

HQAI Glossary

A

Accountability: the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power (CHS, 2014).

Accreditation: the “certification of the certifying body” by an official accreditation body, usually a government agency. This process ensures that HQAI complies with relevant auditing principles related to impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - confidentiality - impartiality -

Advisory and Complaint Board (ACB): the body of HQAI in charge of handling complaints made to or about HQAI and safeguarding the rules of impartiality, confidentiality and avoiding conflicts of interests in the work of HQAI.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - Board of Directors - conflict of interest - Facilitation Fund Management Committee - General Assembly - impartiality - Secretariat

Agreement Letter: document presenting the scope, coverage, process, indicative outline, estimated costs, payment terms, general terms and conditions for audit agreements. The AL has to be signed by HQAI and the audited partner organisation.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - audit scope -

Appeal: formal contestation by an audited organisation of a quality assurance decision made by HQAI about this same organisation. Find more [about complaints](#) in our POL049 - Complaint management Policy and PRO049 – Complaint Management Procedure.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - complaint - quality assurance -

Association : are generally entities that are set up through an agreement between a group of people or groups coming together for a reason other than to make a profit, e.g. a voluntary group or a sports club, with varying degrees of formality.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - Family organisation – Membership – Sister organisation –

Audit: systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining objective evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled. (ISO9000:2015)

Also see glossary entry(ies): - auditor - audit criteria - audit scope - evidence - finding - quality criteria - quality assurance scheme

Audit criteria: set of requirements used as a reference against which objective evidence is compared (ISO9000:2015) and the audit carried out (e.g. CHS indicators).

Also see glossary entry(ies): - audit - CHS - evidence - Key Action - Organisational Responsibility -

Audit finding: results of the evaluation of the collected audit evidence against audit criteria (ISO9000:2015)

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit criteria - evidence -

Auditor: person who conducts an audit.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - audit - registered auditor -

Audit scope: extent and boundaries of an audit (ISO9000 :2015). This defines the mandates, activities, programmes areas, entities, parts of the organisation (e.g. affiliates, members, regional hubs etc.) that are covered by the audit.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - audit - country programme -

B

Benchmarking audit: audit carried out by HQAI, for the purpose of establishing the degree to which the organisation being audited applies the standard (e.g. CHS) at a given point in time.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - audit - CHS -

Board of Directors (BoD): is the body of HQAI in charge of governing the organisation, responsible for setting the strategic direction for the Secretariat, for ensuring that the statutes are respected and for supporting HQAI in achieving its objectives, mission and vision whilst publicly representing the organisation.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Advisory & Complaint Board - Facilitation Fund Management Committee - General Assembly – Secretariat

Bridge: transfer from one HQAI quality assurance scheme to a different one (i.e. benchmarking, certification, independent verification) OR use the information of a CHS audit to inform the requirement of another DD assessment.

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit scheme - benchmarking audit - certification - certification audit - independent verification - independent verification audit - quality assurance scheme – reverse bridging

C

Cancellation: Voluntary decision by the certified organisation to retire from the certification process.

Also see glossary entry(its): - certification - certification mark - certification scheme -

Certification: is the independent and objective assurance that an organisation, or a group of organisations, meet the requirements specified in the reference standard (e.g. CHS). A certificate is valid for three years, providing

that continued conformity with the requirements of the standard is confirmed in the surveillance audits (i.e. maintenance and renewal audits).

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit - certification mark – maintenance audit – renewal audit

Certification mark: protected mark, issued under the rules of HQAI's certification system, indicating that confidence is provided that the audited organisations is in conformity with the reference standard (eg. CHS).

Also see glossary entry(its): - certification - certification scheme – conformity

CHS+ : Informing due diligence requirements that are not already informed by the CHS audit. In other words, it is a bridge to which some elements are added to inform the set of due diligence requirements.

Example: To fill the ECHO ex-ante assessments, HQAI collect additional data to inform the due diligence requirements that are not already informed by the CHS audits (e.g. on disposing of medical waste).

