

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

One core standard with nine commitments

Many organisations and individuals are typically involved in a humanitarian response. Some common elements and ways of working are therefore useful for promoting an effective response. Without a common approach, outcomes may be inconsistent and unpredictable.

The Core Humanitarian Standard is a critical element of this approach. It is composed of nine commitments to crisis-affected people on behalf of the humanitarian sector, promoting greater quality and accountability in humanitarian response: It applies at the response level and at the programme level and applies to all phases of a response.

The standard also addresses organisational responsibilities, so that humanitarian organisations have the capacity to deliver against these commitments.

The nine commitments are not intended to correspond to any particular phase of the programme cycle. Some are more relevant to a certain phase of the cycle, while others are intended to apply throughout all phases.

The Core Humanitarian Standard, along with the Humanitarian Charter and Protection Principles, form a strong foundation within the Sphere Handbook and support all technical standards. Together they provide the ethical, legal and practical framework for humanitarian work, along with the commitments and processes which contribute to quality and accountable humanitarian response. Throughout the Handbook, there are cross-references made between the technical chapters and the foundational section.

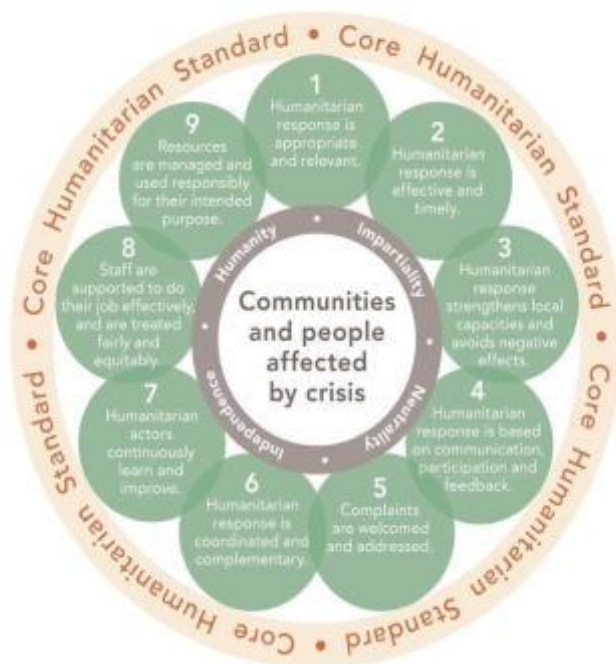
More detailed information on this standard, including resources to help users apply it in practice, can be found at www.corehumanitarianstandard.org.

A unique structure

Developed through a collective effort of the humanitarian sector to bring several core standards together into a single harmonised framework, the Core Humanitarian Standard is structured differently from the minimum standards in the Handbook.

People affected by crisis are the best judges of changes in their lives. Accordingly, this standard consists of nine commitments that describe what people affected by a crisis can expect from a humanitarian response.

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability



Each Commitment concentrates on a specific aspect of response, which taken together forms a solid approach to effective and accountable humanitarian action. Some elements cut across all the commitments, such as the importance of communication with affected people.

Each of these nine commitments is supported by the components described in Table 1.

TABLE1: Structure of the Core Humanitarian Standard Commitments

Support for each Commitment	Overview
Quality criterion	Describes the expected result of implementing the key actions and organisational responsibilities
Key actions	Describe what staff engaged in humanitarian action should do to be accountable and consistently deliver high-quality programmes
Organisational requirements	Define the policies, processes and systems that organisations should use to support the implementation of the Key Actions and embed quality within the organisation.
Performance indicators	Measure progress in meeting the standard, drive learning and improvement, and allow for comparison across time and location.
Additional guidance notes (What else I need to know)	Provide additional support in applying the Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities
Guiding questions	Tool in appendix to chapter to support planning, review, evaluation.
References	Provide additional learning on specific topics.

The result of a collective review

The Core Humanitarian Standard is unique in the way it was developed to bring similar existing standards together into a single harmonised framework.

The standard was first published in 2014 after a 12 month, three-stage consultation process. These broad consultations identified three key expectations that a single core standard needs would meet:

- re-affirm that crisis-affected communities and people are at the centre of humanitarian action;
- be founded on humanitarian principles; and
- be verifiable.

A Management Committee was established to oversee the development of a draft standard drawing on the contributing tools (Sphere Core Standards, HAP 2010 Standard on Accountability and Quality Management and the People In Aid Code of Good Practice). A technical advisory group piloted and validated this draft standard in the field. The three organisations jointly launched the Core Humanitarian Standard in December 2014. Since 2015, Sphere, Groupe URD and the CHS Alliance collectively manage the copyright of the standard. Since then, an increasing number of NGOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent family members, United Nations agencies, and donors have adopted it. A Steering Committee composed of these three organisations, the IFRC, the UN, and a southern-based regional NGO was established in 2017.

CHS Commitment 1

Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate to their needs.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant.

Performance indicators

1. Communities and people affected by crisis consider that the response takes account of their specific needs, culture, and preferences.
2. The assistance and protection provided correspond with assessed risks, vulnerabilities and needs.
3. The response considers the capacities, skills and knowledge of people requiring assistance and protection.

<p>KA 1.1</p>	<p>Conduct a systematic, objective and ongoing assessment of the context and stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and analysis is a process, not a single event. As time allows, in-depth analysis should be carried out. The needs and capacities of affected communities should not be assumed but identified through assessments that engage them in an ongoing discussion to find appropriate responses. • Cross check and verify (i.e. triangulate) information, acknowledging that assessment data will initially be imperfect, but should not impede life-saving actions. • Assess the safety and security of affected, displaced, and host populations to identify threats of violence and any forms of coercion, denial of subsistence or denial of basic human rights. • Assess gender-related and power dynamics to define a more effective and sustainable response (<i>see Protection Principles</i>). • Coordinate with others to avoid burdening communities with multiple assessments. Joint assessments and findings should be shared with interested agencies, government and affected populations.
<p>KA 1.2</p>	<p>Design and implement programmes based on an impartial assessment of needs and risks, and an understanding of the vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care to assess needs of those in hard-to-reach locations and ‘at-risk’ groups such as those with disabilities, older people, housebound individuals, female-headed households, children and adolescents. Impartiality requires understanding different needs in order to meet them.
<p>KA 1.3</p>	<p>Adapt programmes to changing needs, capacities and context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor epidemiological and other data regularly to inform ongoing decision-making and prioritize life-saving interventions. • Remain flexible enough to redesign any intervention in response to changing needs. Confirm that donors agree with programme changes.

Organisational Responsibilities	
OR 1.4	<p>Policies commit to providing impartial assistance based on the needs and capacities of communities and people affected by crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanitarian organisations maintain policies, processes and systems that support a commitment to humanitarian principles and inclusiveness. All staff should understand their responsibilities in relation to this, and how they may be held to account. Share these policies transparently with other stakeholders.
OR 1.5:	<p>Policies set out commitments which take into account the diversity of communities, including disadvantaged or marginalised people, and to collect disaggregated data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline required levels of data disaggregation (such as age cohorts, sex, and disability) for assessment and reporting. Good practice encourages that data is disaggregated by sex, age and disability. Additional factors for disaggregation should be based on contextual knowledge of vulnerabilities and marginalising factors in specific countries and contexts and should always be balanced with safety concerns and risk factors around collecting sensitive data.
OR 1.6:	<p>Processes are in place to ensure an appropriate ongoing analysis of the context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanitarian workers should have management support to acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes necessary to manage and carry out assessments.

What else do I need to know?

Assessment and analysis

- Assess existing local capacities to meet identified needs, understanding that the needs and capacities of affected people will change over time.
- Consider providing basic psychological training to staff involved in assessments. This can help the staff manage people who become distressed during an assessment.
- Ensure specialised assessments for different target groups. For example, undertake specific assessments with women and girls to understand their particular risks to multiple forms of gender-based violence.
- Consider people's relationship to their environment (both natural and built) including how they interact with markets, as well as chemical, industrial and natural hazards in adapting programme design. And consider how social and contextual factors contribute to people's vulnerability. These include discrimination and marginalisation, social isolation, environmental degradation, climate variability, poverty, lack of land tenure, poor governance, ethnicity, class, caste, and religious or political affiliations

Impartial assessment

- Acting impartially does not equate to treating all people the same. Providing needs-based assistance requires an understanding of differing needs, vulnerabilities and capacities. People may be vulnerable because of individual factors such as age, sex, disability, or because they are caring for others who are vulnerable.

Vulnerability

- Social and contextual factors also contribute to people's vulnerability. These include discrimination and marginalisation, social isolation, environmental degradation, climate variability, poverty, lack of land tenure, poor governance, ethnicity, class, caste, and religious or political affiliations.

Existing capacity

- The state has the primary role and responsibility to provide timely assistance and protection to affected people within its borders. Intervention by other humanitarian actors should occur only if the affected population and/or the state have insufficient capacity or willingness to respond (particularly during the early stages of the response). Intervention may also be justified if the state or authorities actively discriminate against certain groups and/or people living in an affected area.
- People, communities, organizations, and authorities affected by crisis possess a skills, knowledge and capacities to cope with, respond to and recover from disasters. They will usually be the first to respond. Actively engaging and ensuring leadership and participation of affected people, community based groups, and local authorities in humanitarian response is an essential part of upholding the right to life with dignity. Targeted efforts may need to be undertaken to ensure representation of typically underrepresented groups, such as women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, etc.

