Sosyal Araştırma ve Rehabilite Derneği - SARD
Initial Audit – Summary Report - 2026/02/13

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	Registered as an Association in Türkiye (Reg # 7750444670).	
Head Office location	Mersin, Türkiye	
Total number of organisation staff	140	

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Sarah Kambarami
Second auditor	-
Third auditor	-
Observer	-
Expert	-
Audit Facilitator	Ezdehar Kanjo

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS:2024 Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit Cycle	First cycle
Type of audit	Initial Audit
Scope of audit	This audit covers the entire organisation, including humanitarian, development and advocacy work in Türkiye and Syria. The affiliated legal entities established in France (SARD Europe) and The Netherlands (Stichting SARD) are not covered within the scope.
Focus of the audit	The audit focuses on SARD's programmatic work in Syria and Türkiye, including direct implementation and projects undertaken in partnership with other actors.

1.4 Sampling*

Sampling unit	Projects
Total number of sampling units	9
Sample size	4
Total number of sampling units assessed onsite	3
Total number of sampling units for remote assessment	1
Sampling Unit Selection	

Random Sampling — onsite/remote	Purposive Sampling — onsite/remote
KARAMA II - ECHO, Syria - onsite	Protection Project – DCV, Syria - Onsite
Earthquake Response, Türkiye - remote	MAKANI – OCHA, Syria - Onsite

Any other sampling considerations:

In addition to the minimum requirement of 3 projects to be assessed onsite in Syria, an additional project from Türkiye was chosen to be remotely assessed. This was to ensure that the sample included programmatic work carried out in both locations of operation.

Sampling risks identified:

Due to security risks, the Lead Auditor did not travel to Syria. The audit facilitator, who was more familiar with the local language, context and security situation, conducted the onsite assessments with relevant training from HQAI and under close supervision of the Lead Auditor. Given the management of the 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	2025/11/10	Number of participants	23 (10F/13M)
Location	Remote	Any substantive issues arising	None

2.2 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
Head Office, Türkiye /Syria	2025/11/10 – 2025/11/13	Remote
Syria	2025/11/24 – 2025/12/11	Onsite
Türkiye	2025/12/03	Remote

2.3 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	**Male**	
Head Office			
Management	2	2	Remote
Staff	2	3	Remote
Projects			
Staff	3	4	Onsite and remote
Partner staff	0	2	Remote
Other external stakeholders	1	2	Onsite and remote
Total number of interviewees	8	13	Total: 21

2.4 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Group discussion #1, female children, Protection Project, Syria.	11	0	Onsite
Group discussion #2, mothers, Protection Project, Syria.	11	0	Onsite
Group discussion #3, male children, Protection Project, Syria.	0	15	Onsite
Group discussion #4, disabled people, KARAMA II ECHO Project, Syria.	1	5	Onsite
Group discussion #5, elderly women, KARAMA II ECHO Project, Syria.	12	0	Onsite
Group discussion #6, elderly men, KARAMA II ECHO Project, Syria.	0	7	Onsite
Group discussion #7, female heads of households, MAKANI OCHA Project, Syria	10	0	Onsite
Group discussion #8, disabled people, MAKANI OCHA Project, Syria	0	5	Onsite
Individual Interview #1, Community Committee Volunteer, MAKANI OCHA Project, Syria.	0	1	Onsite
Total number of participants	45	33	Total: 78

2.5 Closing Meeting

Date	2025/12/18	**Number of participants**	12 (5F/7M)
Location	Remote	**Any substantive issues arising**	None