Also see glossary entry(its): - bridge - core humanitarian standard – ECHO ex-ante assesment

Claim: statement, symbol or graphic that indicates an organisation has been audited under one of HQAI's schemes.

Complaint: formal expression of dissatisfaction made to or about HQAI, related to its audited organisations, services or staff where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. Find more [about complaints](#) in our POL048 - Complaint management Policy and PRO048 – Complaint Management Procedure.

Also see glossary entry(its): - appeal -

Conformity: fulfilment of a requirement (ISO9000:2015). To conform means to meet or comply with the audit criteria (e.g. CHS requirements) in a systematic, robust and demonstrable way.

Also see glossary entry(its): - non-conformity -

Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS): The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. The CHS places communities and people affected by crisis at the centre of humanitarian action. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid. It is a voluntary and measurable standard. The CHS is the result of a global consultation process. It draws together key elements of existing humanitarian standards and commitments.

Corrective action requests (CAR): in the certification scheme, a minor or major non conformity lead to a request for a corrective action from the audited partner organisation.

Also see glossary entry(its): - corrective action - major non-conformity - minor non-conformity - non-conformity -

Closing meeting: formal part of the audit process that takes place after the onsite visits and remote assessments have concluded. Auditors present an overview of the preliminary results of the audit, observations

on areas of good performance, potential non-conformities or gaps identified during audit visits, as well as post-audit activities, provide information about the complaint and appeal handling processes.

Also see glossary entry(its): - opening meeting -

Conflict of interest: situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional or public interest. A conflict of interest can be real or perceived, but needs to be managed in both cases.

Corrective action: action to eliminate the cause of a non-conformity (ISO9000:2015).

Also see glossary entry(ies): - corrective action request (CAR) - non-conformity -

Country Programme: The unit used by HQAI to sample the sites to be assessed remotely or onsite during an audit. We broadly define a country programmes as a country where the audited organisation delivers activities directly or through implementing partners whilst recognising that precise definitions may vary between HQAI partners.

Also see glossary entry(its): - project site -

D

De-duplication: Process or objective, whereby the same information is not requested to organisations twice or more for the purpose of informing due diligence assessments.

E

ECHO - Ex-ante assessment: The ex-ante assessment is the assessment required as part of an organisation's Humanitarian Certificate or Programmatic Partnership application. It must be informed by a third-party auditor and submitted to ECHO by the organisation.

To be noted that there is only one ex-ante assessment template which covers both the Humanitarian Certificate (main assessment) and the Programmatic Partnership (main assessment and additional programmatic partnership application questions). While the assessment is scored following the same system for both status, the score itself will make a difference as to whether the organisation can access the certificate/partnership.

Also see glossary entry(its): - ECHO-Programmatic Partnership -

ECHO – Humanitarian Certificate/FPA: The Humanitarian Certificate (ex-FPA) is one of recognition proposed by ECHO for organisations to access funding.

ECHO – Programmatic Partnership: The Programmatic Partnership is one of recognition proposed by ECHO for organisations to access funding. It is one step higher than the Humanitarian Certificate.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Humanitarian Certificate -

Evidence: information that demonstrates the application (or not) of a standard requirement (i.e. audit criteria) and on which audit findings/conclusions are built. Evidence can be document-based, information collected through interviews and observation.

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit – audit criteria

F

Facilitation Fund Management Committee: manages HQAI Facilitation Fund, established to financially support organisations and individuals that want to access HQAI's services.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Advisory & Complaint Board - Board of Directors - General Assembly - Secretariat

Family organisation: refers to organisations consisting of multiple entities. There are usually a number of separate legal entities across different jurisdictions, and members generally operate in different locations, although they may implement some or even all programming jointly. They are usually bound together by shared name, brand and logo and will share the same Vision, Mission and Values (VMV). Family organisations are generally described using terms such as: Association, Federation, Confederation, Alliance or Umbrella.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Association - Membership organisation - Sister organisation -

Focal point: person from the audited organisation responsible for all communication with HQAI and for all key aspects of the audit process during the preparation of the audit, during the audit team's visits to the Head Office and country programmes, as well as leading the follow up after the initial audit.

