the number of requirements in that commitment. Except when a major non-conformity/weakness is issued, in this case the overall score for the Commitment is 0 (CHSA Verification Framework – Scoring Grid, 2024).

5. Summary of non-conformities

Corrective Action Request (CAR)	Type	Status	Resolution timeframe
2025-3.3 Nusaned does not consistently plan and implement programmes that contribute to long-term positive effects on people's lives, livelihoods, the local economy, and the environment beyond the lifespan of their projects.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
2025-3.5 Nusaned has not yet developed all the operational tools to implement a coherent organisational approach to ensure support reinforces locally led actions.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
2025-4.2: Nusaned does not systematically identify, prevent, mitigate and address potential and actual negative impacts of programmes on the environment.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
2025-4.5: Nusaned has not established a systematic and coherent organisational approach to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the organisation and its work.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
2025-5.4: Nusaned does not currently have a fully functional internal or external capacity to investigate SEAH complaints in line with good practice.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
2025-7.2 Nusaned does not systematically use disaggregated data for decision making beyond the initial stages of projects.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
2025-9.4 Nusaned does not manage and use resources in a way that minimises the impact on the environment.	Minor	New	By the 2028 Renewal Audit
Total Number of open CARs	7		

* _Note_: The CARs are completed by the audit team based on the findings. The audited partner is required to respond with a Management Response for each CAR to HQAI before a certificate is issued (reference: HQAI Procedure 114).

6. Lead auditor recommendation

CERTIFICATION

In my opinion, Nusaned demonstrates no major non-conformities in its application of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

I recommend certification.

Name and signature of lead auditor:	**Date and place:**
Nancy Vallejo	Cully, 20 November 2025

7. HQAI decision

Final decision on certification:	☒ Issued ☐ Refused	
Start date of the certification cycle: 2025/12/12 Next audit before 2026/12/12		
Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director: Désirée Walter		**Date and place:** Geneva, 12 December 2025

8. 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: *If yes, please give details:*	☐ Yes ☒ No
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings: I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit I accept the findings of the audit	 ☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative: Ghaidaa Itani Nawam Executive Director	**Date and place:** December 15th 2025

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the quality assurance decision, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 workdays after being informed of the decision.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will confirm that the basis for the appeal meets the appeals process requirements. The Chair will then constitute an appeal panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. The panel will strive to come to a decision within 45 workdays.

The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeals Procedure.

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning for all verification scheme options, including self-assessment and third-party audits	Guidance for scoring requirements
0	Your organisation does not currently meet the requirement and indicates a major issue that is so significant that the organisation's ability to meet the commitment is compromised. **For third-party auditing schemes:** Independent verification: A major weakness. Certification: A major non-conformity that compromises the integrity of the commitment which leads to a major corrective action request (CAR).	To give a score 0, **not all** of the measurable components of the requirement are verified to be in place **and** the issue(s) identified are so significant that the organisation's ability to meet the **commitment** is compromised.
1	Your organisation does not currently meet the requirement. **For third-party auditing schemes:** Independent verification: A minor weakness. Certification: A minor non-conformity that compromises the integrity of the requirement which leads to a minor corrective action request (CAR).	To give a score 1, **not all** of the measurable components of the requirement are verified to be in place.
2	Your organisation currently meets the requirement, but there is an opportunity for improvement that deserves attention so that the requirement is not compromised in the future. **For third-party auditing schemes:** Independent verification: Requirement is met with an observation. Certification: Conformity with an observation.	To give a score 2, **all measurable components** of a requirement are verified to be in place, however, one or more opportunities for improvement are observed which deserve attention so that the requirement is not compromised in the future.

3	Your organisation meets the requirement,-with organisational systems ensuring it is being met consistently throughout the organisation. **For third-party auditing schemes:** Independent verification: Requirement is met. Certification: Conformity.	To give a score 3, **all measurable components** of a requirement are verified to be in place.
4	Your organisation meets the requirement in an exemplary way, demonstrating innovation and/or special recognition of performance, and organisational systems ensure this high quality throughout the organisation. **For third-party auditing schemes:** Independent verification: Requirement is met in an exemplary way. Certification: Conformity in an exemplary way.	To give a score 4, **all measurable components** of a requirement are verified to be in place. **In addition**, the following must be verified: • An organisational system (or systems) that demonstrate an innovative approach to meeting the requirement at a high standard throughout the organisation are in place. and/or • The organisation has been awarded special recognition of performance in relation to meeting the requirement at a high standard, and this is built into organisational systems so that the high quality is ensured throughout the organisation.
	Guidance notes for scoring commitments: • Commitments are scored by taking the mean average score of the requirements, i.e. the sum of all the requirement scores in a commitment divided by the number of requirements in that commitment. • Except when a major non-conformity/weakness is issued, in this case the overall score for the Commitment is 0.	

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Framework 2024