



CHS Alliance
MAKING AID WORK BETTER FOR PEOPLE

CHS Alliance Management Response to Charter for Change open letter

The CHS Alliance was grateful to receive a letter from the [Charter for Change](#) at our recent General Assembly. The [letter](#) showed our common alignment on localisation, as well as appreciating how much further we have to go:

“We, as the Charter 4 Change (C4C) network, strongly support the CHS commitments and see the Alliance as a natural ally to the localization agenda given its focus on accountability to affected populations (AAP) and commitments 3 and 6’s explicit recognition of the capacities of local and national humanitarian actors in response...Making real progress against these and other global commitments is challenging, but necessary if we are to achieve a more equitable and effective global humanitarian response”

In the letter, C4C specifically asked for the following four actions from the Alliance and we are pleased to share our responses:

- 1. Scale-up efforts to raise awareness about practical implementation of the CHS in strategic countries, embedded into wider dialogue on programme quality, particularly with agencies operating at the sub-national level.**

This is an essential part of the new CHS Alliance strategy going forward. Without it, we recognise that we cannot achieve our mission. In 2020 we look forward to:

- Assessing CHS application at a collective operational level. This will provide us with a better understanding of how the CHS is understood and applied practically, and areas for improvement.
- We will continue to run awareness raising meetings as well as both public and bespoke training sessions globally.

- 2. Deliberately increase the number of local and national actors that are self-assessed and CHS certified by reducing their barriers to the certification process.**

The CHS is a core standard, which means its can be applied universally. The CHS verification process is the same when applied to a national or an international organisation. However, we recognise that universality is not enough to make verification accessible to all.



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To increase verification uptake with local and national NGOs, we will continue to promote the various verification options, including the simplified self-assessment process. We will also make clear how Self-Assessment can contribute towards certification. While Self-Assessment does not replace independent verification or certification, it is a good entry point to the CHS verification scheme and produces valuable learning. The CHS Alliance are in the process of reviewing the CHS Self-Assessment option and will soon announce plans to make it more accessible to all organisations.

We also accept that we need to reduce barriers to external verification - independent verification or certification - as offered by [HQAI](#). Together with HQAI, we are well aware of the financial challenge to certification and are taking steps to mitigate it. HQAI has created a [subsidy fund](#) that is available to all national organisations who want to use their auditing services. We will continue to work with HQAI to promote the subsidy fund and support local organisations to become certified.

In addition, we will continue to promote our “localisation index”. All organisations, no matter what their size, can complete a verification option to see how they are meeting their “localisation index score”.

What is the CHS localisation index score?

As with the two other CHS indexes (Gender & Diversity and PSEA), the CHS localisation index is not a comprehensive tool but it does provide useful insights that can be acted upon. This score measures the performance of an organisation in applying the CHS requirements that support approaches that consider the explicit recognition of local and national approaches, including partnerships, participation of communities, coordination with local authorities and the impact on the local market and economy, linked to commitments three, four, six, and nine. The collective results of organisations verified against the CHS are [online](#).

3. Strengthen advocacy to donors for the alignment and simplification of reporting processes on programme quality around the CHS.

We couldn't agree more. As the CHS is a common framework for programme quality and accountability, it has the potential to standardise partner capacity assessments across the sector. It is in the interest of all humanitarian actors to harmonise around a common, core standard. This reduces the resources that need to be invested in compliance.



We are currently undertaking a piece of work looking at how donors can recognise the CHS within their partner capacity assessments. Though this isn't just about government donors, it applies along the whole chain of accountability. We also want to look at how far the UN can go with recognising the CHS, and how far are INGOs recognising CHS verification in their partner due diligence processes? Let's make a commitment to this common framework and work towards our collective goal of harmonisation and simplification in aid.

4. Move inclusive governance from good practice to policy, adopting more deliberate and creative ways to engage local and national civil society in CHS governance and decision-making processes.

We agree and welcome the new members of our [Governing Board](#). The diversity of our Board is very important to us.

We will continue to develop our online Communities of Practice on Verification, AAP, PSEA, and People Management with a view to increasing the geographical representation and diversity of voices in these online communities.

We also remain committed to holding our international meetings in different regions when possible, to make it easier for national organisations to attend. Our recent General Assembly took place in Bangkok, and our flagship 2020 events – the CHS Exchange and Humanitarian HR conference – will be held in Nairobi and a location in Asia.

We sincerely thank Charter for Change for your efforts and engagement to promote localisation throughout the humanitarian sector. We hope to continue constructive dialogue to progress this important work.

Yours Sincerely,

Tanya Wood
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CHS Alliance