G

General Assembly: is the body of HQAI that exercises the general oversight of the organisation and, among others, is responsible for approving the strategy and annual budget, appoint Directors of the Board and appoint and revoke members of the Advisory and Complaint Board.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Advisory and Compliant Board - Board of Directors -

Grant: fund attributed by the Facilitation Fund Management Committee to a project which objective is to facilitate access to HQAI independent quality assurance by national organisations. Find more about grants in our POL200 – [HQAI Facilitation Fund Policy](#) and PRO200– [HQAI Facilitation Fund Procedure](#).

Also see glossary entry(its): Facilitation Fund Management Committee - quality assurance - national organisation - subsidy -

Group entity: legal entity that applies for the group scheme, is the holder of the outcome (e.g. a certificate).

Also see glossary entry(its): - group manager - group scheme - quality assurance - quality assurance scheme

Group management/manager: person(nel) who manages the group entity and is responsible to ensure that the members satisfy the requirement of the group scheme, under the responsibility of the group entity.

Also see glossary entry(its): - group entity - group scheme -

Group scheme: the different policies and procedures that apply to a specific group quality assurance scheme and service (e.g. CHS certification).

Also see glossary entry(its): - group entity - group manager - quality assurance -

H

Harmonisation : Political decision of several organisations to use the same criteria for due diligence assessments.

I

Impartiality: presence of objectivity, making no distinction on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions. This is an HQAI auditing principle.

Also see glossary entry(its): - independence -

Independence: being autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that might put pressure on a decision by an organisation such as HQAI. This is an HQAI principle.

Also see glossary entry(its): - impartiality -

Independent verification: independent and objective assurance that one or a group of organisations are making demonstrated, continuous and measurable progress in applying the reference standard (eg.CHS).

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit - audit scheme - certification - certification scheme -

Initial audit: is the first audit of the cycle of independent verification and certification schemes and the unique audit in the benchmarking scheme. The objective of the initial audit is to assess the organisation's performance in the application of the reference standard and provide a baseline for the rest of the cycle, as relevant.

Also see glossary entry(its): - maintenance audit - renewal audit -

J

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K

Key Action: under each commitment of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), Key Actions describe the actions that organisation should take to consistently deliver high-quality programmes and be accountable to those they seek to assist (CHS, 2014).

Also see glossary entry(its): - Organisational Responsibilities -

L

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M

Maintenance audit: in the certification scheme, annual maintenance audits are carried out remotely with the primary objective of reviewing potential significant changes in the audited organisation and the actions taken to address non-conformities identified during the initial or renewal audits. The second maintenance audit is also used to prepare for the following renewal audit.

Also see glossary entry(its): - initial audit - renewal audit -

Major non-conformity: HQAI's score 0. Non-conformity that affects the capability of the organisation to achieve the intended results and leading to a major Corrective Action Request (CAR). This is only used in certification audits (see 'major weakness' for independent verification).

Also see glossary entry(its): - certification - certification audit - certification scheme - conformity - correction action request (CAR) - major weakness - minor non-conformity - minor weakness - non-conformity

Major weakness: HQAI's score 0. weakness that is so significant that the organisation is not able to meet the audit criteria (e.g. a CHS Commitment). This is only used in independent verification audits (see 'major non-conformity' for certification).

Also see glossary entry(its): - independent verification - minor non-conformity - non-conformity - verification - verification audit - weakness

Management response: before HQAI's Executive Director final decision on certification, the audited organisation must submit to HQAI a management response stating the corrective actions that will be taken to correct the minor non-conformities identified in the initial audit report.

Management system: set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organisation to establish and implement policies and to set and achieve objectives.

Also see glossary entry(its): - quality control mechanisms -

Membership organisation: Membership organisations allow people or entities to subscribe, and often requires them to pay a membership fee. May comprise a large number of volunteers compared to numbers of paid staff. They typically have a specific purpose, which involves connecting people together around a particular activity, location, interest or mission.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Assosiation - Family organisation – Sister organisation

Minor non-conformity: HQAI's score 1. Non-conformity that does not affect the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results and leading to a minor Corrective Action Request (CAR). This is only used in certification audits (see 'minor weakness' for independent verification).

