



STRATEGY 2018 – 2021

UPDATED 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

CHS Alliance, formed in 2015, brings together more than two decades of experience in quality, accountability and people management, and is the result of a merger between HAP International (a Swiss Association) and People In Aid (a UK-registered charity).

This strategy is the guiding document for the secretariat of CHS Alliance. The secretariat can only achieve the outcomes outlined in this strategy with the active support of the CHS Alliance membership.

‘We’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ refers to both the secretariat and the membership. The membership adopted the original strategy, through the CHS Alliance Board, in April 2017. In 2018, the CHS Alliance commissioned an [external evaluation](#). One of its recommendation was to update the strategy at its midway point. This updated version follows this recommendation. The new strategic objectives and success indicators are based on the steep learning curve of the past few years and the feedback from our members at our General Assembly 2019.

Overall, this revised strategy places more emphasis on: an influencing agenda, to promote broad adoption of the CHS; strengthening and promoting our verification scheme; and investing in greater expertise in key programmatic thematic areas (Accountability to Affected People, Protection Against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment, and People Management) to support our members.

This version was approved by our Board in March 2020.

2. OUR VISION

People and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty, influence and access quality assistance and can hold organisations accountable.

3. OUR MISSION

- To promote respect for the rights and dignity of people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty.
- To enhance the effectiveness and impact of assistance by building a culture of quality and accountability.

4. OUR PURPOSE

We aim to make aid work better for people; the people affected by crisis and the people (aid workers) who serve them.

5. OUR VALUES

We put people at the centre. They inspire us to work with these values in mind:

- **Quality.** We continuously improve the quality of our work. We help organisations strengthen and consolidate the quality of their assistance. We recognise excellence and raise its visibility.
- **Accountability.** We listen, we are responsive, and we ensure clarity of our approach and the effects of our work. We promote the accountability agenda amongst our membership and in the wider sector to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of aid.
- **Collaboration.** With others, we are a movement for quality and accountability. In isolation, we are irrelevant. In our collaboration, we are respectful and inclusive.

6. OUR MEMBERSHIP

The CHS Alliance is a membership organisation with members operating in more than 160 countries worldwide in both the humanitarian and development sector. Our members are committed to improving quality and accountability, and collectively demonstrate this to affected people, staff and donors.

Together, our members form a movement for quality and accountability. They share experience and lessons and adopt and adapt each other's good practice. They use and contribute to evidence, tools and services. As a group, they amplify the individual voices. This gives the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) local and global visibility and influences the future shape of response.

The CHS Alliance is committed to creating an accessible membership framework that recognises the diversity present in the sector, and to creating an enabling environment for initiatives to emerge from any member.

7. OUR RELATION TO THE CHS

The CHS serves as a reference point for the work of CHS Alliance. Other organisations that provide important CHS-related products and services include Sphere, Groupe URD and the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI).

The CHS puts people vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty at the heart of humanitarian



and development work. The CHS¹ is an evolving standard and a CHS Steering Committee will oversee its revision to ensure its continued relevance.

The CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action, and aims to help people affected by crisis in two ways:

- By outlining **what organisations need to do** to deliver high quality accountable and principled assistance and protection, and
- By **specifying what affected populations should expect** from the organisations responding to their needs.

These expectations are framed around nine commitments, each supported by a quality criterion. For each of these, key actions describe what staff engaged in humanitarian action need to do to achieve high-quality response programmes consistently, and to be accountable to those that they seek to assist, while organisational responsibilities outline the policies, processes and systems organisations need to have in place to support their staff to deliver high-quality and accountable responses.

The CHS aligns closely with the wider Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and specifically with its commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). The CHS incorporates the need for effective *people management* and highlights the importance of the well-being and security of humanitarian staff, recognising that approximately 95% of staff are national staff from the affected population. The CHS indirectly supports many of the 23 principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD).

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) enhanced the visibility² of the CHS.

“Participants at the Summit recognized the need to ensure people affected by crises are not only informed and consulted but put at the centre of the decision-making processes. People affected by crisis should be treated as partners, not beneficiaries. Numerous commitments were made towards addressing this shift by donors, UN agencies and NGOs, including the adoption of the Core Humanitarian Standard”.

