

Joint Communication

UN OCHA To Pilot HQAI CHS Audits as Proxies for Internal Capacity Assessments

Geneva and New York, May 27, 2026 -- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI), and the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance (CHS Alliance) are exploring ways to reduce bureaucratic burdens and duplicative due diligence processes for aid organisations, while supporting the current drive for efficiency under UN80.

The three entities carried out a joint mapping exercise that identified a high degree of alignment between OCHA's Pooled Fund capacity assessment and HQAI's independent audits against the CHS. The analysis showed that **90% of the questions in UN OCHA's Pooled Fund's capacity assessments can be answered** in whole or in part by HQAI's CHS audits. Building on this, OCHA intends to pilot the use of CHS audits as proxies for its Pooled Funds capacity assessments, subject to approval on a country-by-country basis. HQAI and UN OCHA also intend to explore how OCHA's Pooled Fund capacity assessments can similarly serve as evidence for CHS audits. This approach aims to advance the entities' joint objectives of reducing duplication, increasing efficiency, and facilitating more equitable access to funding.

UN OCHA, HQAI, and CHS Alliance share a commitment to locally-led, principled, and accountable aid that meets the needs and respects the rights and dignity of people affected by crisis. The OCHA Pooled Funds¹ are committed to enabling timely, coordinated, effective and needs-based² responses, while the CHS³ provides a framework for organizations to demonstrate consistent adherence to these commitments.

HQAI and CHS Alliance welcome this recognition of the CHS audit process as a credible tool for assessing and strengthening organizations' capacity to consistently deliver dignified, people-centred and effective aid.

Why This Matters

Multiple mechanisms are used across the aid sector to assure the quality of work, including audits, evaluations, due diligence, and capacity assessments. These processes often collect the same information, creating duplication and "assessment fatigue" that drains resources from local and national actors (LNAs), international partners, and donors alike.

By piloting the mutual recognition of assessment information across the CHS Audits and OCHA's Pooled Fund's capacity assessments, the aim is to:

¹ Country-Based Pooled Funds Global Guidelines (2022)

² UN OCHA recognizes that people affected by crises "are not passive recipients of aid, but active participants who have the right to shape the assistance they receive" (OCHA, 2025, *Accountability to Affected People: An OCHA Evaluation (2022-2024)*).

³ The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out nine commitments to ensure that organizations support people and communities affected by crisis and vulnerability in ways that respect their rights and dignity and promote their primary role in finding solutions to the crises they face (www.corehumanitarianstandard.org)

Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance (CHS Alliance)
Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI)
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)

- **Accelerate access to Funding:** Support faster and informed decisions on who receives humanitarian grants.
- **Support Local Actors:** reduce the due diligence burden currently faced by national NGOs, which currently make up nearly 50% of the CHS Alliance members and HQAI-audited partners.
- **Maintain Rigor:** Ensure high standards for accountability and risk management remain intact through a verified, two-stage conversion tool.

A Drive for Efficiency

Accurate assessment of organizational capacities is essential for responsible management of aid funding and delivering effective outcomes for people and communities affected by crisis.

This initiative represents a concrete step toward efficiency without compromising the entities' shared values of principled, accountable aid. By recognizing existing investments that organisations have already made in quality and accountability, the system rewards transparency and takes a step towards a more coherent quality assurance system for the aid sector.

About the Entities:

- **UN OCHA** supports humanitarian organizations to respond effectively to the needs of people caught in crises, to understand and analyse their needs, and to mobilize international assistance. UN OCHA manages Country and Regional Funds that allow donors to pool contributions to support local humanitarian responses.
- **CHS Alliance** is a global network of over 300 humanitarian and development organisations committed to making aid work better for people through the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.
- **HQAI** is an independent, non-governmental auditor providing third-party quality assurance services for the humanitarian and development sector. HQAI has successfully engaged across multiple funder organisations to map assessment duplications and build trust in HQAI's CHS audit approaches.

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