3. Background information on the organisation

|	
3.1 General information	Sosyal Araştırma ve Rehabilite Derneği (SARD) was registered as an association in Türkiye in 2016 and recently also registered in Syria in January 2025. Programming is primarily focused in north-west (NW) Syria, with some additional programming in Turkey. SARD's vision is *A future in which all individuals and communities are self-reliant and thriving* and their mission is *We build resilience and self-reliance among individuals and communities affected by natural disasters and conflict while championing the localisation of humanitarian assistance.* There are also two other affiliated legal entities established in France (SARD Europe) and the Netherlands (Stichting SARD), primarily established to support international fundraising efforts. These two affiliated entities are outside the scope of this audit.
	SARD's work is community-based, human rights-based and area-based and is underpinned by values of integrity, independence, inclusion and innovation. SARD works in the sectors of Food Security, Non-Food Items, Shelter, WASH, Protection, and Early Recovery & Livelihoods. Additionally, SARD prioritises investing in the next generation of humanitarian leaders and advocating for the localisation of humanitarian assistance.
	In 2024, SARD's Annual Report recorded serving almost 280,000 unique people in Syria and almost 16,500 unique people in Türkiye. Total income and expenditure was recorded at just over USD 10 million (approx 80% for Syria programmes and 20% for Türkiye).
3.2 Governance and management structure	SARD is governed by a General Assembly of members who meet annually to approve strategic direction, annual reports and budgets, and to elect the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors provides strategic oversight and ensures accountability by working closely with the Director of SARD. There are currently five board members, three of whom

are on the Senior Management Team (SMT) and two external members. The Board has responsibility for setting the organisation's strategic direction, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and upholding humanitarian principles. SARD's Director oversees day-to-day operations and manages a multidisciplinary team across different locations.

SARD's headquarters (HQ) is currently in the process of transitioning from Mersin, Türkiye to Aleppo, Syria. At the HQ, the Senior Management Team (SMT) serves as the primary decision-making and coordination hub for programmatic and operational activities. It oversees strategic planning, program quality assurance, donor compliance, and external representation. The HQ is directly accountable to the Board of Directors and produces the Annual Report, consolidated Annual Plans, and contributes to the organisation's Strategic Framework.

There is currently also a Liaison Office in Damascus. This ensures compliance with national regulations, coordinates with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) and Syrian authorities, and provides oversight on legal registration and reporting requirements. Decision-making authority in this office is limited to liaison and compliance functions, while programmatic and financial accountability remains with HQ.

The Turkey Office, based in Gaziantep, maintains semi-autonomy for projects implemented from Turkey into Syria. While day-to-day operations and partner coordination are locally managed, strategic direction, resource allocation, and program quality assurance remain under HQ oversight and aligned with SARD's Country Strategies.

Project Offices located in NW Syria operate with limited autonomy focused on implementation and direct community engagement. They report to sector/programme managers at HQ and contribute to Country Annual Plans and monitoring frameworks.
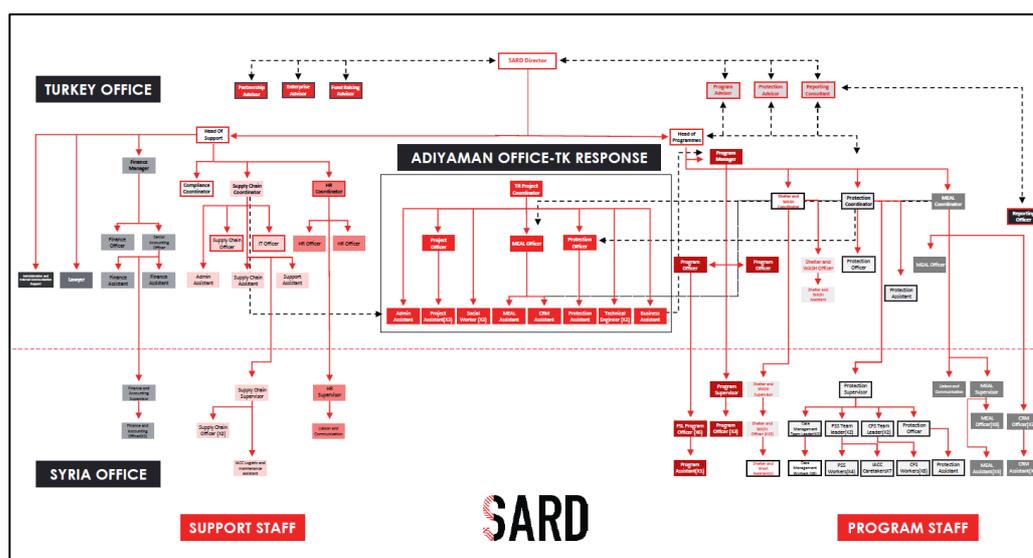
3.3 Work with partner organisations	SARD primarily implements programmes directly. Occasionally, SARD works with sub-implementing partners. It is estimated that appropximately 15% of SARD's programme portfolio is currently implemented by partners. This is often in the form of a co-implementation approach, with sub-implementing partners complementing SARD's own direct implementation efforts. This is either by working in a different geographic area to expand coverage, or by taking on a specific technical aspect that complements SARD's own technical expertise.