Advocacy for the adoption and application of the CHS was identified as a way forward to implementing Core Responsibility Four of the Agenda for Humanity³, and there is a clear link between the CHS and the commitments made under the Participation Revolution⁴ of the Grand Bargain.

¹ Copyright is held by CHS Alliance, Groupe URD and the Sphere Association.

² Summary Report of UN Secretary General.

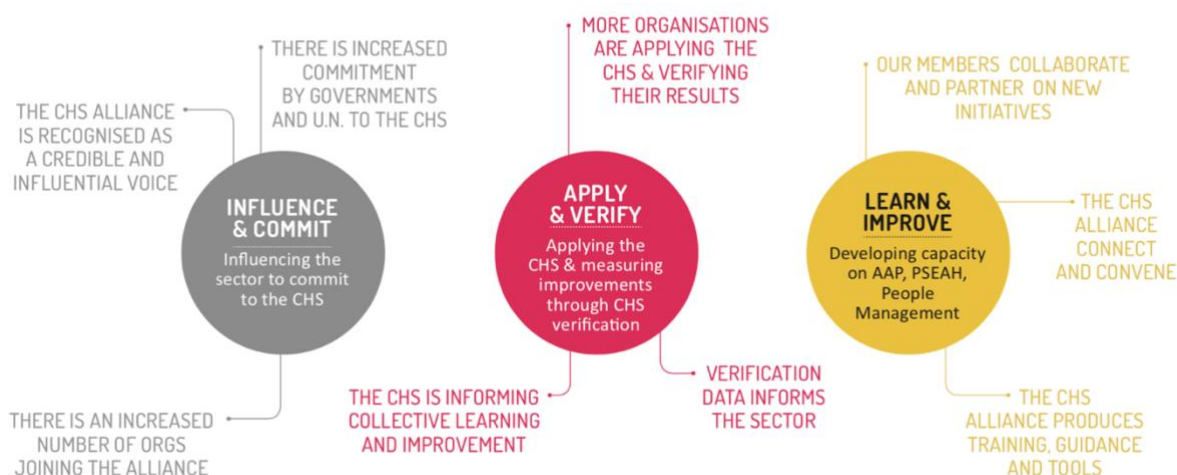
³ People at the Centre, Special Session Summary.

⁴ Grand Bargain, A participation revolution: include people receiving aid in making decisions which affect their lives – final report 22 May 2016.

8. OUR OBJECTIVES

The CHS Alliance has three strategic objectives underpinned by the belief that the CHS, as **a verifiable standard**, enables people vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty to influence and access quality assistance and hold organisations accountable.

We will do this by achieving the following objectives:



Objective 1. Influence and Commit

We will influence the sector to adopt the CHS in their policies and practice, recognising the CHS as the standard to make aid work better for people

- a. The CHS Alliance is seen as a **credible and influential voice** for the sector on issues related to the CHS:

We will continue to advocate for the CHS at all appropriate opportunities, at conferences, through engagement in relevant sectoral working groups, and developing newsletters, articles and outreach on social media etc.

- b. **Increased number of organisations** from across the globe commit to the CHS and *making aid work better* through membership of the Alliance

We will continue to engage with our members to ensure the CHS Alliance membership remains relevant for them. We will constantly assess our membership offer so it is clear why members should join the Alliance and what is required of members that join to enable a membership adhering to the CHS. We will continue to do targeted outreach, particularly to underrepresented parts of the globe. We

will also encourage our members to communicate the CHS commitments in plain language to the people they serve.

- c. **Increased number of donors** (including governments, UN and donor NGOs) recognise the CHS as the benchmark for quality and accountability in the sector.

We will continue to consider how and why donors (including governments, UN and donor NGOs) could and should use the CHS, so it remains a relevant and enabling tool to make aid work better. We will do this in connection with the key CHS stakeholders including the CHS copyright holders and HQAI.

Objective 2: Apply and Verify

We will encourage and support organisations to continuously improve, by measuring how they meet the CHS Nine Commitments and verifying their results

- a. Increasing number of organisations are **improving their performance** guided by the CHS verification process

We will continue to make sure the Verification Scheme and its related tools are fit for purpose to enable an increasing number of organisations to apply and measure their commitment against the CHS. We will continue to support our members in this process.

- b. Collective application and measurement of the CHS is **driving change at operational level**

We will put more emphasis on developing the mechanisms for assessing how the CHS is being applied at the operational level. We will continue to ensure this is being driven by the voice of affected people. We will advocate for the systematic assessment of the CHS in operations to assess how to make aid work better.

