



HQAI Facilitation Fund Policy

Supporting organisations to access HQAI quality assurance services

POL200 - HQAI Facilitation Fund - 2024-11-07

D-POL200 - HQAI Facilitation Fund - 2024-11-07			
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Nature of change	Removal of subsidy allocation criteria (now in PRO200); Revised composition of FFMC and Quorum ; Removal of Grants chapter.		
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If you would like to provide comments on this document or any aspect of our work, please send your feedback to: contact@hqai.org.

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Introduction

I. The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative

HQAI's objective is to improve the Quality and Accountability of organisations working with vulnerable and at-risk populations through the provision and promotion of meaningful and adapted independent quality assurance. Its services are intended to build capacity in the sector and provide consistent, measurable data in the delivery of quality action, thus improving principled, accountable, efficient provision of aid to vulnerable and at-risk populations.

To all its stakeholders, HQAI is an accountable, open and trustworthy partner which applies the internationally recognised ground rules of auditing, which are impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints. Our policies, procedures and tools for independent quality assurance follow relevant ISO standards requirements. HQAI's CHS certification scheme is accredited against ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

HQAI has developed robust tools to measure efficiently where an organisation stands in relation to the [Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\) on Quality and Accountability](#). Tools related to other standards may be developed in the future.

HQAI is committed to the nine fundamental principles of the CHS and implements them as far as they are applicable to its own activities.

These are:

- delivery of services that respond to the needs of users
- timely delivery of these services
- avoidance of negative effects
- transparency and participation in decision-making
- provision of safe complaint mechanisms
- avoidance of duplication
- responsible management of staff, including non-discrimination
- responsible use of resources

II. Scope

This policy applies to the management of HQAI Facilitation Fund, hereafter the FFund, established by HQAI to facilitate access to its quality assurance and training services for national and local responders.

III. References

The following referenced documents can usefully complement this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

GOV001 - Articles of Association

POL049 - Appeal policy

POL110 - Conflict of interest policy

POL114 - Third party quality assurance policy

PRO049 - Appeals procedure

PRO105 - Training and registration of auditors

PRO200 - HQAI Facilitation Fund Procedure

TOR200 - Terms of Reference for HQAI Facilitation Fund Management Committee

IV. Definitions

The following terms and definitions and those provided in POL114 and ISO/IEC 17000:2004 - Conformity assessment, vocabulary and general principles apply for the purpose of this policy, unless otherwise specified in the text.

National organisation:	Organisation not affiliated to an international organisation which operates in one or more subnational regions only in the country where it is headquartered or registered or is operational in a country neighbouring its home state if for any reason it has to be located away from its home state for justifiable security or business reasons.
Local aid worker / auditor:	Individual with experience in the aid sector, working with a national organisation, or resident in a country with HQAI audited national organisations.
Aid sector:	Sector of organisations working with vulnerable people and at-risk communities.
Subsidy:	Financial support to facilitate the access to HQAI quality assurance by a national organisation or to facilitate access to HQAI auditor or audit facilitator training by a local aid worker or auditor.

The Facilitation Fund

1. Purpose

1.1 The FFund is designed to:

- 1.1.1 subsidise national organisations that want to access HQAI quality assurance services, but for which costs would be a barrier;
- 1.1.2 support the development of local auditing capacity by subsidising the training of local audit facilitators and auditors;
- 1.1.3 develop, maintain and review sustainable subsidy allocation models; i.e. subsidy allocation criteria and rules that enable the access to HQAI quality assurance services

and trainings to a large number of new national organisations, auditors and audit facilitators;

1.1.4 through its subsidies, promote HQAI quality assurance amongst national organisations, and national audited organisations amongst international stakeholders.

1.2 The FFund does not support the implementation of measures to apply the CHS or other relevant standards.

2. Governance

2.1 The FFund is hosted within a specific department of HQAI.

2.2 The FFund Department has independent resources to ensure the activities below, independently of HQAI core budget:

2.2.1 the general management of the FFund;

2.2.2 adequate communication and promotion of the FFund;

2.2.3 advocacy to promote the FFund;

2.2.4 the management of projects supported or directly implemented by the FFund;

2.2.5 adequate due diligence whenever the FFund finances projects operated by third parties;

2.2.6 allocation of subsidies to national organisation and local aid workers or auditors.

2.2 It is managed by a FFund Management Committee (hereafter the Committee), appointed by HQAI's Board of Directors.

2.3 The Committee is composed of no less than three and up to five individual members reflecting the perspective of:

2.3.1 Donors or representants of pooled funding mechanisms;

2.3.2 National NGOs in the aid sector.

2.3.3 HQAI, through one member of its Board of Directors

2.4 The Committee collectively brings knowledge and experience which makes the FFund an impartial service to the sector.

2.5 The term of Committee members is four years, renewable twice, submitted to re-appointment by HQAI's Board of Directors.

2.6 Members are expected to participate actively in the Committee's discussions and decision-making.

2.7 Members who do not participate in two consecutive duly called meetings or email decision-making processes of the Committee will forfeit their membership.