Data disaggregation

- Data disaggregation is an important analytical approach for data to understand the impact of actions or situations on different groups. Disaggregated data can tell humanitarians a lot about who are the most vulnerable/marginalized and if they are able to access and use humanitarian assistance or if more needs to be done to reach the most vulnerable. Thinking critically about what factors are most important for different data points/indicators to be disaggregated by is essential to contextualizing MEAL activities.
- Good practice encourages that data is disaggregated by sex, age and disability. Additional factors for disaggregation (such as geographic location) should be based on contextual knowledge of vulnerabilities and marginalizing factors in specific countries and contexts and should always be balanced with safety concerns and risk factors around collecting sensitive data. Disaggregation by age should include meaningful age-groupings

Processes for ongoing analysis

- Human resources systems should be flexible enough to recruit and deploy assessment teams rapidly.
- Programme budgets and resources should be allocated according to need. Funding should support ongoing analysis of assistance and protection needs, and the adaption and correction of programmes, including measures to facilitate access (e.g. outreach mechanisms, accessibility of facilities and communication, etc).

CHS Commitment 2

Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is effective and timely.

Performance Indicators

1. Communities and people affected by crisis, including the most vulnerable groups, consider that the timing of the assistance and protection they receive is adequate.

	<p>2. Communities and people affected by crisis consider that the response meets their needs, and preferences.</p> <p>3. Monitoring and evaluation reports show that the humanitarian response meets its objectives in terms of timing, quality and quantity.</p>
KA 2.1	<p>Design programmes that address constraints so that the proposed action is realistic and safe for communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not possible to assess and meet the needs of a specific area or population group, including hard-to-reach locations, clearly state the limitation and make others aware of these gaps. • Prioritize support to local response capacity in advance, where contingency planning shows areas are vulnerable and may prove hard to access in the future.
KA 2.2	<p>Deliver humanitarian response in a timely manner, making decisions and acting without unnecessary delay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of living conditions, seasons, agricultural calendars and other factors which influence provision of right services at the right time. • Include timeframes for delivery and monitoring systems in programme plans; proactively identify and flag delays. • Acknowledge that decisions will be made based on imperfect knowledge in the early stages of an acute crisis and refine decisions as information becomes available.
KA 2.3	<p>Refer any unmet needs to those organisations with the relevant technical expertise and mandate, or advocate for those needs to be addressed.</p>
KA 2.4	<p>Use relevant technical standards and good practice employed across the humanitarian sector to plan and assess programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply national humanitarian technical standards where these exist and/or where the Sphere technical standards have been adapted in national practice or legislation. • Advocate for the use of globally-agreed standards to complement national ones (including Sphere and partner standards in related sectors).
KA 2.5	<p>Monitor the activities, outputs and outcomes of humanitarian responses in order to adapt programmes and address poor performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include progress against objectives and performance indicators, in addition to activities and outputs (i.e. number of facilities built). Monitor project outcomes (desired results) such as use of facilities or changes in practice. • Review systems regularly so that only useful information is collected, with updated contextual information (i.e. local market function, change in security).
Organisational Responsibilities	
OR 2.6	<p>Programme commitments are in line with organisational capacities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies reflect importance of using agreed humanitarian technical quality standards and developing expertise in chosen areas of intervention. • Acknowledge the conditions under which the organisation may need to provide services outside this area of expertise until others can do so.
OR 2.7	<p>Policy commitments ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic, objective and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of activities and their effects;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from monitoring and evaluations is used to adapt and improve programmes; and • Timely decision-making, with resources allocated accordingly.
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What else do I need to know?

Addressing constraints and realistic programming

- Where an organisation cannot access a population or meet identified needs, it has a responsibility to refer these needs to appropriate actors (government, non-government).
- Coordinate with others to develop shared strategies to address collective issues that block timely assistance.
- Define time-bound and context-specific performance indicators. Review them on a regular basis to measure progress towards meeting assistance and protection needs. Use forecasts and early warning systems for contingency planning before a crisis. This will help communities, authorities and agencies to make timely interventions. It will also allow affected people to protect their assets before their lives and livelihoods are at risk.
- Affected communities should contribute to an objective analysis of needs and capacities to inform decision making. This should include considerations on how they engage with markets and can be supported through market-based programming.
- Decision-making processes should be flexible enough to respond to new information from ongoing assessments. Within an organisation, delegate decisions and resources as close to the implementation site as possible.
- Document decisions and decision-making processes to demonstrate transparency. Base the processes on consultation, meaningful participation, and coordination with others (see Commitment 6).

Monitoring activities, outputs and outcomes

- Monitoring informs project revisions, verifies application of selection criteria and confirms if aid is reaching the people most in need. Document any programme changes that result from monitoring (see Commitment 7).
- Establish monitoring systems that involve and rely on affected people and key stakeholders (see Commitment 7).
- Use common, response-wide monitoring indicators where available.

Organisational policies, processes and systems

- Organisations should develop a documented evidence base for humanitarian action to improve outcomes, with systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation contributing to this process.
- An organisation that meets the CHS should be able to show how data from monitoring and evaluation is used to adapt programmes, policies and strategies, strengthen preparedness and improve performance in a timely manner (see Commitment 7). This might involve ensuring that staff can be recruited or redeployed quickly when needed or the existence of an emergency response fund.

Organisational decision-making

- Both the responsibilities and processes for decision-making within organisations must be clearly defined and understood, including who is responsible, who will be consulted and what information is needed to inform decision-making.

CHS Commitment 3	
Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.	
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.	
Performance Indicators	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communities and people affected by crisis consider themselves better able to withstand future shocks and stresses. 2. Local authorities, leaders and organisations with responsibilities for responding to crises consider that their capacities have been increased. 3. Communities and people affected by crisis, including vulnerable and marginalised individuals do not identify negative effects resulting from humanitarian action. 	
Key Actions	
KA 3.1	<p>Ensure programmes build on local capacities and work towards improving the resilience of communities and people affected by crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design services that reduce the impact of hazards (such as drought management, and flood-, hurricane- or earthquake-resistant structures). • Support self-help initiatives
KA 3.2	<p>Use the results of any existing community hazard and risk assessments and preparedness plans to guide activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider specific needs of different groups within society who are exposed to different levels of risk. • The more vulnerable an individual, household, community or country is, the more likely it is that the crisis will have adverse effects.
KA 3.3	<p>Enable the development of local leadership and organisations in their capacity as first responders in the event of future crises, taking steps to ensure that marginalised and disadvantaged groups are appropriately represented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate that local actors are treated as equal partners with autonomy to design and/or lead a response. • Support the initiatives of local groups and organizations, as the platform for learning and capacity building to strengthen first response in future crises • Hire local and national staff, considering diversity within the population, instead of expatriates wherever possible.
KA 3.4	<p>Plan a transition or exit strategy in the early stages of the humanitarian programme that ensures longer-term positive effects and reduces the risk of dependency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to existing state and community systems, rather than establish parallel efforts.

<p>KA 3.5</p>	<p>Design and implement programmes that promote early disaster recovery and benefit the local economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps to restore services, education, markets, and livelihood opportunities. • Buy goods and services locally, and consider cash-based assistance as actions to benefit the local economy.
<p>KA 3.6</p>	<p>Identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. people’s safety, security, dignity and rights; b. sexual exploitation and abuse by staff; c. culture, gender, and social and political relationships; d. livelihoods; e. the local economy; and f. the environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider safety, security, dignity and rights; potential sexual exploitation and abuse by staff; culture, gender, and social and political relationships; livelihoods; the local economy; and the environment.
<p>Organisational Responsibilities</p>	
<p>OR 3.7:</p>	<p>Policies, strategies and guidance are designed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. prevent programmes having any negative effects, such as, for example, exploitation, abuse or discrimination by staff against communities and people affected by crisis; and b. strengthen local capacities.
<p>OR 3.8:</p>	<p>Systems are in place to safeguard any personal information collected from communities and people affected by crisis that could put them at risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear and comprehensive policies on data protection, including electronic registration and distribution systems. • Ensure third parties (banks, commercial organisations) take appropriate measures also take appropriate measures to safeguard information. • Inform those receiving aid about their rights in relation to data protection, how they can access the personal information that an organisation holds about them, and how to raise concerns they have about misuse of information to be investigated.
<p>What else do I need to know?</p> <p><i>Community resilience and local leadership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations should consider working with national, local, and municipal authorities to support their efforts as much as possible. • Communities, local organisations and authorities are the first to act in a crisis and have in-depth knowledge of the situation and specific needs. These local actors should be equal partners and given autonomy in designing or leading a response. This requires a commitment of international and local agencies to adapt their way of working, engage in open dialogue and constructive criticism. • Early exit-planning, in collaboration with the authorities and affected people encourages design of services that will continue after the programme has closed (for example, introducing 	

cost-recovery measures, using locally available materials or strengthening local management capacity) and provides more time to prepare a transition.

Negative effects and ‘do no harm’

- The high value of aid resources and the powerful position of humanitarian workers can lead to exploitation and abuse, competition, conflict, misuse or misappropriation of aid.
- Aid can undermine livelihoods and market systems, drive resource conflict and amplify unequal power relations between different groups and/or between men, women and children. These potential negative effects should be anticipated as possible and monitored, and actions taken to prevent them.
- Humanitarian response must be acceptable to the different groups within an affected population. However, some culturally acceptable practices constitute human rights violations, or reflect misconceptions. Be aware of practices such as biased targeting of girls, boys or specific castes, denying education to girls, and other forms of discrimination against females, and refusing immunisation.