Due diligence processes are in place for SARD's partnerships, with a formal partner assessment process and standard partnership agreements which together cover many aspects of the CHS committments. Due to the predominant co-implementation model, regular monitoring and ongoing mutual support between SARD and their partners ensures effective oversight of their partnerships.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms	SARD has established many layers of quality assurance and internal control throughout the organisation, as described in the Internal Control Guidelines. Governance processes ensure organisational accountability and the Compliance Coordinator oversees organisational adherence to policies. The Finance Manual, and Procurement and Supply Chain Manual, set the minimum operating standards for how SARD manages donor funds, organisational resources, and assets. Compliance is ensured through internal reviews, management oversight, and annual external audits. Zero-tolerance policies on fraud and corruption and safeguarding are in place, supported by a Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy and Complaints Response Mechanism (CRM), reinforcing ethical standards throughout the organisation. Risk Management is the responsibility of Senior Management, with a focus on managing security risks. Legal risks are managed by the Legal Advisor and the Compliance Coordinator, and Financial risks are managed by the Finance Manager. However, there is not currently a cross-organisational process to pro-actively identify and manage new or emerging risks, and risks of negative impacts of SARD's work on the environment are not monitored as part of the current risk management approach.

The Programme Leads, together with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) team manage risks at the project level. Quality assurance at the programme level is also the responsibility of the MEAL team, with monitoring policies establishing clear frameworks for regular data collection and reporting, using indicators aligned with project goals and donor requirements. Evaluations and lessons learned workshops support the assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, although these often depend on donor requirements and donor funding, rather than happening systematically across the programme portfolio. Internal quality assurance processes are also in place to manage partnerships, with partner assessments and due diligence processes in place. |
| **4.2 Level of application of the CHS** | SARD demonstrates a strong organisational commitment to Quality and Accountability, with many of the CHS requirements integrated into existing systems and processes. SARD's local, community-based approach to programming prioritises dignity and meaningful, active participation of the people and communities they work with, promoting diversity and inclusion with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised. Protection mainstreaming approaches and safe data management practices are well embedded, enabling people and communities to access support that does not cause harm. As a National NGO (NNGO), SARD is rooted in the local context and is committed to advocating for the localisation of humanitarian assistance. SARD supports local capacities at the community level, is well coordinated with local authorities, and strategically seeks to strengthen the capacity of other local NGOs to respond effectively to people and communities in crisis. SARD coordinates well with other relevant stakeholders and co-implements effectively with sub-implementing partners based on equitable partnership principles. Organisational processes are also well established for complaints handling, MEAL, Human Resources and Financial Management.

The main area for improvement, which SARD is already working on, is establishing a more coherent organisational approach to minimising negative impacts of its work on the environment. Efforts are underway to mainstream environmental considerations into programmes, and there are many examples of ad-hoc initiatives to do this, however, it is not yet happening systematically. There is also not yet a strategic approach to minimising the environmental impact of resource use in SARD's operations. The environment also does not yet feature in SARD's oversight processes, such as internal controls, risk management processes or partner assessments. Other areas for improvement include developing more systematic ways to ensure unmet priority needs are referred to relevant stakeholders, local capacities are supported to anticipate and reduce risks of potential crises, and learning from feedback and monitoring processes is shared with people and communities. |
| **4.3 PSEAH** | SARD has established a strong organisational commitment to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH). The policy framework, including documents such as the Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, and Safeguarding Policy, outline a zero-tolerance approach with clear and accessible reporting mechanisms, a commitment to survivor-centred approaches, and disciplinary measures. Recruitment screening processes, |

mandatory induction sessions on the Code of Conduct and Complaints mechanisms, and ongoing refresher trainings support the implementation of the policies among staff.

