

Tanganyika Christian Refugee Services (TCRS) Initial Audit – Summary Report – 2025/03/14

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Туре	Mandates	Verified
☐ International ☐ National ☐ Membership/Network ☐ Direct Assistance ☐ Federated ☐ With partners	⋈ Humanitarian⋈ Development⋈ Advocacy	⋈ Humanitarian⋈ Development⋈ Advocacy
Legal registration TCRS is registered association under 1		
Head Office location	ce location Dar Es Salam (Tan	
Total number of organisation staff		

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Jorge Menendez Martinez
Second auditor	Gertrude Dendere Chibwe
Third auditor	
Observer	
Expert	
Witness / other participants	

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS:2014 Verification Scheme	Verification
Audit Cycle	First cycle
Type of audit	Initial Audit
Scope of audit	The audit covers the whole organisation. The audit includes TCRS's Head Office in Dar Es Salam and all programmes and projects.
Focus of the audit	-

1.4 Sampling*

Sampling unit		Project	
Total number of Project sites included in the sampling		15	
Total number of sites for onsite visit		2	
Total number of sites for remote assessment		0	
Sampling Unit Selection			
Random Sampling — onsite/remote	Purposive Sampling — onsite/remote		
Aid to urban refugee and vulnerable groups - onsite		Resilience - onsite	

Any other sampling considerations:

Project selection was carried out as part of the Tareminet Group audit and the sampling rate differs from that which would be used in an initial Independent Verification audit (3 – 1 onsite assessment and 2 remote). The two projects selected do ensure that the sample covers the humanitarian, development and advocacy mandates.

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Sampling risks identified:

There is no sampling risk identified. The audit team has full confidence in the findings and conclusions of this audit based on the sample as outlined above.

*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	2024/09/23	Number of participants	4
Location	Dar Es Salam	Any substantive issues arising	None

2.2 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
Dar Es Salman, Tanzania	23, 24, 26, 27, 30 September and 1 Oct 2024	Onsite
Morogoro, Tanzania	25 September	Onsite

2.3 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	Number of	Onsite or	
Level / Position of interviewees	Female	Male	remote
Management	3	2	Onsite and Remote
Staff	3	4	Onsite and Remote
Stakeholders		1	Remote
Project Staff	1	1	Onsite
Total number of interviewees	7	8	15

2.4 Consultations with communities

Turns of augus and location	Number of	Onsite or	
Type of group and location	Female	Male	remote
Group discussion - female TCRS project participants – Morogoro, Tanzania	10		Onsite
Group discussion - male TCRS project participants – Morogoro, Tanzania		18	Onsite
Group discussion – mix group TCRS project participants – Morogoro, Tanzania	12	4	Onsite
Group discussion - male refugee TCRS project participants - Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania		2	Onsite

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Group discussion – male and female refugee TCRS project participants - Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania	1	1	Onsite
Group discussion - female TCRS project participants – Dar Es Salam, Tanzania	2		Onsite
Group discussion - female TCRS project participants – Dar Es Salam, Tanzania	2		Onsite
Total number of participants	27	25	52

2.5 Closing Meeting

Date	2024/11/06	Number of participants	7
Location	Remote	Any substantive issues arising	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

The Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) is a faith-based organisation created in 1964 by the Lutheran World Federation at a call of the Christian Council of Tanzania's churches to provide ecumenical support and assistance to refugees in Tanzania. From its inception until 2006, TCRS operated as the Tanzania Field Programme of the Lutheran World Federation Department for World Service (LWF/DWS), conducting humanitarian relief and development activities with refugees and marginalised communities. In January 2006, TCRS became an autonomous and independent Tanzanian NGO, registered as a Trust Association. Today, TCRS continues its humanitarian, advocacy, relief, and development work in Tanzania, representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Christian Council of Tanzania, and the global ecumenical network.

TCRS aims to empower vulnerable, marginalised, and displaced communities to achieve self-reliance and sustainable development, reducing human suffering and poverty. Its vision is to see empowered communities living in a just, democratic society, united in diversity, and enjoying the quality of life and God-given dignity. TCRS focuses on vulnerable, marginalised, and displaced (VMD) individuals whose livelihoods are threatened by natural and human-made disasters, with special attention to internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and disadvantaged communities in remote areas. Special attention is given to women, children, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living with communicable diseases. Currently, TCRS operates in 12 selected districts in Tanzania.