Environmental concerns and climate change (see also 9)

- Humanitarian response can cause environmental degradation (for example, soil erosion, depletion or pollution of groundwater, overfishing, waste production, natural resources degradation, deforestation and other environmental hazards), amplifying a crisis or vulnerability levels.
- Environmental degradation reduces people’s and societies’ resilience to shocks. There are various kinds of ecosystem services: Provisioning services (e.g. food, fuel and water) support livelihoods; regulating services such as erosion control and water purification); supporting services (e.g. soil formation). These services, together with regulating services, support health and nutrition and buffer against natural hazards; Measures to reduce negative effects could include reforestation, rainwater harvesting, efficient use of resources, and ethical procurement policies and practices. Major construction activities should only be performed following an environmental assessment.
- A rapid environmental impact assessment (REA) can help to determine the risks and makes it more likely that mitigation measures are put in place.
- Involving affected people and their concerns in this process is key. Support for the local management of natural resources should be integrated into programming.

Sexual exploitation and abuse by staff (see also 5.4)

- All staff share a responsibility to maintain an environment that is free of exploitation and abuse. Staff members have a responsibility to report any abuse they suspect or witness, whether within their own organisation or outside.

Organisational policy (see also 9.5)

- Organisations are encouraged to have a clearly documented risk management policy and system in place. NGOs that fail to systematically tackle corruption via their own anti-bribery policies and procedures and through collective action with other NGOs increase corruption risks for other actors.
- Policies and procedures should reflect a commitment to the protection of vulnerable people and outline ways to prevent and investigate the abuse of power.
- Careful recruitment, screening and hiring practices can help to reduce the risk of staff misconduct, and codes of conduct should make it clear what practices are forbidden. Staff should formally agree to adhering to these codes and be made aware of the sanctions they will face if they fail to do so (see Commitment 8).

- Complaints and grievance procedures, including whistle-blowing policies, should be in place and staff should be made aware of how to access them.
- Green procurement policies can help to ensure that unintended negative environmental effects are avoided (see Commitment 9).

Safeguarding personal information

- All personal information collected from individuals and communities should be treated as confidential. This is particularly the case with regard to handling protection related data, reported violations, complaints of abuse or exploitation, and gender-based violence. (see Protection Principles and Commitment 5). Assurances of confidentiality are essential to prevent the occurrence of further harm.
- The increasing use of electronic registration and distribution systems in humanitarian response makes the need for clear and comprehensive policies on data protection greater than ever before. Agreements obliging third parties such as banks and commercial organisations to take appropriate measures to safeguard information are essential. Clear guidance about the collection, storage, use and disposal of data aligned with international standards and local data protection laws is important.
- Systems to mitigate the risk of data being lost should be put in place. Data should not be held longer than is required and should be destroyed once no longer required.

CHS Commitment 4

Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback

Performance Indicators

1. Communities and people affected by crisis are aware of their rights and entitlements.
2. Communities and people affected by crisis consider that they have timely access to relevant and clear information.
3. Communities and people affected by crisis are satisfied with their opportunities to influence the response.
4. Affected people report being adequately involved in different phases of emergency responses
5. All staff are trained and provided guidance on the rights of the affected population and avoiding additional harm

Key Actions

KA 4.1:

Provide information to communities and people affected by crisis about the organisation, the principles it adheres to, how it expects its staff to behave, the programmes it is implementing and what they intend to deliver.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without accurate information, people cannot make informed decisions about their situation. They may be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse if they don't know what they are entitled to, what behaviour they can expect from humanitarian workers and how to complain if they are not satisfied with the level of services provided. Information is a key protection consideration (see Protection Principles)
KA 4.2:	<p>Communicate in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate for different members of the community, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing communication systems and consult with people on their communications preferences and the degree of privacy required. Care is needed to ensure that communications technology, new and old, is used effectively and safely.
KA 4.3:	<p>Ensure representation is inclusive, involving the participation and engagement of communities and people affected by the crisis at all stages of the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different levels of participation may be appropriate at different times. In the early stages of an acute response, consultation might only be possible with limited numbers of affected people. Over time, there will be more opportunities for more people and groups to become involved in decision-making. Participation may not occur spontaneously. Organisations may have to foster a process of dialogue to stimulate greater participation. Give attention to groups or individuals historically excluded from power and decision-making processes.
KA 4.4:	<p>Encourage and facilitate communities and people affected by crisis to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received, paying particular attention to the gender, age and diversity of those giving feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take steps so that operational staff know how to gain and maintain people's trust, welcome suggestions and comments, know how to respond to both positive and negative feedback and be observant of the reactions of different community members to the way services are provided. Integrate feedback collection into a broader approach to receiving, reviewing and acting upon the feedback, as well as sharing the organisation's response to the feedback back to the community.
Organisational Responsibilities	
OR 4.5:	<p>Policies for information sharing are in place, and promote a culture of open communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strive to share organisational information about successes and failures openly to promote a system-wide culture of openness and accountability. Organisations that are transparent and open in sharing information with their staff are more likely to be open with communities and the public.
OR 4.6:	<p>Policies are in place for engaging communities and people affected by crisis, reflecting the priorities and risks they identify in all stages of the work.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline how staff members are trained and encouraged to facilitate community engagement and decision-making, listen to diverse communities of affected people and manage negative feedback. • Policies and strategies should help create space and time for community dialogues, decision making, and self help
<p>OR 4.7:</p>	<p>External communications, including those used for fundraising purposes, are accurate, ethical and respectful, presenting the communities and people affected by crisis as dignified human beings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information based on risk assessment. Consider potential harm to the population, such as sharing information about cash distributions or demographics of specific settlements which can put people at risk of being attacked. • Exercise care when making use of stories and images that discuss and depict affected people as this can be an invasion of their privacy – and a breach of confidentiality—if their permission is not sought (See Protection Principles on informed consent).

What else do I need to know?

Sharing information with communities

- The sharing of accurate, timely, understandable and accessible information strengthens trust, deepens levels of participation and improves the impact of a project. It can help to reduce the number of formal complaints received and is a key to being transparent.
- Sharing financial information with communities can also improve cost-effectiveness and help communities to identify and highlight waste or fraud.
- When an organisation does not share information appropriately with the people it aims to assist, misunderstandings and delays, inappropriate projects that waste resources, and negative perceptions about the organisation can develop that can generate anger, frustration and insecurity.

Effective, Safe, Accessible, and inclusive communication

- Different groups people living with HIV) will have different communication and information needs and may well have different trusted sources of communication. They may also need time talking among themselves in a safe, private setting to process the information and its implications. Ensure the accessibility of communication means, providing and collecting information in at least two formats.
- Time spent consulting affected populations early in the response allows to build on existing knowledge and to develop positive, respectful relations. It can prevent the expenditure of time trying to fix inappropriate decisions later.
- The level and context of participation should be adjusted to fit the local situation. Encouraging group discussions and decision making is highly valuable in many contexts, but in some conflict settings, this could be a form of political organizing and could cause harm to local people.
- It is worth looking into various methods to enhance community engagement to the complaint handling system, including the use of community scorecards

Feedback

- Formal feedback can be sought through specific assessments (using group discussions or interviews), post distribution monitoring or questionnaires. Informal feedback received during daily interaction should also be valued and used to develop trust and improve programmes on an ongoing basis (see the links to further guidance below).
- Feedback should be obtained on whether women, men, girls and boys feel respected and satisfied with their role in and influence over decision making about the humanitarian response. People may be happy with the aid delivered by NGOs but may nevertheless wish that they had had a stronger influence on decision making. This requires two-way communication and ongoing dialogue.
- People may fear that critical feedback will lead to a loss of assistance or have negative repercussions. There may also be cultural reasons why criticism of an intervention is unacceptable. Exploring different methods of providing informal and formal feedback including methods for confidentially sharing feedback is important.
- Design feedback mechanisms in coordination with other agencies. Feedback mechanisms should be accessible to all people.. They should be seen as separate from complaints mechanisms for serious infringements of practice or behaviour (see Commitment 5) although in practice there is usually an overlap in the type of feedback and complaints received. Acknowledging and following up on the feedback received and adapting the programme when appropriate is crucial if the process is to be trusted. Such Feedback mechanisms should also be integrated into organisations' monitoring and evaluation systems.

Promoting a culture of open communication

- Define and document processes for sharing information, for example, organisational commitment to accurate and timely information sharing; what information it will share with the people it seeks to assist and other stakeholders; how decisions will be made about when and how to share information; and the criteria used in deciding not to share information.
- Organisations should state publicly (on their website or in promotional material) additional interests and commitments such as political or religious affiliations. The purpose of this declaration of additional interests is to encourage a 'no surprises' approach, giving all stakeholders an opportunity to better understand the nature of the organisation and its likely affiliations, policies, partnerships and relationships.

Organisational commitment to participation and listening to communities

- Gender and diversity policies can also help to promote the values and commitments of the organisation and provide concrete examples of expected behaviour. Feedback from affected people should also inform strategy and programme development.

Restricting information, confidentiality and non-disclosure

- Not all information can or should be shared with all stakeholders.
- This also includes considerations such as how the collection of demographically identifiable and personally identifiable information that may cause or increase their vulnerability, or create new threats to their protection. (see Protection Principles)

An ethical approach to external communications

- Fundraising material and photographs taken out of context can often be misleading. They can make the viewer assume that those receiving aid are all needy and helpless and may fail to highlight people's dignity and their capacity to help themselves. Policies and

guidelines relating to external communications should be available to all staff and can help to ensure that these mistakes are not made.

Images of children:

- Images of affected persons should present them as persons with dignity. Images of children must not show them undressed or in inappropriate poses. Details attached to images and included in stories must not allow that child to be traced to his or her home or community. Distinctive buildings, street signs or landmarks should not be included in an image if they identify where a child lives or works.
- Geotagging of images should be disabled when taking photographs, and any externally employed photographer/journalist/translator must be properly vetted and reference checked.
- Photos may only be taken and used with the informed consent of children and their parents/carers.

CHS Commitment 5

Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.

Quality Criterion: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.

