Call for applications to HQAI's pool of auditors

HQAI is a young and rapidly growing NGO. Since 2016, more than 40 organisations have used HQAI’s services and we contracted 27 independent auditors from 14 different countries to create a significant auditing capacity. In 2019 alone the audits led our auditors to more than 20 countries in Asia, Africa, South America and Europe.

HQAI’s business projections for the next five years are promising and we are looking to increase our global pool of registered auditors.

Are you an independent consultant? Do you have experience in quality assurance in the humanitarian sector or against other ethical standards?

Read more about what it takes - and what it brings - to join our dynamic team of auditors.

1. About HQAI

HQAI provides organisations with third-party quality assurance services grounded in feedback from vulnerable and at-risk people and communities. In other words: HQAI verifies that organisations work according to defined standards from the head office to the field. HQAI’s 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.

Professional independent quality-assurance is generally considered the most robust means to generate a reliable, objective assessment of the extent to which a standard is applied. It benefits the affected populations, the audited organisations, the donors and the entire sector.

To all its stakeholders, HQAI is an accountable, open and trustworthy partner, which applies the internationally recognised ground rules of auditing that are impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints. Our policies, procedures and tools for independent quality assurance follow relevant ISO standards requirements.

2. What does it mean to be an auditor with HQAI?

Auditors are the backbone of HQAI and often its most visible representatives. We value their work and are very attentive to their recruitment and training process. We operate with a pool of independent auditors who are registered with HQAI. This means that they have successfully gone through HQAI-specific training (see chapter 4).

Auditors conduct third-party audits as per HQAI’s independent quality assurance procedures and the requirements of the applicable standards. Currently, HQAI works with the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). Tools related to other standards may be developed in the future.
Auditors are responsible to collect and analyse sufficient information to generate objective and impartial conclusions. They provide recommendations whether or not certification (or registration under the verification scheme) should be granted. This process happens in very close cooperation with HQAI’s quality assurance team, which is responsible for the control of the quality of audits and reports.

When they have acquired enough experience, registered auditors become senior auditors and have the authority for the management, control and performance of auditing activities. Senior auditors also assist in the training of new auditors.

Auditors working with HQAI are active members of the humanitarian and development ecosystem. They have unique opportunities to thoroughly assess organisations of different sizes and types, in various contexts, from the head office to the field. Auditors travel to different countries and locations for the field visits of the audits.

HQAI has security policies in place and offers its auditors a very comprehensive travel and risk insurance.

Our auditors are a pool of qualified professionals from different backgrounds and different experience as auditors and/or in the humanitarian and development sector. HQAI offers regular opportunities for joint auditors meetings (virtual and face-to-face) to foster exchange and mutual learning. In addition to this peer support, HQAI’s quality assurance team offers constant support during audits and beyond and conducts regular quality-control to ensure each one remains up-to-speed.

You can find summary information on projected auditor revenues in Annex 1.

3. Required Auditor Profile

Qualities:

The attitude and performance of auditors strongly influence HQAI’s image and the professionalism of its services. A number of essential qualities are therefore critical in the selection process. An auditor should be:

- Ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet;
- Open-minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view;
- Diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people;
- Perceptive and observant, i.e. instinctively aware of and able to understand situations;
- Decisive, i.e. reaches timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis;
- Impartial and objective, i.e. ability to make unbiased audit observations and conclusions.
- Professional, i.e. exhibiting a courteous, conscientious and generally business-like conduct in the workplace;
Experience:
Auditors with HQAI should have the following work experience:

- At least 10 years work experience in the humanitarian sector in strategic levels implementing quality or accountability management systems or 8 years as an auditor in ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 37001, institutional donors due diligence assessments and other relevant quality management system standards.

- In principle, auditors need to be able to prove their status as independent consultant.

- We will request candidates to provide two credentials from precedent employment positions or consulting missions.

HQAI is currently developing its capacity to audit against new sets of standards and core donors due diligence criteria. Candidacies of consultants with proven financial auditing experience will be given priority. Experience with DFID, DANIDA, ECHO, assessments would be a plus.

Skills:
We require auditors to have the adequate skills to:

- Apply audit principles, procedures and techniques;

- Plan and organise their work effectively so as to conduct the audit within the agreed time schedule;

- Prioritise and focus on matters of significance while collecting information through effective interviewing, listening, observing and reviewing documents, records and data;

- Understand the appropriateness and consequences of using sampling techniques for auditing;

- Verify the accuracy of collected information, and ensure the sufficiency and appropriateness of audit evidence to support audit findings and conclusions;

- Assess those factors that can affect the reliability of the audit findings and conclusions;

- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders involved.

Furthermore, applicants in the training path must be highly proficient in spoken and written English. French, Spanish, Arabic and other languages are highly valued.

4. From now to your registration as HQAI auditor
Becoming a registered auditor is a multistep process.

- Auditors must demonstrate their qualification and experience in the humanitarian and/or auditing sectors to apply for HQAI training.
• If accepted, candidates go through the trainings (e-module + face-to-face training) and are required to take several tests which are evaluated by HQAI’s quality assurance team and trainers. Only those who pass the evaluations at a sufficient level are accepted to become registered auditors for HQAI and continue their field training under the supervision of an HQAI senior auditor. While we do our utmost to support candidates, we cannot guarantee that all will be successful. The decision of HQAI is final.