TCRS has four strategic objectives:

- 1- Reduce the suffering of refugees, internally displaced people, and those affected by calamities by providing timely and adequate relief and humanitarian support, including WASH, psycho-social, and other emergency services.
- 2- Reduce poverty among VMDs through capacity building and support for local initiatives, enabling them to increase capacities, generate income, fulfil basic needs, and achieve socio-economic security, human rights compliance, disaster risk resilience, and gender justice.
- 3- Ensure self-reliance by empowering VMDs to meet their basic needs and take control of their livelihoods without TCRS's help, through group formation, networking with stakeholders, and joint action in acquiring knowledge, skills, agricultural inputs, materials, equipment, access to finance, and markets.
- 4- Promote sustainable livelihoods by enhancing good governance practices, leadership skills, adherence to procedures and systems, and building social accountability

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capacities at the local level, enabling VMDs to participate in decision-making, express their needs, claim their rights, and hold government and service providers accountable.

According to its 2023 financial statements, total revenues reached US\$ 1.534.000, with expenses of US\$ 1.762.000 and a negative result of US\$ 248.680.

3.2 Governance and management structure

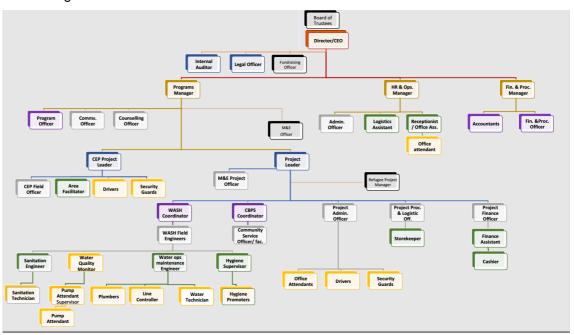
The Board of Trustees (BoT) is TCRS's highest authority, and it is composed of seven Trustees: four appointed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, one appointed by the Christian Council of Tanzania, one appointed by the Lutheran World Federation and the TCRS Executive Director, who serves in an ex-officio capacity and who will exempt himself on all matters relating to his employment by the TCRS Board of Trustees. They meet twice a year on an ordinary basis and when requested by the members of the BoT on an extraordinary basis.

The Trustees take overall responsibility for the running of the organisation, including responsibility for identifying key risk areas, considering and monitoring investment decisions, considering significant financial matters, and reviewing the performance of management organisation plans and budgets. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that a comprehensive system of internal control (policies and procedures) is in place and that the organisation complies with sound organisation governance principles.

The Executive Director (ED) is the organisation's legal representative. The ED is responsible for the overall daily management of the organisation in accordance with instructions given by the BoT. The ED represents TCRS externally and is accountable to the BoT.

The management structure is organised into three main departments: Programme, Human Resources, and Finance and Procurement. Additionally, TCRS has an internal auditor and a legal and compliance officer. The Programme Manager is responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring all programmes carried out by TCRS.

TCRS's organisational structure is shown below:



3.3 Work with partner organisation s

TCRS does not work with partner organisations to implement projects in Tanzania. TCRS is an implementing partner for for the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Norwegian Church Aid, UN Habitat, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ACT Alliance, among others, with which it has signed agreements detailing the responsibilities and commitments of each party.

TCRS has a Partnership Policy that outlines the principles and procedures governing its relationship and collaboration with other organisations.

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4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms

The Constitution and Trust Registration clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees (BoT). One of the responsibilities of the BoT is to ensure that TCRS's financial accounts are maintained and audited annually by a reputable firm. In 2023, Deloitte & Touche, a well-known audit company, audited the annual accounts. Their opinion is that the TCRS's 2023 financial statements give a true and fair view of the Trust's financial position.

The internal auditor annually evaluates and assesses internal control processes and prepares a report for the BoT. In the 2023 report, the internal auditor did not identify any high-risk or unsatisfactory control mechanisms. The internal auditor reports administratively to the Executive Director but functionally to the BoT.

