

2025

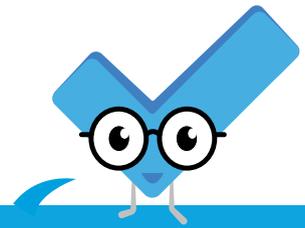
Annual Report
Figures,
achievements,
insights.



hqai
HUMANITARIAN QUALITY
ASSURANCE INITIATIVE

So you can **#TrustAid**

↓ What we do



MISSION

HQAI is an independent auditor in the humanitarian and development sector, providing professional, tailored quality assurance services that have a positive impact on the quality, accountability, efficiency, and equity of aid.

VISION & SERVICES

With its vision of an aid system that is trusted to efficiently deliver what affected people need, to agreed minimum standards, in ways that suit them HQAI collaborates with national and international aid actors, funding mechanisms and networks, as well as institutional donors to

- **quality-assure and improve the quality and accountability** of actors working with affected populations
- use independent assurance data as proxies in other assessments to **reduce duplication and increase efficiencies**
- contribute to increasing levels of **trusted and funded locally led aid**

HQAI's five strategic objectives (SO) support this vision.
The following pages illustrate achievements in 2025.



Check our website
for service details.

Strategic Objective 1

Provide robust and relevant quality assurance services to an increasing number of partners along the delivery chain.

2025 in numbers

93

aid actors now partner with HQAI for CHS audits.

2

new services launched:

AUDIT READINESS TRAINING & ASSESSMENT

ECHO EX-ANTE ASSESSMENT

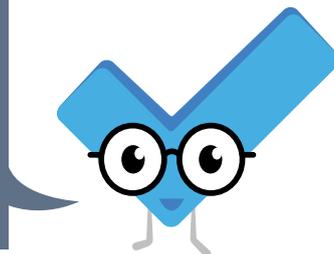


(note) UNICEF benchmarking audit conducted in 2019.

The diversity of HQAI CHS audit partners - status February 2026

+11%

average client satisfaction increase in 2025.



2 parallel CHS audit frameworks

CHS:2024 and CHS:2014

since 1 April 2025 and until all partners have transitioned.

Strategic Objective 2

Ensure more local actors are audited against the CHS, increasing their access to quality funding.

HQAI's audits foster more locally led action: local / national actors (LNA) are readily able to provide necessary evidence to demonstrate capacity, mitigate risks and therefore justify investment and trust by stakeholders. This advances the localisation agenda, more equitable partnerships and greater access to funding.

The [Facilitation Fund](#)¹ is a cornerstone of accessibility ambitions. Thanks to multi-donor multi-year support, the Fund allocated subsidies for LNAs to access CHS audits, and for individuals to train as HQAI auditor or audit facilitator in strategic focus regions, including Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Honduras, Lebanon, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen.

19 audit subsidies

10 auditor/facilitator subsidies

-20%
HQAI reduced CHS audit cost by up to 20% for LNAs in 2025.



Funders respond to sector-wide calls for efficient, principled approaches to localisation, reduced duplication and improved access to quality funding for LNAs. Discover HQAI's collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on the [A2A Project](#)² and the collaboration with Danish Refugee Council and the NGO-network in Burkina Faso, SPONG, on the [LoCAL project](#)³, co-funded by the European Union.



¹ About the HQAI Facilitation Fund



² Learn more about A2A project



³ Learn more about LoCAL project

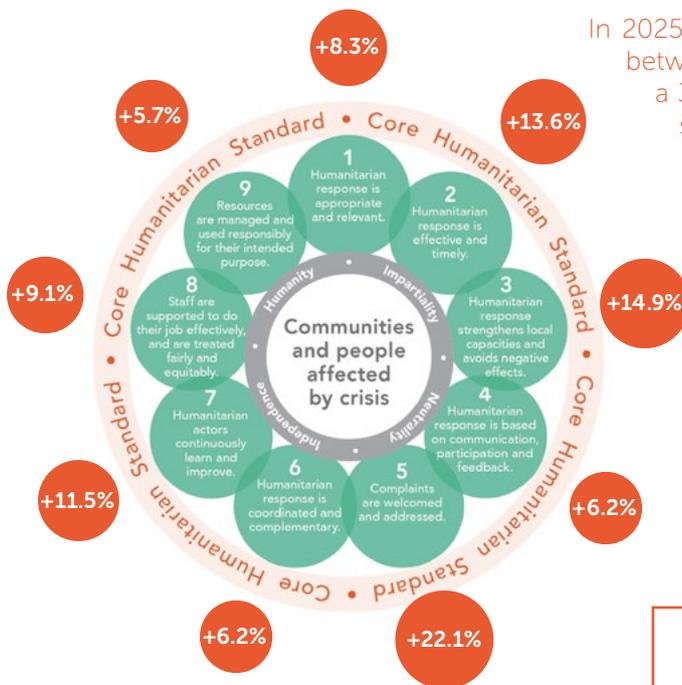
48%
of HQAI-audited partners are local and national actors working in diverse geographic, cultural, and political context.