Performance Indicators

1. Communities and people affected by crisis, including vulnerable and marginalised groups, are aware of complaint reporting mechanisms established for their use.
2. Communities and people affected by crisis, consider the complaint reporting and handling mechanisms accessible, effective, confidential and safe.
3. Complaints are investigated, resolved and results fed back to the complainant within the stated timeframe.

Key Actions

<p>KA 5.1:</p>	<p>Consult with communities and people affected by crisis on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on how complaints can be submitted, what may prevent people and staff from complaining, how they wish to receive response about complaints. • Explore joint complaint mechanisms with other agencies, partners, and third-party contractors. • Train staff on the complaints mechanism.
<p>KA 5.2:</p>	<p>Welcome and accept complaints, and communicate how the mechanism can be accessed and the scope of issues it can address.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider an information campaign to help raise awareness of the system and procedures, where people can ask further questions about how it will work.
<p>KA 5.3:</p>	<p>Manage complaints in a timely, fair and appropriate manner that prioritises the safety of the complainant and those affected at all stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with each complaint individually, even if many cover similar issues. • Provide a response within a specified timeframe. The complainant should know when to expect a response (i.e. 7 days for non-sensitive). • Consider community management or engagement in the complaint handling system. • Only trained staff should investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers. • Confidential referral for additional care and support (e.g. mental health and psychosocial support, health care) should be provided for complainants according to complainant’s wishes.
<p>Organisational Responsibilities</p>	
<p>OR 5.4:</p>	<p>The complaints-handling process for communities and people affected by crisis is documented and in place. The process should cover programming, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other abuses of power.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep records of how the complaints mechanism is set up, decision criteria, all complaints made, how they were responded to and within what timeframe. • Take care to ensure that information on complaints is kept confidential, in strict accordance with data protection policies, and that information is only stored for as long as is needed. • Ensure that both organisation staff and the communities it serves have the opportunity to complain.
<p>OR 5.5:</p>	<p>An organizational culture in which complaints are taken seriously and acted upon according to defined policies and processes has been established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly share policies which relate to an organisation’s duty of care to the people it aims to assist, its codes of conduct and how it will protect potentially vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with disabilities. • Establish formal investigation procedures that adhere to the principles of confidentiality, independence and respect. Conduct investigations in a thorough, timely and professional manner, meeting legal standards and local labour law requirements. Train designated managers on or investigations and handling staff misconduct, or provide specialist assistance. • Include a grievance procedure and whistleblowing policy to deal with staff complaints.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should be aware of how to handle complaints or allegations of abuse. In the case of criminal activity or where international law has been broken, liaison with the appropriate authorities will be necessary.
OR 5.6:	<p>Communities and people affected by crisis are fully aware of the expected behaviour of humanitarian staff, including organizational commitments made on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the complaints process to communities and staff, including mechanisms for both sensitive (i.e. relating to corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse, or gross misconduct or malpractice) and non-sensitive information (for example, challenges to use of selection criteria).
OR 5.7:	<p>Complaints that do not fall within the scope of the organisation are referred to a relevant party in a manner consistent with good practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify guidance on which complaints fall within the organisation’s remit, when, and how to refer to other service providers. Work with other organisations on complaints mechanisms, as this may be less confusing for communities and staff.

What else do I need to know?

Designing a complaints mechanism

- Consider how complaints will be recorded and tracked, and how what is learned from them will be incorporated into future planning.
- Time and resources will be needed to ensure that different groups within the affected population know what they can expect from agencies in terms of services, staff attitudes and behaviour, as well as what to do and where to go if they want to make a complaint because the agency has failed to meet these standards. They should also be assured that they can make a complaint confidentially and without fear of retaliation.
- Manage expectations, as communities may believe that the complaints process can solve all their problems. This could generate frustration and disappointment if the expected changes are outside the control of the agency.

Managing complaints

- Explain clearly to the complainant when the complaint falls outside the control and responsibility of the organisation. Where possible and in agreement with the complainant, provide referral to the appropriate organisation. Coordinate with other agencies and sectors to ensure this functions effectively.
- Anonymous and malicious complaints present specific challenges because their source is unknown. They may be a warning signal to the organisation of underlying discontent and any follow-up will need to investigate if there is any previously unacknowledged cause for complaint.

Protecting complainants

- Social and power dynamics must be assessed before deciding on the best way to interact with communities. Attention should always be paid to the specific needs of older people, women and girls, children, people with disabilities and others who might be marginalised in order to ensure they have a say in the design and implementation of complaints-handling systems.
- Care must be taken in deciding who needs to know what information within the organisation. Given the social stigma associated with sexual abuse and the real danger that people reporting such abuse could face from perpetrators and their own families, it is essential to ensure that their complaint will be treated confidentially and reassure them that they will face no danger of retaliation. A whistleblowing policy should offer assurance of protection to staff who highlight concerns about programmes or the behaviour of colleagues.

Complaints handling process

- Ensure that both organisation staff and the communities it serves have the opportunity to complain. Such complaints can be seen as an opportunity to improve the organisation and its work. Complaints can indicate the impact and appropriateness of an intervention, potential risks and vulnerabilities, and the degree to which people are satisfied with the services provided.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

- An organisation and its senior management are responsible for ensuring that complaints mechanisms and procedures for SEA are in place, safe, transparent, accessible and confidential. Where appropriate, organisations should consider including specific statements about cooperating with investigations into SEA cases in their partnership agreements.

Organisational culture

- Managers and senior staff should model and promote a culture of mutual respect between all staff, partners, volunteers and people affected by crisis. Their support for the implementation of community complaints mechanisms is vital.
- Organisations working with partners should agree on how they will raise and handle complaints (including against each other).

Staff behaviour and codes of conduct

- Organisations meeting this Commitment should have a staff code of conduct that is well publicised and endorsed by senior management.
- A child safeguarding policy should apply to all staff and partners, and inductions and training should be provided on expected standards of behaviour.
- Staff should know and understand the consequences of breaching the code (see Commitments 3 & 8).

CHS Commitment 6

Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisations minimize gaps and overlaps which are identified by affected communities and partners in the response through coordinated action. 2. Responding organisations share relevant information through formal and informal coordination mechanisms. 3. Organisations coordinate needs assessments, delivery of humanitarian aid and monitoring of aid implementation. 4. Local organisations participate fully in coordination mechanisms. Number of local organisations participating in emergency coordination. 	
Key Actions	
KA 6.1:	<p>Identify the roles, responsibilities, capacities and interests of different stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and sharing of resources and equipment optimises the capacity of communities, host governments, donors and humanitarian organisation with different mandates and expertise. • Joint assessments, trainings and evaluations across organisations can help ensure a more coherent approach.
KA 6.2:	<p>Ensure humanitarian response complements that of national and local authorities and other humanitarian organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that the overall planning and coordination of relief efforts is ultimately the responsibility of the host government. Humanitarian organisations have an essential role to play in supporting the state’s response and coordination function. • Local organisations and civil society networks have a significant amount of context-specific experience; they may need support in re-establishing themselves following the effects of a disaster.
KA 6.3:	<p>Participate in relevant coordination bodies and collaborate with others to minimise demands on communities and maximise the coverage and service provision of the wider humanitarian effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination sessions with different sectors can address people’s needs holistically rather than in isolation. Coordination on mental health and psychosocial supports must be done across the health, protection and education sectors, for example through a cross-sectoral technical working group with coordination by the sector leads. • Coordination leaders have a responsibility to ensure that meetings and information sharing are well managed, efficient and results-oriented as this influences engagement of partners. Determine the scope of activities and

	<p>commitments, as well as any overlap with other coordination bodies and how this will be managed (i.e. in relation to accountability, gender and protection).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the application of and adherence to recognized quality standards and guidelines through coordination. Achieving a coordinated impact is only possible through collaboration and mutual accountability. • Contextualize the technical and core humanitarian standards collectively to monitor and evaluate activities. • Partnerships with the private sector should ensure explicit benefits for people affected by crisis, whilst recognising that private sector actors may have additional objectives of their own. • Coordination with the military should be led by humanitarian organisations and conducted according to internationally agreed upon guidelines (see Introduction, Humanitarian Charter and Protection Principles.) • Military activities in support of humanitarian operations should be conducted in close dialogue with humanitarian organizations and in accordance with existing guidelines. • Humanitarian organisations must remain clearly distinct from the military to avoid any real or perceived association with a political or military agenda that could compromise the agencies’ neutrality, independence, credibility, security and access to affected populations.
<p>KA 6.4:</p>	<p>Share necessary information with partners, coordination groups and other relevant actors through appropriate communication channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the use of local language(s) in meetings and other communications. Examine barriers to communication so that local stakeholders are enabled to participate. • Communicate clearly and avoid jargon and colloquialisms, especially when other participants do not speak the same language. • Provide interpreters and translators. • Consider locations to allow local actors to participate. • Work with networks of local civil society organisations so that the civil society voice is heard.
<p>Organisational Responsibilities</p>	
<p>OR 6.5:</p>	<p>Policies and strategies include a clear commitment to coordination and collaboration with others, including national and local authorities, without compromising humanitarian principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include coordination in organisational policies and resourcing strategies. The organisation should provide a statement on how it will engage with partners, host authorities and other humanitarian (and where appropriate, non-humanitarian) actors. • Staff representing agencies in coordination meetings have the appropriate information, skills and authority to contribute to planning and decision-making. • Coordination responsibilities are clearly articulated in their job descriptions.

OR 6.6:	<p>Work with partners is governed by clear and consistent agreements that respect each partner’s mandate, obligations and independence, and recognises their respective constraints and commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and national organisations engage or collaborate with partners with a shared understanding of each other’s organisational mandate, and mutual roles and responsibilities, for effective and accountable action.
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What else do I need to know?