The management team develop a risk matrix, where most of the risks, such as financial risks, programme risks, reputation risks and information and communications technology risks, are identified, and mitigation activities are developed to minimise the main risks. However, this matrix does not include risk related to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH).

Monitoring and data collection mechanisms primarily focus on obtaining information requested by partners or donors, reflecting a compliance-based approach to monitoring and evaluation. In line with this, the organisation adheres to minimum standards and guidelines set by donor and funding partner requirements.

Financial management and supply chain procedures are clearly described and well understood by the staff. The new Anti-fraud and Corruption policy details TCRS's commitment and mechanisms to prevent and address corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest, and misuse of resources; however, the policy has not yet been approved.

The human resource procedures outline the principles and processes for recruitment and selection, including induction, to ensure staff have a clear understanding of key policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct (CoC) and other policies related to professional conduct.

4.2 Level of application of the CHS

TCRS seeks to ensure the quality and accountability of its programmes, adhering to humanitarian standards.

Strengths identified in the audit:

- Impartial assistance: TCRS provides assistance based on community needs and capacities, considering diversity and including marginalised groups.
- Collaboration and coordination: TCRS effectively collaborates with network members, working groups, local and national authorities, and partners, ensuring their projects complement other humanitarian efforts.
- Promote local economy. TCRS's programmes promote early disaster recovery and benefit the local economy.
- Strengthened local capacities and improved community resilience, and programmes build the capacity of local leaders and organisations as first responders

The audit found thirteen minor weaknesses and one major weakness in 5.1, related to CHS implementation. The following are some of the most important weaknesses that require TCRS' attention and prompt action:

- No community-level complaints mechanism is in place, nor has consideration been given to involving the community in its design, implementation and monitoring.
- TCRS does not have a systematic organisational process to ensure a continuous analysis of the context and does not adapt its programmes to evolving needs, capacities and context.

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- TCRS does not provide information to the community on how the staff should behave or their PSEAH commitments.
- The organisation does not ensure the communities provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received.
- There is a lack of policy or procedures to ensure the safety of the staff.
- There is no identification of the projects' potential or actual undesired negative effects.
- Lack of a mechanism to ensure learning and adaptation of projects based on monitoring recommendations and conclusions.



4.3 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Strong points and areas for improvement	Average score*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	2.3

TCRS is committed to providing humanitarian assistance that is appropriate and relevant. TCRS has policies that commit to impartial assistance based on the needs and capacities of communities and consider the diversity of communities, including disadvantaged or marginalised people.

TCRS conduct informal context and stakeholder analyses through various means, such as attending local and regional meetings and forums, utilising local community governance structures and volunteers and whenever required by project funders. However, it does not have systems to adapt programmes to changing needs and capacities.

Feedback from communities:

Communities state that TCRS does not ask if their needs or capacities have changed in order to adapt the programmes if needed, and they do not recall any project adaptations.

Communities indicate they cannot influence the type of activities delivered by TCRS.

Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely

2.4

TCRS uses relevant technical standards and good practices in the design and implementation of programmes such as SPHERE. TCRS has a system in place to ensure that programme commitments are in line with organisational capacities. TCRS utilises the TAREMINET network and ACT Alliance to refer unmet community needs; however, TCRS does not have systems to refer unmet needs to other relevant external organisations.

TCRS conducts monitoring and evaluation activities mainly as required by the project funders; however, it does not have adequate systems to ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities and that evidence from the monitoring, and evaluation activities is used to adapt programmes.

Feedback from communities:

Some communities indicate that they experience delays in services with no communication of the reason for delays from TCRS.

Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects

2.3

TCRS' programmes build on local capacities and improve the resilience of communities, and the programmes enable the development of local leaders and organisations' capacity as first responders. Programmes also promote early disaster recovery and benefit the local economy. However, TCRS does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects in the areas of people's safety and security, sexual exploitation and abuse by staff and the environment.

TCRS does not have systems in place to safeguard personal information collected from communities, which could put them at risk. In addition, not all TCRS uses the results of existing community hazard and risk assessments and preparedness plans to guide activities.