At the programme level, budget and time is allocated to ensure information is systematically shared with people and communities about SARD's organisational commitments related to PSEAH and how to report a concern if needed. People and communities demonstrate a good understanding of how staff and volunteers are expected to behave, including how they should act to prevent SEAH. Complaints Response Mechanisms (CRM) are established in all projects, and communities understand how to report concerns and complaints. They trust SARD to respond appropriately if a concern was reported. SARD's protection mainstreaming approach also helps ensure that any potential negative impacts of programmes on people and communities, including SEAH, are identified, prevented and mitigated.

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.	2.8
SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure transparent information-sharing, communication and meaningful participation of people and communities in the actions and decisions that affect them. SARD's inclusive approach to programming ensures that activities are adjusted to meet diverse needs with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised. Systems are in place to ensure relevant information is consistently shared, including on PSEAH, in a range of appropriate formats that are accessible and culturally appropriate. SARD's programming approach ensures meaningful participation, both in decision making and through active engagement of people and communities in the project designs and implementation. Systems are also in place for ensuring external communications gain informed consent and are accurate, respectful and preserve dignity.	
Feedback from communities: Communities consistently gave examples of how project activities were designed to be inclusive for different vulnerable and marginalised groups. Communities consistently knew relevant information about SARD, the project activities, and about expected staff behaviour and how to give feedback or make complaints. All community groups spoke of the value and meaningfulness of their participation in the projects. Communities consistently felt that communication material gathered about them was respectful and preserved their dignity and everyone confirmed giving consent for photos, although some children stated that while consent was requested from them and their parents, they did not always understand why their photos were being taken.	
Commitment 2: People and communities access timely and effective support in accordance with their specific needs and priorities.	2.7
SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure their support is based on an understanding of the context, culture, priority needs and diverse vulnerabilities and capacities faced by marginalised people and communities. SARD's participative community-based approach ensures local knowledge and capacities are respected and processes are in place to ensure fair, impartial and transparent selection criteria are used to define programmes and the people or groups they support. SARD has processes in place to regularly monitor programmes with evidence of adjustments being made as a result of monitoring activities. Technical standards are applied using technical experts, cluster guidelines, and being part of sector working groups etc. Unmet priority needs are referred internally between the SARD teams and there is an established system for protection-related referrals, but a systematic process for referring other unmet needs to other relevant stakeholders is not yet in place.	
Feedback from communities: Communities are happy with the quality of SARD's work and feel that their needs and capacities are considered in the design of programmes. Communities confirm that they are engaged in monitoring and gave examples of adjustments being made due to changes in context or need. In some specific cases, selection criteria are not	

explained in detail so there can sometimes be a perception of the criteria not being fair by some community members, although this was not widespread. Communities feel that when they express other priority needs to SARD that SARD can not meet (due to funding or donor restrictions), they are not always referred to another relevant stakeholder.

Commitment 3: People and communities are better prepared and more resilient to potential crises.	2.4

SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure their support reinforces locally led actions and decision making. The community-based approach supports both formal and informal community leadership with consistent engagement with local authorities and community leaders in the design and implementation of programmes as well as establishing community committees within many of the programmes to strengthen local ownership and leadership. The engagement of communities from the start of programmes helps ensure that they contribute to decisions and feel ownership over the project resources. SARD's localisation approach ensures communities are engaged and active in projects with support also provided to other National NGOs (NNGOs). However, a systematic approach is not yet in place to systematically support local capacities to anticipate and reduce risks of potential disasters.