- Some local actors may not participate in coordination mechanisms if these appear to be relevant only to international agencies. The location of meetings or the language used can be a barrier to the participation of local actors. National and sub-national coordination mechanisms are required and clear reporting lines will need to be established. Participation in coordination mechanisms before a disaster establishes relationships and enhances coordination during a response.
- Link emergency coordination structures with longer-term coordination bodies. The formal IASC cluster system is one recognised mechanism for the coordination of emergencies, but should support national coordination mechanisms. In refugee assistance, the refugee coordination mechanism is used by UNHCR.

Working with the private sector

- The private sector can bring commercial efficiencies, complementary expertise and resources to humanitarian organisations. Information sharing, at the very least, is required to avoid duplication and to promote humanitarian good practice.

Working with the military

- The military has particular expertise and resources, including those associated with security, logistics, transport and communication. The primary expectation by humanitarian organizations is for the military to provide security.
- Support by the military to humanitarian operations should be in accordance with the hierarchy of tasks as stipulated in the MCDA Guidelines (see introduction chapter and references). Infrastructure support is encouraged, and direct assistance as an exception. Humanitarian organizations should be clearly distinct from the military.
- The three key elements of humanitarian-military coordination are information sharing, planning and division of tasks. The relationship ranges from co-operation to co-existence. Dialogue should take place throughout, in every context and at all levels.

Sharing information

- Sharing information (including financial) between different stakeholders and different coordination mechanisms makes it more likely that programme gaps or duplication will be identified.

Working with partners

- Different types of arrangements may exist with partners, ranging from the purely contractual to shared decision-making and shared resources.
- Respect the mandate and vision of the partner organisation and its independence. Identify opportunities for mutual learning and development, what both parties stand to gain from

the partnership, as they increase their knowledge and capacities and ensure better response preparedness and more varied response options.

- Longer term collaborations between local / national civil society organisations and international organisations can allow all partners to increase their knowledge and capacities and ensure better response preparedness and more varied response options.

CHS Commitment 7

Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.

Performance Indicators

1. Communities and people affected by crisis identify improvements to the assistance and protection they receive over time.
2. Improvements are made to assistance and protection interventions as a result of the learning generated in the current response.
3. The assistance and protection provided reflects learning from other responses.

Key Actions

<p>KA 7.1:</p>	<p>Draw on lessons learnt and prior experience when designing programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider failures as well as successes. Consider the ethics of how data is collected, managed and reported. • Use qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and evaluate; triangulate data and maintain consistent records. • Determine what data is collected and how it is presented based on the intended use and users of the data. Do not collect data that is not to be analysed or used. • Design monitoring systems that are simple and accessible, recognising that information should be representative of different groups.
<p>KA 7.2:</p>	<p>Learn, innovate and implement changes on the basis of monitoring and evaluation, and feedback and complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use open-ended listening and other qualitative participatory approaches. People affected by crisis are the best sources of information about needs, changes in the situation. • Share and discuss learning with communities.
<p>KA 7.3:</p>	<p>Share learning and innovation internally, with communities and people affected by crisis, and with other stakeholders.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring performed by affected people themselves can enhance transparency and quality and encourage ownership of the information. Information collected through monitoring and evaluation should be presented in an accessible format that facilitates sharing and decision-making. Evidence that is available across the sector is greater than what is available to any single organisation. Identify ways to support system-wide learning activities.
<p>Organisational Responsibilities</p>	
<p>OR 7.4:</p>	<p>Evaluation and learning policies are in place, and means are available to learn from experiences and improve practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations include a performance review and improvement plan that is based on measurable, objective indicators in their learning cycle. All staff understand their responsibilities in relation to monitoring the progress of their work and how learning can contribute to their professional development.
<p>OR 7.5:</p>	<p>Mechanisms exist to record knowledge and experience, and make it accessible throughout the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational learning leads to practical changes (i. e. improved strategies for carrying out assessments, reorganisation of teams for more cohesive response, or clearer articulation of decision-making responsibilities).
<p>OR 7.6:</p>	<p>The organisation contributes to learning and innovation in humanitarian response amongst peers and within the sector.</p>
<p>What else do I need to know?</p> <p><i>Learning from experience</i></p> <p>Different approaches and methods suit different performance, learning and accountability purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring - collection of regular data sets of project activities and performance. Can be used for course correction. Real time reviews – one off assessment exercises, involving people working on the project, which can be used for course correction Feedback – information received from affected people, not necessarily structures, can be used for course correction. After action reviews – one off exercises, involving people working on project, occurring after project completion. Identify elements to retain and change in future projects. Evaluations – formal activities to determine the value of an activity, project or programme. 	

- Aim for objectivity – normally conducted by people external to the project. Can be real time (to allow for course correction) or ex post (after project, to provide learning for use in other, similar situations and inform policy)
- Research - systematic investigation into specific defined questions related to humanitarian action, generally used to inform policy

Innovation

- Crisis response often leads to innovation as people and organisations adapt to changing environments. People affected by crisis themselves are innovating to find their own solutions and can be more systematically have always been innovative in adapting to changing circumstances. This characteristic might benefit from support that involves them in a more included in systematic any process of innovation and development.

Collaboration and sharing of lessons

- Collaborative learning with other agencies and academic bodies is a professional obligation and can introduce fresh perspectives and ideas, as well as maximise the use of limited resources. Collaboration also helps to reduce the burden of repeated evaluations in the same community.
- Peer learning exercises have been used by a variety of organisations and can be undertaken to monitor progress in real time or as a reflective exercise post-emergency.
- The creation of networks and communities of practice (including the involvement of academia) and opportunities to learn from peer groups – both in the field and in after-action reviews or learning forums – can make an important contribution to organisational practice and system-wide learning. Sharing challenges as well as successes amongst peers can enable humanitarians to identify risks and avoid future mistakes.
- Organisations learning and reviewing evidence together are more likely to catalyse organisational change than lessons learned within a single organisation.

Evaluation and learning policies

- Key lessons and areas identified for improvement are not always addressed systematically and lessons cannot be considered learned unless they have brought about demonstrable changes in current or subsequent responses.

Knowledge management and organisational learning

- Knowledge management involves collecting, developing, sharing, storing and effectively using organisational knowledge and learning. Longer-term national staff are often key to preserving local knowledge and relationships.

CHS Commitment 8

Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.

Quality Criterion: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All staff feel supported by their organisation to do their work. 2. Staff satisfactorily meet their performance objectives. 3. Communities and people affected by crisis assess staff to be effective (i.e. in terms of their knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes). 4. Affected communities are aware of humanitarian codes of conduct and how to raise concerns about violations. 	
Key Actions	
KA 8.1:	<p>Staff work according to the mandate and values of the organisation and according to objectives and performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations make policies easily accessible. Staff understand the policies that are relevant to them and accept the consequences if they fail to do so. • All staff members must be made aware of their legal and organisational status, whether national or international.
KA 8.2:	<p>Staff adhere to the policies that are relevant to them and understand the consequences of not adhering to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all situations, including a rapid deployment or scale-up, inductions and training on organisational mandate, policies and codes of conduct apply.
KA 8.3:	<p>Staff develop and use the necessary personal, technical and management competencies to fulfil their role and understand how the organisation can support them to do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for formal staff development may be limited in the first phase of response, but managers provide an induction and on-the-job training as a minimum.
Organisational Responsibilities	
OR 8.4:	<p>The organisation has the management and staff capacity and capability to deliver its programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire people who will increase the accessibility of services and avoid any perception of discrimination, considering language and ethnicity. • Consider how the organisation will address peaks in demand for qualified staff in advance. • Clarify country-level roles and responsibilities as well as internal decision-making responsibilities and communication. • Avoid deploying staff for short periods of time. Develop locally recruited staff who are likely to stay for longer periods of time. In multi-mandated agencies, development staff should be trained and available for humanitarian response.
OR 8.5:	<p>Staff policies and procedures are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant with local employment law.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational policy and practice promotes the role of national staff at management and leadership level to ensure continuity, institutional memory, and more contextually appropriate responses.
OR 8.6:	<p>Job descriptions, work objectives and feedback processes are in place so that staff have a clear understanding of what is required of them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff in how to apply standard operating procedures as this allows for higher levels of delegation and faster responses. An effective response is not simply about ensuring that skilled staff are present but also depends on the way that individuals are managed. Research from emergency contexts shows that effective management, frameworks and procedures are as important as, if not more important than, the skills of personnel in ensuring an effective response.
OR 8.7:	<p>A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation’s code of conduct is understood, signed and upheld, making it clear to all representatives of the organisation (including staff, volunteers, partners and contractors) what standards of behaviour are expected and what the consequences will be if they breach the code.
OR 8.8:	Policies are in place to support staff to improve their skills and competencies.
OR 8.9:	<p>Policies are in place for the security and the wellbeing of staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization have and enact policies that help to support the psychosocial well-being of staff. Managers make humanitarian workers aware of risks and protect them from exposure to unnecessary threats to their physical and emotional health. Measures that can be adopted include effective security management, preventative health advice, zero-tolerance for harassment and abuse in the workplace, active support for working reasonable hours and access to psychological support. Establish holistic prevention and response strategies to address incidents of sexual harassment and violence, as experienced or perpetrated by their staff.

What else do I need to know?

Staff and volunteers

- Any designated representative of the organisation, including national, international, permanent or short-term employees, as well as volunteers and consultants, is considered to be a member of staff. However, different terms and conditions apply to different types and levels of staff.
- National employment law will often dictate the status of an individual working for the organisation and such laws must be respected.