- c. **Information from verification is being analysed and shared with the sector, informing where improvements need to be made.**

We will continue to gather and analyse the data received from the various verification processes. We will continue to find more analytical processes to use this data to inform how the sector is meeting its commitments. We will continue to produce the biannual Humanitarian Accountability Report to provide a more thorough analysis of how the sector is achieving the CHS commitments and what actions are needed to do so.

Objective 3 - Learn, Improve and Innovate

We will work with our members and partners to provide opportunities for collaboration in seeking improvements in meeting the CHS, and identifying ways to drive broader sector wide change in our focal areas of Accountability to Affected People, People Management and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

- a. Members have **opportunities to connect and collaborate** to share challenges and identify collective solutions for meeting the CHS.

We will continue to seek and develop engaging mechanisms for our members to share challenges and identify solutions for their work in our three thematic areas. This will include conferences, communities of practice, as well as sharing via the regular communication channels of the CHS Alliance.

- b. Members have **access to high quality training, tools, and guidance towards meeting the CHS.**

We will continue to develop high quality training, tools and guidance towards meeting the CHS. We will reassess and refine our training strategy to reach more people on the CHS, as well as improve our highly demanded SEA investigation training. We will continue to have a fit for purpose complaint mechanism in place to support our members in achieving the CHS: We will be both proactive and reactive to developing guidance the sector requires for these focal areas.

- c. Initiatives are undertaken to **promote innovative solutions** to make aid work better for people affected.

We will listen to our members and engage with our partners to discover initiatives for which the CHS Alliance can take a prominent or partnership role. We will continuously seek to remain relevant, responding to the needs of our members and striving to make aid work better for people.

9. OUR RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The secretariat, through our professional networks and consultation with our membership, will closely monitor the environment in which we operate. We will ensure that we mitigate the risks we face, and that we do the utmost to ensure that our assumptions hold true.

We are confident about the positive impact we can have, while at the same time remain aware of the sector's competing interests. We recognise that the CHS itself is one of several quality and accountability initiatives, and that these initiatives form only one of multiple fields of interest for the humanitarian and development sector and its donors. As part of our strategy, we will work closely with these different initiatives to ensure complementarity and collaboration with the view of working together to improve the quality of humanitarian action.

We recognise the vital roles that other stakeholders – such as Sphere, Groupe URD and HQAI - play to advance the sector's quality and accountability agenda. We look forward to close collaboration. Our intention is to benefit from, contribute to and build on their work, not to compete with it.

10. TOWARDS A STRONG CHS ALLIANCE

We will ensure sufficient support and resources (both human and financial) to enable the CHS Alliance to implement its Strategy and actively manage risks—both financial and reputational.

a. **The CHS Alliance has the proper staffing in place to deliver on its plans**

We will build a strong team that reflects the values of the organisation and the principles that we promote. Increased attention will be given to ensure our human resource policies and processes, as well as our working modalities, fit the values of the organization.

b. **Effective governance, policies and processes**

We will continue to develop our working platforms, tools and systems. We will integrate, streamline and automate them, and enhance their ownership among staff. The CHS Alliance Board and its committees play an active role to ensure that financial and operational capacity are aligned with this four-year strategy and that the Secretariat is fully accountable to both members and donors.

c. **CHS Alliance has adequate funding to deliver its plans**

We will maintain our current funding base by consolidating the relationships we have with existing donors. In addition, we will engage with new donors, to increase our funding base, with a focus on donors that show a strong commitment to quality and accountability by putting people at the centre. We will ensure that our membership remains committed to and engaged with CHS Alliance. This commitment includes paying membership fees as required by our Statutes and building on our services which can be cost recovered.

Together, these objectives and our commitment to a strong enabling environment form the engine for a process that will support our long-term outcomes, which will bring us and the sector closer to achieving the CHS Alliance vision.

11. OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Executive Director and the CHS Alliance management team have prepared an operational work plan for 2020 that reflects the changes in this Strategic Plan. This Operational Plan is driven by the priorities identified by the Board and the members and supported by donors.

The CHS Alliance Board will hold the Executive Director accountable for the implementation of the Strategy and Operational Plan to ensure that CHS Alliance is fully accountable to both members and donors.

Ends