Feedback from communities:
Communities confirm being engaged in decision making and that community leadership is supported through SARD's work. Partners also stated that SARD is 'rooted locally' and 'respects local actors' and indicates that SARD is supporting leadership in the NNGO sector. Some communities voiced concerns about the long term positive impacts of some of the shorter term activities and most communities could not confirm SARD supporting them to anticipate or reduce the risk of future disasters.

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

SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure the organisation works in ways that protect the safety, security, rights and dignity of people and communities and to prevent all forms of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) by staff and volunteers. Protection mainstreaming is in place across SARD's programming which ensures consistent proactive identification, prevention and mitigation of potential risks to people at the project level. This is combined with a well-communicated and functioning feedback and complaints mechanism which ensures any actual negative impacts of programmes are addressed. Systematic processes are also in place across the organisation to keep data safe and communities trust SARD with their personal information. SARD has not yet established a coherent organisation approach to reducing negative environmental impacts of the organisation and its work. Efforts are underway to mainstream environmental considerations into programmes and there are many examples of ad-hoc initiatives to do this, however, it is not yet systematically in place.

Feedback from communities:
Communities can provide many examples of how SARD takes steps to keep them safe and prevent any negative impacts, including SEAH, from project activities. People and communities also confirm trusting SARD with their personal data. Most communities, however, do not recall SARD discussing how to minimise negative environmental impacts with them.

Commitment 5: People and communities can safely report concerns and complaints and get them addressed.	2.8

SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure any concerns and complaints are welcomed and acted upon in a timely and appropriate manner. SARD systematically plans and implements safe, accessible and appropriate ways for communities to provide feedback and report complaints, including child-friendly options where relevant. Communities' understanding of the Complaints Response Mechanism (CRM) is routinely integrated into existing monitoring processes although monitoring of communities' awareness of expected behaviour is not as systematic. Systems and processes are in place (e.g. with complaints logs, investigation tools and procedures, staff trained in investigations etc.) to manage, investigate, address and refer complaints as needed, while applying a

victim/survivor-centred approach. Sampled project documentation shows plans and budget allocated for CRM activities and active use of the CRM using logs/trackers.

Feedback from communities:
People and communities (including children) consistently stated that they know how to report complaints and feedback, understand expected behaviour (including PSEAH) and that they trust the systems that are available to be safe. Concrete examples were provided of how they regularly use the systems for providing feedback. Although the groups spoken with had never needed to report a serious complaint, they all knew how to report, and trusted that SARD would respond well and that they would be supported and protected if they did.

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

SARD has tools and processes in place to ensure a coherent approach to coordination with external stakeholders and to manage relationships with partners in a way that ensures the characteristics, roles and responsibilities of each partner are respected. Processes to ensure the responsibilities of each partner for the prevention of PSEAH are also in place for their joint work. SARD also has a strong approach to coordination with local actors (local partners, local authorities, community leaders, community structures etc.) and demonstrates consistent engagement in coordination structures with other stakeholders (clusters, forums, working groups etc.). Support to partners on quality and accountability commitments (e.g. strengthening their Code of Conduct, advising on PSEAH Policy etc.) is provided and the close regular interaction with partners enables the relationship to be regularly assessed and improved on an ongoing basis. However, SARD does not yet have a documented organisational approach to partnership which risks the partnership practices currently in place not being consistently applied in future partnerships, particularly if the portfolio of sub-implementing partners increases significantly.

Feedback from communities:
Communities confirm that, in general, there is no duplication of efforts and that SARD has good coordination with other stakeholders, especially with local authorities.

Commitment 7: People and communities access support that is continually adapted and improved based on feedback and learning.	2.2

SARD has established a coherent organisational approach for continuous learning and improvement. SARD's effective implementation of its CRM, together with regular opportunities for community engagement, ensures that feedback is regularly listened to and responded to. Disaggregated data is routinely collected which reflects the diversity of people and care is taken to minimise data-related demands. Processes are in place (e.g. Direct Observation Reports) to ensure that monitoring leads to adjustments and programmatic improvements. However, sometimes the standardised responses from official feedback channels do not provide sufficient information to satisfy those giving feedback and there is a lack of a systematic process for sharing learning (e.g. from monitoring processes or from evaluations) with communities.