Adhering to organisational mandates, values and policies

- What is provided during humanitarian response is just as important as how it is provided, such as ensuring staff offering aid are polite, caring and respectful throughout.

- Staff are expected to work within the legal scope, mission, values and vision of the organisation, which should be defined and communicated to them. Beyond this wider understanding of the role and ways of working of the organisation, an individual should work to a set of personal objectives and the performance expectations agreed to together with their manager.
- Policies should make explicit commitments to gender balance and inclusion of women as staff and volunteers.
- Policies should promote a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. Measures shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility in the workplace; prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability; promoting equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value; providing reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities in the workplace

Performance standards and development of competencies

- Staff and their employers are mutually accountable for their skills development – including management skills. With the help of clear objectives and performance standards, they should understand what skills, competencies and knowledge are required to perform their current role. They should also be made aware of the opportunities for growth and development that might be available or required. Competencies can be improved through experience, training, mentoring or coaching.
- There are various methods that can be used to assess a staff member's skills and behaviours, including observation, reviewing work output, direct discussions with them and interviewing their colleagues. Regular documented performance appraisals should allow managers to identify areas for support and training (see the links to further guidance below).

Staff capacity and capability

- Personnel management systems differ by agency and context but should be informed by good practice. They need to be considered and planned at a strategic level with the support of senior management. Organisation and project plans must consider staff capacity, and gender balance, to ensure that the right numbers of staff with the right skills are in the right place at the right time to deliver short and long-term organisational objectives.
- This does not mean that organisation-wide preparedness (involving operations, human resources, finance and other functions) is vital to envisioning how the resources required will be mobilised.
- Organisations should ensure that staff have the competencies needed for supporting community listening, decision making and action.
- Focusing on competency and capacity development can motivate staff and lead to greater effectiveness. The organisation should have mechanisms for reviewing staff performance and assessing capacity gaps as well as a strategy for developing competencies and capacity to contribute to talent development. Performance review schedules must be flexible enough to cover staff who only work short-term as well as those who are on open-ended contracts. Adequate attention should be given to competencies of listening, enabling inclusion, facilitating community dialogue, and enabling community decision making and initiatives.
- Partner organisations should agree together on the competencies required for staff to meet the agreed Commitments.

Staff policies and procedures

- The style and complexity of staff policies and procedures will depend on the size and context of each agency. However simple or complex the agency may be, staff should participate in the development and review of policies where possible to ensure that their views are represented. A staff manual facilitates knowledge of and consultation on policies.
- Local labour laws must be understood and respected.

Staff guidance

- Job descriptions should make clear what is expected of each member of staff and should be kept up to date. In addition, each staff member should identify individual objectives that cover their work aspirations and the competencies they hope to develop or improve, and document these in a development plan.

Security and well-being

- Staff often work long hours in risky and stressful conditions. An agency's duty of care to its national and international staff includes actions to promote well-being and avoid long-term exhaustion, burnout, injury or illness.
- Managers can promote a duty of care through modelling good practice and personally complying with policy. Humanitarian workers also need to take personal responsibility for managing their well-being. Psychological First Aid should be immediately available to workers who have experienced or witnessed extremely distressing events.
- Include trainings to ensure that staff are prepared to receive information on incidents of sexual violence experienced by their colleagues, as well as robust investigative and deterrence measures to ensure trust can be placed in the system and accountability thrives. When incidents do occur, a survivor-centred approach to medical and psychosocial support, which includes recognition of vicarious trauma, that is responsive and inclusive of the needs of expatriate and national staff.
- Ensure that a mental health professional contacts all national and international staff members (including translators, drivers, volunteers, etc.) who have survived a potentially traumatic event one to three months following the event. The professional should assess how the survivor is functioning and feeling and make referral to clinical treatment for those with substantial problems that have not healed over time.

CHS Commitment 9

Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.

Quality Criterion: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.

Performance Indicators

1. Communities and people affected by crisis are made aware of community-level budgets, expenditures and results achieved.
2. Communities and people affected by crisis consider that the available resources are being used:

<p>a. for what they were intended; and</p> <p>b. without diversion or wastage.</p> <p>3. The resources obtained for the response are used and monitored according to agreed plans, targets, budgets and timeframes.</p> <p>4. Humanitarian response is delivered in a way that is cost effective.</p>	
<p>Key Actions</p>	
<p>KA 9.1:</p>	<p>Design programmes and implement processes to ensure the efficient use of resources, balancing quality, cost and timeliness at each phase of the response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt procedures in rapid-onset emergencies to enable faster financial decision-making and cope with challenges (for example, a lack of available suppliers to carry out competitive tenders).
<p>KA 9.2:</p>	<p>Manage and use resources to achieve their intended purpose, minimising waste.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff with specific skills and systems are in place to manage risks related to procurement, cash-transfer programming and stock management. Accounting records should satisfy accepted national and/or international standards and should be applied systematically within the organisation.
<p>KA 9.3:</p>	<p>Monitor and report expenditure against budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish financial planning and monitoring systems to ensure that programme objectives are met, including procedures to mitigate key financial management risks and track all financial transactions. All staff members share responsibility for ensuring that finances are well managed. Staff are encouraged to report any suspected fraud, corruption or misuse of resources.
<p>KA 9.4:</p>	<p>When using local and natural resources, consider their impact on the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green procurement policies help reduce the impact on the environment. They must be managed to prevent or minimise delay in the provision of assistance. Commit to environmentally sound policies and practices, both for internal and external operations and procurement, and make use of existing guidelines to help address environmental issues in an emergency. Conduct a rapid environmental assessment (REA) to determine risk and mitigating measures should be put in place as early as possible in the response or programme.
<p>KA 9.5:</p>	<p>Manage the risk of corruption and take appropriate action if it is identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document funding criteria and sources of funding. The use of some funding sources could compromise the operational independence and impartiality of an organisation and efforts. Take steps to

	mitigate such risks by producing guidance for staff and encouraging transparency.
Organisational Responsibilities	
OR 9.6:	<p>Policies and processes governing the use and management of resources are in place, including how the organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. accepts and allocates funds and gifts-in-kind ethically and legally; b. uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way; c. prevents and addresses corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and misuse of resources; d. conducts audits, verifies compliance and reports transparently; e. assesses, manages and mitigates risk on an ongoing basis; and f. ensures that the acceptance of resources does not compromise its independence.
<p>What else do I need to know?</p> <p><i>Efficient use of resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In high-profile acute emergencies, there is often the pressure to respond quickly and to demonstrate that agencies are doing something to address the situation. This can lead to poor project planning and insufficient emphasis on exploring different potential programme and financial options (for example, the use of cash-based assistance) that may offer better value for money. • However, the elevated risk of corruption in these contexts means it is important to provide training and support to staff and establish complaints mechanisms to prevent adapted systems being open to corruption (see Commitments 3 & 5). • Deploying experienced senior staff during this time can help to mitigate the risks and ensure that a balance is struck between providing a timely response and one that also maintains standards and limits waste. • Collaboration and coordination between organisations can also contribute to a more efficient response (for example, by conducting joint assessments or evaluations and supporting interagency registration and logistics systems). • At the end of the project, the assets and resources that remain will need to be donated, sold or returned responsibly. <p><i>Using resources for their intended purpose</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All humanitarian actors are accountable to both donors and affected people and should be able to demonstrate that resources have been used wisely, efficiently and to good effect. • Fraud, corruption and waste divert resources away from those who need them most. However, an intervention that is not effective because it is understaffed or under-resourced cannot be said to be accountable. Economical does not always equal value for money. A balance will often need to be struck between economy, effectiveness and efficiency. <p><i>Managing corruption risks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition and understanding of corrupt practices is not the same in all cultures. A clear definition of the behaviour that is expected of staff (including volunteers) and partners is fundamental in addressing this risk (see Commitment 8). 	

- Being more open and transparent with project information, encouraging stakeholders to report abuses of power, careful on-site monitoring and treating community members with respect can help to reduce corruption risks.

Funding and gifts-in-kind

- Gifts-in-kind may create ethical dilemmas. Giving gifts in many cultures is an important social norm and refusing a gift would appear rude. If receiving the gift causes a sense of indebtedness, the receiver should politely refuse it. But if it is accepted, it is wise to declare this and discuss with a manager if concerns remain. Staff should be made aware of such policies and possible dilemmas.

Natural resources and environmental impact

- Humanitarian responses can have negative impacts on the environment that in turn causes further damage to lives, health and livelihoods. Humanitarian organizations should adopt a plan of action for reducing their environmental impact. This includes an environmental assessment, reporting lines and responsibilities. Coordination between and across sectors including WASH, Shelter and Health is critical to deal with cross-sectoral issues including waste reduction, use of natural resources, water table contamination and deforestation.

Corruption and fraud

- Fraud includes theft, diversion of goods or property and the falsification of records such as expense claims. Every organisation must keep an accurate record of financial transactions that take place to show how funds have been used. Systems and procedures need to be set up to ensure internal control of financial resources and to prevent fraud and corruption.
- Recognised good practice in financial management and reporting should be supported by the organisation. Organisational policies should also ensure that procurement systems are transparent and robust and incorporate counter-terrorism measures.

Conflicts of interest

- Staff must ensure that there is no conflict between the aims of the organisation and their own personal or financial interests. For example, they must not award contracts to suppliers, organisations or individuals if they or their family stand to gain financially.
- There are various forms of conflict of interest and people do not always recognise that they are contravening organisational codes and policies. For example, using the organisation's resources without permission or taking gifts from a supplier might be construed as a conflict of interest.
- Creating a culture where people feel that they can openly discuss and declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest is key to managing them.