TCRS does not consistently plan a transition or exit strategy in the early stages of its projects and not all communities were informed about the end date of the project or any exit or transition strategies.

Feedback from communities:

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Community members, including marginalised, members state that they participate in activities and are equipped to take lead roles in their communities.

Community members are not aware of project timelines or when programmes will stop providing the services to the community.

Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback

2.1

TCRS has policies for engaging communities that reflect priorities and risks they face; they communicate in languages and formats that are easily understood and culturally appropriate to the communities. TCRS' policies and programme documents also ensure that representation is inclusive, involving the participation and engagement of communities.

TCRS does not systematically provide information to communities about their organisation and expected staff behaviour of their staff. In addition, TCRS does not systematically facilitate communities to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received.

Feedback from communities:

Communities indicate they receive information in languages and formats they understand, and programmes are inclusive, and all community members can participate. However, communities indicate they do not receive information on expected staff behaviour from TCRS.

Some communities indicate they do not think their feedback is always welcome or that it will be considered.

Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed

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A major weakness has been identified at the level of commitment 5 due to the number and significance of the minor weaknesses identified on several inter-connected indicators in commitments 3, 4, and 5, which fundamentally undermine the TCRS's ability to meet this commitment. Specific indicators where weaknesses are identified are: 3.6, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6 and 5.7

TCRS does not have functional Complaints Handling Mechanisms as the mechanisms are still under development and have not yet been rolled out to employees and communities. TCRS' policies do not include the need to consult communities on the design, implementation and monitoring of Complaints Handling Mechanisms.

TCRS does not systematically refer out of scope complaints to a relevant party in a manner consistent with good practice and they do not monitor or report on the complaint handling processes.

Feedback from communities:

Communities indicate they were not involved in the design of TCRS' complaints handling mechanisms and they are not aware of how to access them. Communities are also not aware of how to report sensitive complaints.

Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary

2.8

TCRS is committed to the coordination and complementarity of its activities and ensures that activities create no duplication and are coordinated with national and local authorities and other organisations. Staff participate in working groups and coordination structures.

TCRS have a strong understanding of other actors working in their areas of operation; however, TCRS does not systematically document this information for all programmes. TCRS' work is complementarity to the work of national and local authorities and other humanitarian actors and is aligned with local policy and priorities.

TCRS shares knowledge and research through multiple channels in the humanitarian sector, mainly at a local and regional level.

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TCRS implements all its programmes directly and does not sub-contract or partner with other organisations to deliver its programmes; the agreements with the donor partners are clear, and each partner's mandate, obligations, and independence are respected.

Feedback from communities:

Communities state that there is no duplication of activities and that TCRS coordinate well with local authorities and other organisations.

Community members consider the assistance and programme activities to be coherent and well-coordinated, without unnecessary demands on their resources.

Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve

2.0

TCRS´ commitment to learning and evaluation is stated in its strategies. However, TCRS does not have an Evaluation or Learning Policy in place. TCRS is part of working groups and contributes to learning and innovation amongst their peers through various means; however, this is not systematic, and the organisation has no clear procedure to ensure the organisation contribute to learning and innovation amongst its peers and within the sector.

TCRS has tools to collect information from the community, and lessons learned and innovations are explained in reports. Sometimes, lessons learned and innovations are shared during regular meetings. However, this is not systematic, and staff do not always have access to innovations and learning from other projects.

TCRS draw on lessons learned and experiences when designing projects, strategies and relevant documents. Findings from monitoring, feedback and community complaints are discussed during the meetings. However, there no mechanism to follow up, record and learn from monitoring findings, recommendations and suggestions.

Feedback from communities:

Community members have not identified positive changes in projects overall, including those linked to feedback provided to TCRS.

Communities recall that TCRS has shared learning and innovation; however, it is not a systematic practice.

Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably

2.7

TCRS has effective policies, systems, and processes to ensure that management and staff are recruited, inducted, managed, and supported to ensure that the organisation has the necessary capacity and capability to deliver its programmes. TCRS has policies to ensure that staff are treated equitably and fairly and comply with labour laws. Staff receive an annual performance appraisal, and their job descriptions are updated; however, the human resources manual does not require staff job descriptions to be reviewed as part of the performance appraisal.