Also see glossary entry(its): - certification - certification audit - certification scheme - conformity - correction action request (CAR) - major non-conformity - minor weakness - minor weakness - non-conformity

Minor weakness: HQAI's score 1. Weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the audit criteria (e.g. CHS commitment) but requires correction to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This is only used in independent verification audits (see 'major non-conformity' for certification).

Also see glossary entry(its): - independent verification - major non-conformity - non-conformity - verification - verification audit - weakness

N

National organisation: organisation headquartered in a low or medium HDI country, that is not affiliated to an international organisation, operates only in the country where it is based, or is operational in one country from a neighbouring State if for any reason it has to be located away from its field of operation.

Also see glossary entry(its): - international organisation -

Non-conformity: non-fulfilment of a requirement (ISO9000:2915). It corresponds to HQAI's audit scores of 0 (major non-conformity or major weakness) or 1 (minor non-conformity or minor weakness).

Also see glossary entry(its): - certification audit - CHS - conformity - major non-conformity - major weakness - minor non-conformity - minor weakness - weakness -

O

Observer (in an audit): any individual observing an audit who is not part of the audited organisation staff or the audit team and has no other function in the audit than observe the audit. They are not witnesses whose task is to report the performance of an auditor while conducting audit activities.

Also see glossary entry(its): - witness -

Openness: disclosure of appropriate and timely information about the audit, verification and certification processes and about the verification or certification status (i.e. the granting, maintaining of quality assurance, expanding or reducing the scope of quality assurance, renewing, suspending or reinstating, or withdrawing of quality assurance) of any organisation.

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit - certification - certification audit - certification scheme - independent verification - independent verification audit - quality assurance - quality assurance scheme - verification - second auditor

Opening meeting: formal part of the audit process that introduces the audit team to the organisation, confirms the audit plan and other relevant logistical details, and provides the organisation with information on the

methodology of the audit. The opening meeting is also an opportunity for staff to ask questions and seek clarification about the process.

Also see glossary entry(its): - closing meeting -

Organisational responsibility: under each commitment of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability organisational responsibilities describe the policies, processes and systems organisations engaged in humanitarian action need to have in place to ensure their staff provide high-quality, accountable humanitarian assistance (CHS, 2014).

Also see glossary entry(its): - Key Actions -

Overlap mapping: in the context of CHS audits: Identifying what requirements of a due diligence are already informed by the CHS audit.

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit – core humanitarian standard

P

Passporting: Act of de-duplication. Act of recognizing the CHS audits/robust external assessments as proxies of part or whole of one's due diligence assessments.

Also see glossary entry(its): audit – core humanitarian standard – de-duplication -

Project site: The geographic area where project activities are implemented by either the audited organisation or its partners. During the audit, a sample of project sites is selected from a country programme to be assessed

Also see glossary entry(ies): - country programme -

Q

Quality assurance scheme: the policies and procedures for third-party quality assurance against a specific standard. For example, HQAI has established policies (POL) and procedures (PRO) that describe how humanitarian and development organisations are audited against the CHS' requirements.

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit - management system -

Quality control mechanisms: a range of mechanisms that allow the organisation to make sure it is meeting its objectives, that resources are being used according to plans, and measure whether programmes are delivering the expected results. These mechanisms can be formal or informal.

Also see glossary entry(its): - management system -

R

Reinstatement (of the certificate): restoration of the right to use a certificate, following a suspension, provided the reasons for the suspension have been corrected in due time.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - certification - certification mark - certification scheme - suspension - withdrawal

Renewal audit: in the certification and independent verification schemes, the renewal audit takes place within the final year of an audit cycle and, as relevant, before the expiry date of the certificate. Renewal audits review actions taken to address non-conformities, the appropriate use of marks, re-assess the organisation's performance in the application of the reference standard and the continuity of the operational controls and quality assurance mechanisms of the organisation.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - initial audit - maintenance audit –

Reverse bridging: In the context of CHS audits only : Act of informing the CHS audit with the findings of a pre-existing robust due diligence (e.g. from a funder like ECHO).