Auditing and transparency

- Audits can take several forms – internal audits check that procedures are being followed. External audits verify whether the organisation's financial statements are true and fair. An investigative audit is executed when an organisation suspects a specific problem – usually fraud.

Resources and further reading

General resources : corehumanitarianstandard.org

Self-assessment documents for the CHS

CHS Alliance: chsalliance.org/resources

Principles on Public-Private Cooperation in Humanitarian Payments

Matthew Blake, Drew Propson, Carlos Monteverde

<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/weffiprincipleshumanitarianpayments.pdf>

Cash or in-kind? Why not both? Response analysis lessons from multimodal programming, July 2017

<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-response-analysis-web.pdf>

Monitoring4CTP:Monitoring Guidance for CTP in emergencies

Sophie Martin-Simpson, Floor Grootenhuis and Stewart Jordan.

<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-ctp-monitoring-web.pdf>

CHS Quality Compas

Commitment 1

ACAPS & ECB (2014) '[Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide](#)'

ALNAP & Groupe URD (2009) 'Developing a participatory approach to involve affected people in a humanitarian response'. The Participation Handbook (chapter 7):

http://urd.org/IMG/pdf/MP_GB_CHAPITRE7.pdf

IASC (2015) 'Multi-sector initial rapid assessment guidance' (revised July 2015):

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/mira_revised_2015_en.pdf

IASC (2006) 'Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs, Equal Opportunities'. The Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action:

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/gender-and-humanitarian-action-0/documents-public/women-girls-boys-men-different-needs-equal>

Mazurana, D., Benelli, P., Gupta, H., & Walker, P. (2011) 'Sex and Age Matter: Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies'. Feinstein International Center, Tufts University:

<http://www.alnap.org/resource/8144>

ENVIRONMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION Increasing Effectiveness, Sustainability and Accountability

A STUDY UNDERTAKEN FOR THE JOINT UNEP/OCHA ENVIRONMENT UNIT Version 1 2014

http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/EHA_Study_web_FINAL.pdf

The Environmental Emergencies Guidelines, 2nd edition

<http://www.eecentre.org/eeguidelines/>

Washington Group on Disability Statistics: <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>

Commitment 2

IASC (2015) Reference module for the implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space/programme-cycle-toolbox>

ALNAP & Groupe URD (2009) 'Developing a participatory approach to involve affected people in a humanitarian response'. The Participation Handbook (chapter 8):

http://urd.org/IMG/pdf/MP_GB_CHAPITRE8.pdf

IFRC (2006) 'What is VCA? An introduction to vulnerability and capacity assessment':
<http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/vca/whats-vca-en.pdf>

Commitment 3

Turnbull, M., Sterret, C. & Hilleboe, A. (2013) 'Toward resilience, a guide to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation'. Practical Action:
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECB-toward-resilience-Disaster-risk-reduction-Climate-Change-Adaptation-guideenglish.pdf>

Groupe URD (2013) 'Reaching Resilience: Handbook Resilience 2.0 for aid practitioners and policymakers in Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Poverty Reduction':
<http://www.reachingresilience.org/IMG/pdf/resilience-handbook.pdf>

Slim, H. & Bonwick, A. (2005) 'Protection: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies':
www.alnap.org/resource/5263

SEEP Network (2010) 'Minimum Economic Recovery Standards':
<http://www.seepnetwork.org/minimum-economic-recovery-standards-resources-174.php>

Refer "further links" section here and in commitment 8 to section 5 for resources on PSEA, which needs to be updated (SG Bulletin, IASC PSEA webpage; publications from CHS Alliance (investigation and PSEA guides)

The IASC humanitarian programme cycle (see the links to further guidance) provides more information on expected timelines for slow and sudden onset emergencies. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space>

Commitment 4

ALNAP & Groupe URD (2009) 'Developing a participatory approach to involve affected people in a humanitarian response'. The Participation Handbook:
<http://www.alnap.org/resource/8531>

CRS (2013) 'Communication Toolbox: Practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with participants and community members':
<http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/general/communication-toolbox.pdf>

ALNAP (2014) 'Closing the Loop – Practitioner guidance on effective feedback mechanisms in humanitarian contexts'. ALNAP Practitioner Guidance. London: ALNAP/ODI:
<http://www.alnap.org/what-we-do/engagement/feedback-loop>

Infoasaid (2013) Diagnostic Tools:
<http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20140626100739-b0u7q>

Infoasaid (2015) E-learning course:
<http://www.cdacnetwork.org/learning-centre/e-learning/>

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has several reports on its website on community scorecards. www.odi.org/publications/

Commitment 5

Danish Refugee Council (2008) 'Complaints Mechanism Handbook':
<http://www.alnap.org/resource/8762>

IASC Task force on PSEA (2009) 'Guidelines on Setting Up a Community Based Complaints Mechanism Regarding Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN Personnel':
www.pseatastaskforce.org/uploads/tools/1351822689.pdf

Save the Children (2013) 'Putting Accountability into Practice':
<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/programme-accountability-guidance-pack-save-children-resource>

Keeping Children Safe (2014) 'Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them'
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/rights_child/standards_child_protection_kcsc_en.pdf

Ager A, Pasha E et al. Stress, Mental Health and burnout in National Humanitarian Aid Workers in Gulu, Northern Uganda. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (2012). December 25(6):713-20
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23225036>

Commitment 6

IASC (2012) 'Reference module for cluster coordination at the country level':
<http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters>

NRC (2008) 'Camp management toolkit':
<http://www.nrc.no/camp#.VLz95ihb7ns>

Christian Aid (2012) 'Building the future of humanitarian aid: Local capacity and partnerships in emergency assistance':
<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/building-the-future-of-humanitarian-aid.pdf>

Knox Clarke, P. and Campbell, L. (2015) 'Exploring coordination in humanitarian clusters'. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI:
<http://www.alnap.org/resource/20360>

Commitment 7

ALNAP: Should include the ALNAP HELP database – either in text on sector learning, or in this links to further guidance section

The Sphere Project (2015) 'Sphere for monitoring and evaluation'. Sphere Unpacked series:
<http://www.sphereproject.org/silo/files/sphere-for-monitoring-and-evaluation.pdf>

Buchanan-Smith, M. & Cosgrave, J. (2013) 'Evaluation of Humanitarian Action: Pilot Guide'. ALNAP:
<http://www.alnap.org/what-we-do/evaluation/eha#>

Norman, B. (2013) 'Monitoring and accountability practices for remotely managed projects implemented in volatile operating environments'. Tearfund:
<http://www.alnap.org/resource/7956>

Catley, A., Burns, J., Abebe, D., Suji, O. (2013) 'Participatory Impact Assessment: A Design Guide'. Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, Somerville:
http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/PIA-guide_revised-2014-3.pdf

Hallam, A. and Bonino, F. (2013) 'Using Evaluation for a Change: Insights from humanitarian practitioners'. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI:
<http://www.alnap.org/resource/8980>

Commitment 8

CHS Alliance (2015) HR Tool:
<http://chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/Tools-and-guidance/CHS-Alliance-Handbook-for-Managing-HR-Effectiveness-Final.pdf>

CBHA (2010) 'Core Humanitarian Competencies Guide: Humanitarian Capacity Building Throughout the Employee Life Cycle':
<http://www.start-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Core-Humanitarian-Competencies-Guide.pdf>

ECB (2007) 'Building Trust in Diverse Teams: The Toolkit for Emergency Response':
<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/building-trust-in-diverse-teams-the-toolkit-for-emergency-response-115413>

People In Aid (2011) 'Debriefing: building staff capacity':
<http://chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/Case-Studies/Debriefing-building-staff-capacity.pdf>

Refer "further links" section here and in commitment 8 to section 5 for resources on PSEA, which needs to be updated (SG Bulletin, IASC PSEA webpage; publications from CHS Alliance (investigation and PSEA guides)

World Health Organization, War Trauma Foundation and World Vision International (2011). Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers. WHO: Geneva/
http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/

Commitment 9

Groupe URD/UNEP 'Training toolkit: Integrating the environment into humanitarian action and early recovery':
<http://postconflict.unep.ch/humanitarianaction/training.html>

OCHA & UNEP (2014) 'Environment and Humanitarian action' (factsheet):
https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/EHA_factsheet_final.pdf

Mango (2013) Top Tips for financial governance (webpage):
<http://www.mango.org.uk/toptips/tt20gov>

Lewis, T. (2010) 'Financial Management Essentials: Handbook for NGOs'. Mango:
<http://www.mango.org.uk/guide/coursehandbook>

Bond (2012) 'Value for money – what it means for UK NGOs (Background paper)':
https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Value_for_money_-_what_it_means_for_NGOs_Jan_2012.pdf

Hees, R., Ahlendorf, M. & Debere, S. (2014) 'Preventing corruption in humanitarian operations'. Transparency International:
http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/handbook_of_good_practices_preventing_corruption_in_humanitarian_operations

CASH suggestions - for here or for Introduction chapter explaining cash

<http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/1046-monitoring4ctp-monitoring-guidance-for-ctp-in-emergencies>

Core Humanitarian Standard Appendix 1

Below are some guiding questions related to the Core Humanitarian Standard’s Key Actions and Organisational Requirements. These questions can be used to support programme design, or as a tool for reviewing a project, response or policy.