Feedback from communities:
Communities are able to provide feedback and confirm that it is responded to, although some noted that at times the feedback is not in enough detail. Communities in general are satisfied that data is collected that reflects their diversity and that SARD respects their time by not collecting too much. Concrete examples were provided by community members of improvements made to projects based on community feedback. However, communities are not aware of broader learnings from Monitoring & Evaluation processes being shared back with them.

Commitment 8: People and communities interact with staff and volunteers that are respectful, competent, and well-managed.	2.7

SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure that human resources are managed effectively in a fair, non-discriminatory and transparent manner. There is a strong perception by all stakeholders (staff, partners, stakeholders and communities) that SARD staff and leadership promote a culture of quality and accountability. Human Resource policies that support staff safety and wellbeing are in place as well as adequate levels of support provided by supervisors. A Code of Conduct is in place and well known by all staff. A whistleblowing policy is also in place with

systems known among staff for how to report complaints if needed. Timely action is taken if misconduct is identified. However, the limited training budget can impact on the extent to which staff feel supported to fulfil their roles effectively, and it is noted by some staff that the whistleblowing policy may not be promoted as much internally as the CRM is at community level.

Feedback from communities:
Community members universally hold SARD staff in high esteem. They confirm that staff and volunteers fulfil their roles with the necessary skills and competencies, and that they act and behave in acceptable ways, in line with the organisaton's Code of Conduct.

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

SARD has established a coherent organisational approach to ensure that resources are managed efficiently, effectively and ethically. Financial systems are in place to ensure financial resources are managed responsibly and that SARD has capacity to meet its commitments. An ethical approach to fundraising and fund allocations ensures the organisation's commitments and values are not compromised. Asset management and stock control processes are in place to minimise waste and processes are in place to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption, and if cases are identified, appropriate action is taken. Systems for ensuring compliance and oversight are also in place. However, there is currently not a systematic or strategic approach to minimising environmental impact of resource use in SARD's operations and there is a lack of a formal organisational level approach to proactively manage risk beyond security and financial risks.

Feedback from communities:
Communities state that SARD manages resources well and they have not seen any signs of waste or corruption.

* 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**
2026-2.5: SARD does not systematically refer unmet priority needs to relevant stakeholders with the technical expertise and capacity to address them.	Minor	New	By the 2029 Renewal Audit
2026-3.2: SARD does not systematically support local capacities to anticipate and reduce risks of potential crises or disasters.	Minor	New	By the 2029 Renewal Audit
2026-4.2: SARD does not systematically identify, prevent, mitigate and address potential and actual negative impacts of programmes on the environment.	Minor	New	By the 2029 Renewal Audit
2026-4.5: SARD has not yet established a coherent organisational approach to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the organisation and its work.	Minor	New	By the 2029 Renewal Audit
2026-7.4: SARD does not systematically share analysis and learning from feedback and monitoring and any related changes with people and communities and other relevant stakeholders.	Minor	New	By the 2029 Renewal Audit

2026-9.4: SARD does not systematically manage and use its resources to achieve their intended purpose while minimising environmental impact.	Minor	New	By the 2029 Renewal Audit
Total Number of open CARs	6		

* _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

In my opinion, SARD 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:**
Sarah Kambarami	11 February 2026
	Bonn, Germany

7. HQAI decision

Final decision on certification:	☒ Issued ☐ Refused
Start date of the certification cycle: 2026/02/13 Next audit before 2027/02/13	
Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director: Désirée Walter	**Date and place:** Geneva, 13 February 2026

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	[x] Yes [ ] No
I accept the findings of the audit	[x] Yes [ ] No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative:	**Date and place:** Turkey - Mersin

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