4.1 What is the training path to become an HQAI registered auditor?

1. Send a 5 minutes video explaining why you are interested in becoming an HQAI auditor, as well as CV and two credentials from previous employment positions or consultancy.

2. Provide proof of successful completion of an internationally recognised ISO 19011 Lead Auditor course.

We recommend the following course (if you want to use another training please check with HQAI if it would be accepted):
https://www.sae.org/learn/professional-development/caliso/iso-19011-2011-auditor-training

Note that proven experience as management system auditor can be taken into account in replacement of this requirement.

3. Take an online introductory course on the CHS. You can find the course here:
https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=260

Proof of successful completion of the training will be required for registration to HQAI’s e-learning module. If you deem your past experience satisfies this requirement, please contact us.

4. Take an HQAI distance training (e-learning) that delivers essential knowledge and skills required to become an auditor for HQAI (please see chapter 4.2 for more information)

Successful completion of the training will be required for registration to HQAI’s face-to-face auditor training.

5. Successfully complete a face-to-face auditor training, delivered by HQAI. You will be continuously evaluated and a final test has to be passed at the end of the training (see chapter 4.3).
6. Successfully put your training into practice by taking an active part in at least two CHS audits for HQAI, under the supervision of an experienced HQAI senior auditor. The senior auditors observe and assess your performance during these two audits and report back to HQAI.

4.2. Details of the e-learning module

When can I access the e-learning and take the test?

Upon registration in the training path, you are given access to the e-learning module (available in May 2020). The e-learning module should take you 8 hours to complete and finishes with a validation test.

What do you learn?

The course provides a comprehensive understanding of how to conduct a professional third-party audit in the humanitarian and development sector, in alignment with ISO 19011:2011, Guidelines for auditing management systems.

You will learn the key principles of effective audits and understand the knowledge and skills required to conduct a full audit against the CHS in accordance with HQAI procedures.

Main contents:

- Basic concepts of auditing in line with ISO 19011 “Guidelines for auditing management systems”
- Introduction to the specific tools for HQAI audits
- Effective collection of information
- Communicating results and reporting efficiently
- Post-Audit management

At the end of the module you are asked to take a test. Only applicants who have obtained satisfactory results (80% and above) can register for the face-to-face training.

Fees

The fee for the e-learning module is 370 CHF. An invoice is sent upon registration. Admission to the e-learning platform is only granted to applicants who have paid the fee.

4.3 Details on the face-to-face auditor training

A residential training takes place after successful completion of the previous steps of the training. The four-days face-to-face training builds on the knowledge already acquired in the e-learning module, develops some key practical aspects of auditing methodologies and puts learnings into practice through case studies, group work and exercises. The tutors are senior HQAI auditors and bring real-life auditing experience into the training.
Course content

- Preparing a successful audit
- Evidence-based and risk-based approaches and techniques
- Collection, review and analysis of evidence
- Techniques of interview, focus groups and sampling of documents
- Interpretation of the standard (CHS)
- Reporting on initial and surveillance audits
- Case studies and practical exercises

You will be tested during the training through the simulation of a real audit. This is the opportunity to assess your ability to put knowledge into practice, your writing and reporting skills, and the ability to communicate clear findings and conclusions based on facts.

After successfully completing this training you will be registered as HQAI auditor. This allows you to be enrolled in real-life audits under the supervision of senior auditors. Once you have acquired sufficient experience and skills you will become a senior auditor able to lead audits independently.

Fee of the residential face-to-face training:

The fee for the face-to-face residential training is 1'740 CHF.

This fee also covers:

- Lodging and subsistence at the training venue, near Geneva, Switzerland.
  - Hotel room for 3 nights
  - Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Training materials

What is not included in the fee?

- Flights, transport to and from the training location
- Extras at the hotel and during the stay
- Travel-related cost, e.g. VISA, personal insurance

4.4 Summary cost of the training path

1. ISO19011 e-learning: 199 USD
2. HQAI E-learning module: 370 CHF
3. Face-to-face training: 1’740 CHF

If costs are a barrier, please contact HQAI secretariat.
5. Registration questions and contact

If you wish to register in the training, or have questions on the requirements, profiles or administrative issues, please reach out to HQAI’s Head of Quality Assurance:

Elissa Goucem
E-Mail: egoucem@hqai.org

Registrations are accepted until May 15th, 2020.
The final test of the e-learning should be taken before June 10th.
Confirmation of the registration in the face-to-face training should be expected at the latest on the 30th of June 2020.

If you are interested, check out who our current auditors are. Every profile comes with a short bio and background information: http://hqai.org/auditors/
Annex 1: What are the revenue expectations for HQAI registered auditors?

When mandated by HQAI, auditors and auditors in training are paid according to the following rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Fee (CHF/day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered auditor (2 first supervised training audits)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior auditor (3 first supervised audits, according to performance)</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior auditor</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The time involved for audits differs depending on the size and complexity of the organisation that is audited, but generally varies between 15 and 30 work days over 3 to 8 months. Travel expenses are paid/reimbursed by HQAI.

**HQAI cannot guarantee a fixed number of audits per year.** But auditors usually participate in two to four audits per year. They are expected to undertake 2 audits for HQAI each year to maintain their registration - compulsory.