TCRS has a CoC in place, and its CoC establishes the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse, or otherwise discriminate against people. SEAH principles are reflected in its CoCs, including the duty to report allegations or suspicions of SEAH.

TCRS is committed to being a learning organisation and supporting staff to improve their skills and competencies, including their wellbeing; however, TCRS do not have a comprehensive framework of policies and procedures in place for the management of staff safety and security.

Feedback from communities:

Communities consider that TCRS' staff treat them with respect, dignity, and compassion.

Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose

2.5

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TCRS has zero tolerance for fraud, corruption, and bribery. TCRS has policies and processes to ensure resources are managed and used responsibly, including managing the risk of corruption.

TCRS manage the risk of corruption through several activities, including separation of duties in the procurement procedure, internal audits and external audits. The new Anti-fraud and Corruption policy has clear details of TCRS's commitment and mechanism to prevent and address corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and misuse of resources; however, the policy has not yet been approved.

Systems and procedures for designing and implementing programmes that balance quality, cost and timeliness are in place, and TCRS manages resources to minimise waste and the risk of fraud. However, TCRS has no environmental policy or protocol to ensure that the resources are used in a manner to minimise harm to the environment.

Feedback from communities:

Community members claim that TCRS does not waste its resources.

Community members confirm that they have not experienced any incidents of corrupt activities or extortion from TCRS' staff, that they are aware of their commitment to anti-fraud and anti-corruption, and that they know how to report if a case is detected.

5. Summary of weaknesses

Weaknesses	Туре	Status	Resolution timeframe
2025-1.3: TCRS does not systematically adapt its programmes to the changing need, capacities and context.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-1.6: TCRS does not have a systematic organisational process to ensure an ongoing analysis of the context.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-2.3: TCRS does not have a systematic process to refer unmet needs.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025 – 3.6: TCRS does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-3.8: TCRS does not have systems in place which safeguard any personal information collected from communities and people affected by crisis that could put them at risk.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-4.1: TCRS does not share information on expected staff behaviours with communities	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-4.4: TCRS does not systematically facilitate communities and people affected by crisis to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-5.1: TCRS does not involve the community on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.	Major	New	By Renewal Audit 2028

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^{*} Note: Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each Commitment, except when one of the indicators of a commitment scores 0 or if several scores of 1 on the indicators of a Commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-conformity/weakness at the level of the Commitment (in these two cases the overall score for the Commitment is 0).



2025-5.2: TCRS does not provide information on how the mechanism can be accessed and the scope of issues it can address	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-5.3: TCRS' complaints mechanism is not accessible to the community.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-5.4: The complaints-handling process for communities and people affected by crisis is not in place	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-5.6: TCRS does not ensure that communities are aware of the expected staff behaviour and its commitments to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025-5.7: TCRS does not systematically refer complaints that do not fall within the scope of the organisation to a relevant party in a manner consistent with good practice	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025 - 7.4: TRCS does not have an evaluation and learning policies in place	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
2025- 8.9: TCRS does not ensure the safety of its staff.	Minor	New	By Renewal Audit 2028
Total Number of open Weaknesses	14 Minor and 1 Major		

6. Lead auditor recommendation

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION

In our opinion, TCRS demonstrates a high level of commitment to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and its inclusion in the Independent Verification scheme is justified.

Name and signature of lead auditor:	Date and place:	
	Buenos Aires, 11 March 2025	
Jorge Menéndez Martínez		



7. HQAI decision

Registration in the Independent Verification Scheme:	☑ Accepted☐ Refused			
Next audit before: 2028/03/14				
Name and signature of HQAI Head of Quality Assura	Date and place: 14.03.2025			

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	I No
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:		
I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit	Yes	☐ No
I accept the findings of the audit	Yes	□ No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative: Samuel Mlay	Date and 22.04.20	-

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.

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Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to: • Independent verification: major weakness. • Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issue or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to: • Independent verification: minor weakness • Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to: • Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to: • Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.

^{*} Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020