



Towards recognition of the CHS and Independent quality assurance: show your cards

HQAI ANNUAL DONOR ROUND TABLE on October 27, 2020 13:00 - 15:30 CET

Kindly hosted online by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

This round table will prioritise an open dialogue across governmental and other donor representatives, strategic partners and HQAI. It will be the opportunity to share successes and frustrations, openly raise challenges and identify the levers we can mobilise to better deliver on some of the Grand Bargain commitments.

Moderator: Kate HALFF, President of the Board of Directors at HQAI.

Session 1 Show your cards	
13:00	Housekeeping, Welcome and Introduction: What is in it for the organisations? <i>Kate HALFF, Head Of Division, Cooperation and Coordination within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement at ICRC and President of the Board of Directors at HQAI.</i>
13:15	Suspension of the certificate: pressure and opportunity. <i>Matthew CARTER, Humanitarian Director, CAFOD</i>
13:23	Reducing duplication: where FCDO stands today. <i>Mary THOMPSON, Senior Social Development Adviser, Safeguarding Unit at FCDO</i>
13:41	Positive change through independent audits against the CHS. <i>Mille DØLLNER FJELDSTED, Head of Section, Dept. for Humanitarian Action and Civil Society, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, DANIDA</i>
13:49	Subsidy fund, trust and funding. The localisation agenda. <i>Rehema KAJUNGU, Deputy Country Director, TPO, Uganda</i>
13:57	What are we waiting for? <i>Philippe BESSON, Head, Multilateral Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC</i>
14:05	Food for thought during the break <i>Kate HALFF</i>
14:10	Break
Session 2 Combining our aces	
14:20	Looking at the cards: take-aways from session 1 <i>Kate HALFF</i>
14:30	Completing the picture, adding frustrations and levers, as well as Q&A. Opening the floor: <i>Nick van PRAAG, Ground Truth Solutions</i> <i>Tanya WOOD, The CHS Alliance</i> Discussion among donors around the table: <i>ALL</i>
15:20	Closing: Who is IN? <i>Kate HALFF and ALL</i>
15:30	End of the event.

Some context

Accountability

Accountability is not just a buzzword. The concept has received increasing attention over the last 20 years in the humanitarian and development sector and is closely linked to some of the Grand Bargain commitments (participation, localisation, reducing duplication). And it concerns all of us: the chain of accountability reaches from taxpayers to governments and donors, to aid organisations and - most importantly- to the communities these organisations seek to work with. Effective tools exist to put accountability into practice and link it to robust, but harmonised due diligence requirements:

The CHS

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (**CHS**) describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid. It is a measurable standard. The CHS is the result of a global consultation process and has gained significant momentum, notably at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and at the UK government-hosted Safeguarding summit in 2018, when 22 donor countries committed to demonstrate adherence to the CHS and strengthen measures for verification to that adherence.

HQAI independent quality assurance

As an independent auditor for the humanitarian and development sector, **HQAI** assesses organisations against the CHS to assure stakeholders, including donors that the delivery of aid is efficient, effective and is accountable to the people it serves. Professional auditing against the CHS brings value to the entire sector, for organisations, donors and for vulnerable and at-risk communities.

Donor Due Diligence (DD)

DANIDA and the UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) require CHS audits as part of their DD processes. In doing so, they have shifted their previous requirements towards compliance with the CHS. The effect is striking on the number of organisations that use HQAI services in these countries, compared to others. The Dutch Relief Alliance, Germany and the UK provide, to different extents, shortened DD assessments for organisations that have undergone CHS verification.

In addition, HQAI has demonstrated that, by adding only a few questions to a standard CHS audit, it can answer the totality of ECHO's Framework Partnership Agreement ex-ante audits. Should this approach be accepted by ECHO and other donors, millions of Euros could be saved for the aid sector as a whole.

The CHS is six years old. HQAI is five years old. Where do we stand with the role of the CHS and independent quality assurance in promoting quality and accountability, spearheading participation, safeguarding, facilitating localisation and reducing duplication of due diligence processes?