<p>Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 1 Key Actions</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has a comprehensive and consultative assessment of needs and capacities been conducted and used to inform response planning? 2. Are multiple sources of information, including affected people and communities, local institutions and other stakeholders consulted when assessing needs, risks, capacities, vulnerabilities and context? Are assessment and monitoring data disaggregated by sex, age and disability? 3. How have at-risk groups been identified? 4. Are relevant cross-cutting issues considered in the needs and context analysis? 5. Does the response include providing assistance in a way which is adapted to their needs (i.e. in-kind, cash, etc) as well as the different types of assistance and protection for different demographic groups? 6. What actions are taken to adapt the response strategy to different demographic groups, based on changing needs, capacities, risks and the context?
<p>Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 1 Organisational Responsibilities</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the organisation have a clear policy commitment to needs-based, impartial and independent humanitarian action, and are staff members aware of it? 2. Do relevant stakeholders perceive the organisation as impartial, independent and non-discriminatory? 3. Do working processes include mechanisms for consistently collecting data disaggregated by sex, age and disability? Are these data regularly used to guide programme design and implementation? 4. Does the organisation have the funding, staffing policies and programmatic flexibility to allow it to adapt the response to changing needs?
<p>Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 2 Key Actions</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are constraints such as physical barriers or discrimination and risks regularly identified and analysed, and plans adapted accordingly together with the affected population?

2. Does planning consider optimal times for activities, accounting for factors such as weather, season, social factors or conflict?
3. Are delays in implementing plans and activities monitored and addressed?
4. Are early warning systems and contingency plans used?
5. Are recognised technical standards used and achieved?
6. Are unmet needs identified and addressed?
7. Are the results of monitoring used to adapt programmes?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 2 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Are there clear processes to assess if the organisation has the sufficient ability, financing and appropriate deployable staff available before making programming commitments?
2. Are there clear policies, processes and resources in place to support monitoring and evaluation and to use the results for management and decision-making? Are they known to staff?
3. Are there clear processes to define responsibilities and timelines for decision-making on resource allocations?

Guiding questions for monitoring commitment 3 Key Actions

1. Have local capacities for resilience (i.e. structures, organisations, informal groups, leadership figures and support networks) been identified and do plans exist to strengthen these capacities?
2. Is existing information on risks, hazards, vulnerabilities and related plans used in programming activities?
3. Has the programme considered whether and how services could be provided by local civil society, government or private sector bodies? Are plans in place to support these bodies taking over the provision of relevant services?
4. Are strategies and actions to reduce risk and build resilience designed in consultation with, or guided by, affected people and communities?
5. In what ways (both formal and informal) are local leaders and/or authorities consulted to ensure response strategies are in line with local and/or national priorities?
6. Are staff sufficiently supportive of local initiatives and first response and of building capacities for future first response?
7. Have community-based self-help initiatives been promoted and established?
8. Is the response designed to facilitate early recovery?
9. Is there progressive ownership and decision making by local people?
10. Has a market assessment of any sort been completed, to identify possible impacts of the programme on the local economy?
11. Has a clear transition and/or exit strategy been developed in consultation with affected people and other relevant stakeholders?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 3 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Is there a policy that requires the execution of risk assessments and risk reduction exercises for vulnerable people in the organisation’s programme areas? Is it known to staff?
2. Do policies and procedures exist for assessing and mitigating the negative effects of the response? Are they known to staff?

3. Are there specific policies and procedures in place to deal with situations of sexual exploitation, abuse or discrimination? Are they known to staff?
4. Are contingency plans in place for responding to new or evolving crises? Are they known to staff?
5. Does staff understand what is expected of them on issues of protection, security and risks?
6. Does the organisation enable and promote community-led action and self-help?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 4 Key Actions

1. Is information about the organisation and response provided in accessible and appropriate ways to different affected groups?
2. Can women, men, girls and boys (especially those who are marginalised and vulnerable) access the information provided, and do they understand it?
3. Are affected people’s views, including those of the most vulnerable and marginalised, sought and used to guide programme design and implementation?
4. Do groups within affected communities feel they have opportunities to participate in decisions about the response that affects them including when assistance is provided through electronic transfers?
5. Are all groups within the affected community aware of how to give feedback on the response, and do they feel safe using those channels?
6. Is feedback used? Can the programme point to elements that have been changed based on feedback? (see KA 2.5. and KA 1.3.)
7. Are barriers to giving feedback identified and addressed?
8. Is data provided through feedback mechanisms disaggregated by age, sex, disability and other relevant categories?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 4 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Do policies and programme plans include provisions for data protection and information sharing, including criteria on what information should and should not be shared? Also are there criteria for safe data storage (in lockable cabinets for hard copies and password protected files for soft copies), restricted access, destruction of data in case of evacuation, information sharing protocols (detailing what information should be shared, with whom, and in which situations – keeping in mind that information should only be shared on a strictly need to know basis, and should not contain identifying details or case histories unless necessary)?
2. Are they known to staff?
3. Do policies include provisions on how to deal with confidential or sensitive information, or information that could potentially place staff or affected people at risk? Are they known to staff?
4. Is there a policy commitment and guidelines about the way in which affected people are represented in external communications or fundraising materials? Are they known to staff?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 5 Key Actions

1. Are communities and people affected by crisis consulted about the design of complaints mechanisms?

2. Are the preferences of all demographic groups considered, particularly those related to safety and confidentiality, in the design of complaint handling processes?
3. Is information about how complaints mechanisms work and what kind of complaints can be made through them provided to and understood by all demographic groups?
4. Are there agreed and respected timeframes for investigating and resolving complaints? Is the time between when a complaint is filed and its resolution recorded?
5. Are complaints about sexual exploitation and abuse investigated immediately by staff with relevant competencies and an appropriate level of authority?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 5 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Are there specific policies, budgets and procedures in place for handling complaints?
2. Are all staff provided with induction and refresher training on the organisation’s policy and procedures for handling complaints?
3. Does the organisation’s complaints-handling policy include provisions for sexual exploitation and abuse?
4. Is the organisation’s policy commitment and procedures for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse shared with affected people?
5. Are complaints that cannot be addressed by the organisation referred in a timely manner to other relevant organisations?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 6 Key Actions

1. Is information about the organisation’s competences, resources, geographical areas and sectors of work shared in a timely way with others responding to the crisis?
2. Is information about the competences, resources, areas and sectors of work of other organisations, including local and national authorities, accessed and used?
3. Have existing coordination structures been identified and supported?
4. Are the programmes of other organisations and authorities considered when designing, planning and implementing programmes?
5. Are gaps and duplication in coverage identified and addressed?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 6 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Is there a clear commitment in organisational policies and/or strategies to work in collaboration with other actors?
2. Have criteria or conditions for partner selection, collaboration and coordination been established?
3. Are formal partnership arrangements in place?
4. Do partnership agreements include clear definitions of the roles, responsibilities and commitments of each partner, including how each partner will contribute to jointly meeting humanitarian principles?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 7 Key Actions

1. Are evaluations and reviews of responses of similar crises consulted and incorporated as relevant in programme design?

2. Are monitoring, evaluation, feedback and complaints-handling processes leading to changes and/or innovations in programme design and implementation?
3. Is learning systematically documented?
4. Are specific systems used to share learning with relevant stakeholders, including affected people and partners?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 7 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Do policies and resources exist for evaluation and learning? Are they known to staff?
2. Does clear guidance exist for the recording and dissemination of learning, including specific guidance applicable to humanitarian crises?
3. Is learning identified at programme level, documented and shared within the organisation?
4. Is the organisation an active member of learning and innovation forums? How does the organisation contribute to these forums?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 8 Key Actions

1. Are the organisation's mandate and values communicated to new staff?
2. Is staff performance managed, under-performance addressed and good performance recognised?
3. Does staff sign a code of conduct or similarly binding document? If so, do they receive orientation on it and on other relevant policies that supports their understanding of the policy?
4. Are complaints received about staff or partners' staff? How are they handled?
5. Is staff aware of support available for their developing the competences required by their role and are they making use of it?

Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 8 Organisational Responsibilities

1. Are procedures in place for assessing human resource needs in relation to programme size and scope?
2. Does organisational planning make provision for future leadership needs and for developing new talent?
3. Do staff policies and procedures comply with local employment law and follow recognised good practice in managing staff
4. Do staff security and wellbeing policies accommodate for the practical and psychosocial needs of local staff who may have been personally affected by the crisis?
5. Are soft skills that support the ability of staff to listen to and account for feedback from people affected by crisis taken into consideration when recruiting, training and appraising staff?
6. Do all staff have updated job descriptions and objectives, including specific responsibilities and objectives?
7. Is the compensation and benefits structure fair, transparent and consistently applied?
8. Is all staff provided with an induction and updates on performance management and staff development policies and procedures?
9. Is all staff (and contractors) required to sign a code of conduct (that covers the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse) and provided with an appropriate induction on the code of conduct?

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| <p>10. Does the organisation have location-specific guidelines for an internal complaint handling mechanism, and which are known to staff?</p> <p>11. Do staff members understand, recognize and respond to discrimination in their own programs and activities?</p> |
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<p>Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 9 Key Actions</p>

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|---|
| <p>1. Are staff following organisational protocols for decisions regarding expenditure?</p> <p>2. Is expenditure monitored regularly and the reports shared across programme management?</p> <p>3. Are services and goods procured using a competitive bidding process?</p> <p>4. Are potential impacts on the environment (water, soil, air, biodiversity) monitored, and actions taken to mitigate them?</p> <p>5. Is a safe whistle-blowing procedure in place and known to staff, affected people and other stakeholders?</p> <p>6. Are cost-effectiveness and social impact monitored?</p> |
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<p>Guiding questions for monitoring Commitment 9 Organisational Responsibilities</p>

- | |
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| <p>1. Do policies and procedures exist for ethical procurement, use and management of resources?</p> <p>2. Do these include provisions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptance and allocation of funds? • acceptance and allocation of gifts-in-kind? • mitigation and prevention of environmental impacts? • fraud prevention, handling of suspected and proven corruption, and misuse of resources? • conflicts of interest? • auditing, verification and reporting? • asset risk assessment and management? |
|--|