

An introduction to the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP)

HAP is the humanitarian sector’s first international self-regulatory body. It is made up of over 80 humanitarian and development agencies ranging from International federations such as Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision, to National NGO’s such as COAST Bangladesh, OFADEC Senegal and Sungi Development Foundation Pakistan, as well as donors and networks. Our mission is to make humanitarian action accountable to the people we serve, as well as upholding the rights and dignity of affected populations. We define accountability as ‘the responsible use of power’. Founded in 2003, the HAP Secretariat is based in Geneva and our members operate in over 70 countries worldwide.

HAP is part of the wider quality and accountability movement and has recently started collaboration with People In Aid and the Sphere Project, in an effort to make standards more coherent. This is called the Joint Standards Initiative, see www.jointstandards.org for further information.

2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management

The HAP Standard helps humanitarian organisations to design, implement and improve high quality and accountable programmes. The 2010 edition of the Standard was developed through an extensive review process with over 1,900 crisis affected people, aid workers and donor representatives. Within the HAP Standard 2010, **6 Benchmarks** define key aspects of accountability to affected populations, as follows:

1. Establishing and delivering on commitments	the organisation sets out the commitments that it will be held accountable for, and how they will be delivered
2. Staff competency	the organisation ensures that staff have competencies that enable them to meet the organisations commitments
3. Sharing information	the organisation ensures that the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about the organisation and its activities
4. Participation	the organisation listens to the people it aims to assist, incorporating their views and analysis in the programme decisions
5. Handling complaints	the organisation enables the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible and safe process
6. Learning & continual improvement	the organisation learns from experience to continually improve its performance

Services to HAP members and the wider humanitarian community

- **Baseline audit** - to assess agencies current accountability practices against the HAP Standard.
- **Certification** - through external verification of agencies accountability practices against the Standard
- **Peer support and Capacity Building** to members e.g. providing training in accountability, complaints and response mechanisms and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Sharing good practice** and key messages through the HAP website, publications and workshops.
- **Complaints handling** - offering a collective complaints mechanism with expert investigators.
- **Advocacy** - together shaping the accountability agenda & championing the voice of beneficiaries.
- **Field deployment** - providing on-the-ground support to members on accountability.