3. Resources

3.1 The FFund is financed by:

3.1.1 Donations (private and public);

3.1.2 Surplus from HQAI if and when possible.

3.1.3 Any other sources as far as they do not compromise the independence and impartiality of the FFund.

3.2 Donors are publicly acknowledged and can declare in their public communications that they are providing resources to the FFund. Contributions to the FFund do not allow donors to imply that:

- 3.2.1 they participate themselves under any of HQAI's third-party quality assurance schemes;
- 3.2.2 the partner(s) they fund / support participate in any of HQAI's third-party quality assurance schemes;
- 3.2.3 make any declaration related to their level of compliance with the CHS.

4. Decision-making and avoidance of conflicts of interest

- 4.1 Members of the Committee who may have a real or perceived conflict of interest with the subject debated by the Committee must abstain from the discussion and any decision related to the subject in question.
Note: POL110 - Conflict of interest policy, signed by all Committee members, applies.
- 4.2 Decisions of the Committee require a quorum of at least:
 - 4.2.1 two members, if the Committee is composed of three members
 - 4.2.2 three members, if the Committee is composed of four or five membersNo official decisions or actions may be taken by the Committee without the presence of a quorum.
Note: Committee members who abstain from a discussion because of a conflict of interest do not count in the quorum, even if they are present in the meeting when the discussion happens.
- 4.3 The Committee strives to make decisions by consensus, defined as the absence of sustained opposition.
- 4.4 If consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority vote takes place.
- 4.5 If resources are available, subsidies are allocated at least twice a year.
- 4.6 Subsidies are attributed according to the subsidy eligibility criteria identified below (5) and the subsidy allocation rules & priorities as defined in PRO200 - HQAI Facilitation Fund Procedure, within the limit of available resources.
- 4.7 In making a subsidy allocation decision, the Committee:
 - 4.7.1 reviews the information provided by HQAI's Secretariat and ensures that the documentation required is complete;
 - 4.7.2 assesses whether the eligibility criteria under §5 are met;
 - 4.7.3 follows the subsidy allocation criteria & priorities identified under 6 below and in PRO200 - HQAI Facilitation Fund Procedure;
 - 4.7.4 ensures that the allocated subsidies fall within the budget ;

5. Subsidy eligibility criteria

- 5.1 Access to subsidies for third-party quality assurance services is open to candidates meeting the following eligibility criteria:
 - 5.1.1 Candidates must be national organisations. National organisations are defined as: Organisation not affiliated to an international organisation which operates in one or more subnational regions only in the country where it is headquartered or registered or is operational in a country neighbouring its home state if for any reason it has to be located away from its home state for justifiable security or business reasons.
 - 5.1.2 Candidates must be direct implementers or work through national partners.
 - 5.1.3 As a rule, the candidate national organisation's annual income must be higher than 1 million Swiss Francs (CHF) and cannot exceed 6 million Swiss Francs (CHF).

- 5.1.4 The candidate national organisation must have been legally registered for at least 5 consecutive years, demonstrate a relatively stable yearly budget, undergo annual external financial / statutory audits.
- 5.2 Access to subsidies for the training of auditors, internal auditors and local audit facilitators is open to individuals meeting the following eligibility criteria:
 - 5.2.1 For internal auditors: be in charge of the internal audit of a national organisation meeting the criteria in 5.1 above;
 - 5.2.2 For external auditors and audit facilitators: be vetted by HQAI Quality Assurance Team for their particular skills and the strategic need to develop local auditing capacity in a specific country or region.

6. Subsidy allocation rules & priorities

- 6.1 At the beginning of each year, the Facilitation Fund Management Committee (FFMC) shall determine the total amount of funds to be allocated for subsidies for third-party quality assurance services and for subsidies for internal and external auditors and local audit facilitation trainings.
- 6.2 Subsidy allocation criteria, rules and priorities are outlined in PRO200 - HQAI Facilitation Fund Procedure.
- 6.3 PRO 200 is regularly reviewed by the Committee to ensure that subsidy allocation criteria and rules enable the access to HQAI quality assurance services and trainings to a large number of new national organisations, auditors and audit facilitators.

7. Appeals

- 7.1 Applicants who disagree with the decision made regarding the allocation, or not, of a subsidy can lodge an appeal to the Chair of the HQAI Advisory and Complaint Board, following HQAI Appeals policy and procedure (POL049 & PRO049).

8. Compensation for Committee members

- 8.1 The work as Committee member of the FFund is on a voluntary basis.
- 8.2 Upon request, Committee members shall be reimbursed for their expenses incurred in the management of the FFund, notably travelling, food and accommodation, according to HQAI reimbursement policies.

9. Validity

- 9.1 The FFund was established on July 1st, 2016 by a decision of HQAI's Board of Directors.
- 9.2 The FFund's policy was reviewed on March 2017, April 2017, June 2019, November 2019, December 2019, December 2020, September 2021, March 2022, and November 2024 and will be reviewed further as necessary.
- 9.3 The duration of the FFund is open ended. It can only be closed by a decision of HQAI's Board of Directors.
- 9.4 Remaining available resources at the time of closing the FFund will be redistributed to donors, in proportion of their support in the last year of operation of the FFund.
Note: This clause remains subject to agreements with donors.