Strategic Objective 3

Objectively demonstrate the impact that HQAI CHS audits and strengthened systems have on partners' quality and accountability.

The CHS reflects the sector's commitment to collaborative, needs-based, effective and people-centred action.

HQAI's CHS audits drive organisational learning and continuous improvement beyond compliance. Measurable progress throughout an audit cycle contributes to upholding the sector's commitment to principled and safe aid programming, including the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).



In 2025 HQAI measured the [change in average scores](#)¹ between the Initial Audit and the first Renewal Audit – a 3-year cycle – across 12 organisations. The results show that organisations improve on average by 13% across all nine CHS:2014 commitments. An improvement by 14.5% was measured under the PSEAH Index, demonstrating that audited partners make a concrete difference in safeguarding practices.

The analysis builds on earlier work conducted jointly by HQAI and the CHS Alliance and published as [Impact Study 2024](#).²

The aid actors audited by HQAI consistently [report positive impacts](#)³ of the audits on their overall organisational capacities.

+13% average improvement across all CHS commitments over the audit cycle.

+14.5% average improvement on PSEAH.



¹ Audit scores improvements



² HQAI impact study 2024



³ Read testimonials on HQAI website

Strategic Objective 4

Work with a variety of funders to make greater use of CHS audits within multiple quality assurance processes, including due diligence and risk sharing.

HQAI believes that a transparent, trusted and accessible system of independent quality assurance has the potential to transform the current aid system, saving time, effort and cost whilst ensuring that aid programmes efficiently deliver what affected people need, to agreed minimum standards, in ways that suit them.

HQAI CHS audits inform donor due diligence or partner capacity assessments in the domains of Safeguarding, Code of conduct, Complaints, Do no harm, Governance, Internal quality control, Quality project management, and Downstream delivery with partners.

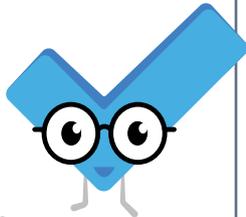
An increasing number of funders across the delivery chain endorse the CHS, request it to be measured, and [recognise CHS Verification in their due diligence requirements](#).¹ Some examples include the Sahel Regional Fund, UN-OCHA Country-Based Pooled Funds, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and Luxembourg, DG-ECHO, Norway, as well as diverse NGO networks.



↗ HQAI CHS certification mark: an icon of trust



¹ Detailed funder recognition to date



HQAI CHS audits inform donor due diligence or partner capacity assessments to

50-100%

HQAI continues to explore how assessments can be lightened for the various institutional and intermediary funders and their international and national partners.



Strategic Objective 5

Sustainably develop HQAI's institutional and operational capacity.

2025 in numbers

HQAI celebrates a decade of commitment to quality and accountability.

In 2025, HQAI welcomed five new members to its General Assembly and three supervisor auditors to its Secretariat team.

HQAI's auditor pool keeps evolving with consultants who have 10 to 30 years' humanitarian and development sector experience across diverse operational contexts, and bring specialisations in areas such as finance, procurement, Human Resources, management and community participation. Discover the [people behind the HQAI brand](#)¹, including auditors, staff and governance members.

HQAI has the privilege to benefit from unearmarked multi-year multi-donor funding which completes the sales of its services. As a not-for-profit entity, any income from services supports HQAI core costs and service delivery and/or serves to support local and national actors in accessing quality assurance services via the Facilitation Fund.

About our own accountability.

HQAI is an accountable, open and trustworthy partner which applies the internationally recognised ground rules of auditing. Independent external accreditations underscore the strength and integrity of HQAI's work.

In 2025, one complaint against a team of two auditors and one Third-Party Observation of Interest (TPOI) against an audited organisation were processed and closed.

Do you have a complaint against HQAI or a member of our staff or do you have a concern regarding an organisation audited by HQAI? Visit www.hqai.org or send an e-mail to complaints@hqai.org.

2 accreditations

ISO/IEC 17065:2012

ISAE 3000

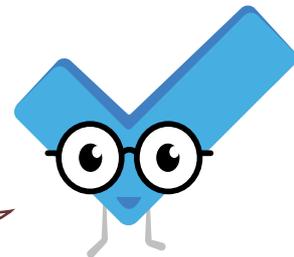


¹ HQAI people



Complaints page

10 years of commitment to quality and accountability





So you can **#TrustAid**

With the generous support of HQAI's strategic and funding partners:



Ch. de Balexert 7-9, 1219 Châtelaine (Geneva), Switzerland

www.hqai.org



HQAI is a not-for-profit NGO registered as a Swiss association.