Also see glossary entry(ies): audits - bridge – core humanitarian standard

Risk-based approach: approach adopted by HQAI in its audits and consisting of adopting a methodology primarily focused on the inherent risks involved in the activities or systems of an organisation. It looks at how risk is being managed through internal and operational controls of the organisation (internal quality controls).

S

Secretariat (of HQAI): the body responsible for managing HQAI's operations and activities. It coordinates and quality-controls the audits, takes audit decisions, supports the audited partners throughout the process, trains new auditors, develops new services, cooperates with strategic partners, contributes to learning in the sector, raises funds, etc.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - Advisory and Complaint Board - Board of Directors - General Assembly - Facilitation Fund Management Committee -

Short notice audit (SNA): audit that happens outside the normal cycle of annual surveillance audits in the certification scheme and triggered when HQAI becomes aware of a situation that may constitute a breach in the compliance with the standard. The audit is done with short-notice.

Sister organisation: these are separate and independent organisations that have ties and associations to each other (or to a founding entity) but are not considered as family organisations in a formal sense.

Also see glossary entry(its): - Association - Family organisation – Membership organisation -

Subsidy: Financial support to facilitate the access to HQAI quality assurance by a national organisation or to facilitate access to training by a local auditor. Find more about subsidies in our POL200 – HQAI Facilitation Fund Policy and PRO200– HQAI Facilitation Fund Procedure.

Also see glossary entry(its): - grant - national organisation - quality assurance -

Suspension (of a certificate): temporary action of suspension of the certificate of an organisation that does not respond to the certification criteria ; during this time the organisation can implement corrective actions that will lead to the reinstatement of its certificate.

Also see glossary entry(its): - audit criteria - certification - conformity - reinstatement - withdrawal -

T

Third-party conformity assessment: independent demonstration that the requirements of a standard (eg CHS) are fulfilled (or not). HQAI conformity assessment activities include independent verification, certification and benchmarking.

Also see glossary entry(its): - benchmarking audit - certification - certification scheme - independent verification -

U

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V

Verification: See 'independent verification'

W

Weakness: non-fulfilment of a requirement (ISO9000:2915). It corresponds to HQAI's audit scores of 0 (major weakness) or 1 (minor weakness). The concept weakness is used only in the independent verification scheme.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - major weakness - minor weakness - non-conformity -

Withdrawal (of a certificate): Measure that normally follows a suspension by which the certificate is nullified. A certificate that is withdrawn cannot be reinstated.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - certification - conformity - reinstatement - suspension -

Witness: any person participating in an audit whose role is to monitor and evaluate the performance of an auditor.

Also see glossary entry(ies): - observer -

Y

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Z

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Acronyms

ACB	Advisory and Complaint Board
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AP	Affected Population
BoD	Board of Directors
CAR	Corrective action request; minor, major
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
CHSA	CHS Alliance
Col	Conflict of Interest
CP	Country programme (<u>not</u> programme site)
CPP	Child Protection Policy
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming
DANIDA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark
DD	Due diligence
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Gbv	Gender Based Violence
GDPR	EU General Data Protection Regulation
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
GHT	Global Humanitarian Team
HAP International	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International
HEAT	Hostile Environment Awareness Training
HIT	Humanitarian Indicator Tracker
HO	Head office (<u>not</u> headquarter)
IA	Initial audit

IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
MA	Maintenance audit
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PS	Project site (as opposed to country programme)
PSEA	Prevention on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSN	People with special needs
QA	Quality assurance
RA	Renewal audit
RTR	Real Time Reviews
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SNA	Short-notice audit
FF	Facilitation Fund
FFMC	Facilitation Fund Management Committee
SMT	Senior Management Team
SOPS	Standard Operation Procedures
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene