

CHS QUALITY ASSURANCE VERIFICATION SCHEME

CORE HUMANITARIAN
STANDARD ON QUALITY
AND ACCOUNTABILITY



The Verification Scheme's aim is to improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of development and humanitarian actions by supporting organisations with a standardised means to measure their application of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).

THE SCHEME WORKS TO:

- ✓ **Demonstrate continuous improvement** in the implementation of, and/or compliance with the CHS.
- ✓ Ensure stakeholders using the CHS have a **reliable and objective tool to measure** organisational policies, procedures, programmes and services against the CHS;
- ✓ Provides **clear guidance on the different verification options** available to organisations and ensure that they are applied in a fair, consistent and reliable manner; and
- ✓ Establishes the **claims** of organisations that use the different options of the scheme.
- ✓ **Contribute to an evidence base** on the effect of the CHS and verification towards better quality, more effective and accountable humanitarian and development actions.

Published by: CHS Alliance, Edition: April 2022
Version: Approved by the CHS Alliance Board 31.03.2022
ISBN: 978-2-940732-00-5

CHS Alliance
Maison Internationale de l'Environnement 2
Chemin de Balexert 7
(first floor, room 1-08)
CH - 1219 Châtelaine
Geneva, Switzerland
+41 (0)22 788 16 41
info@chsalliance.org
www.chsalliance.org

© All rights reserved. The copyright for this material lies with CHS Alliance. It may be reproduced for educational purposes, including training, research and programme activities, provided that CHS Alliance is acknowledged and details of such use are provided to the Alliance prior to use. For elements of this document to be quoted in other publications, translated, or adapted for use, prior written permission must be obtained from the copyright owner by emailing info@chsalliance.org

CONTENTS

1.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE VERIFICATION SCHEME	03
---	----

2.

VERIFICATION OPTIONS AND PROCESSES	04
---------------------------------------	----

CHS Self-Assessment	06
CHS Independent Verification	07
CHS Certification	08

3.

VERIFICATION CLAIMS	09
---------------------	----

4.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	10
---------------------------	----

Individual organisations	10
CHS Alliance	10
- CHS Alliance Governing Board	10
- CHS Verification Advisory Panel	11
- CHS Alliance Secretariat	11
Third-party independent conformity assessment bodies	12

ANNEX – AGREEMENT ON THE USE OF THE CHS VERIFICATION SCHEME BY CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES	14
---	----

PREAMBLE	14
----------	----

Article 1: Definitions	14
---------------------------	----

Article 2: Scope of the Agreement	14
--------------------------------------	----

Article 3: Obligations of the CAB	15
--------------------------------------	----

Article 4: Obligations of CHS Alliance	15
---	----

Article 5: Term and amendments	16
-----------------------------------	----

Article 6: Disputes, governing law and jurisdiction	16
--	----



Photo: International Medical Corps.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE VERIFICATION SCHEME

An increasing number of organisations have committed to using the CHS as a benchmark for applying and continuously improving the quality and accountability in humanitarian and development work. However, committing to adopting the Standard is only the first step.

Organisations and their stakeholders need credible, reliable and trustworthy means to monitor and verify how well they apply the standard and how this contributes to positive outcomes for vulnerable, at-risk and crisis-affected people in need of assistance.

The purpose of the Scheme is to improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of development and humanitarian actions by supporting organisations with a standardised means to measure their application of the CHS.

The objectives of the Scheme are to:

- **Demonstrate continuous improvement** in the implementation of, and/or compliance with the CHS.
- Ensure stakeholders using the CHS **have a reliable and objective tool to measure** organisational policies, procedures, programmes and services against the standard.
- Provide **clear guidance on the different verification options** available to organisations and ensure that they are applied in a fair, consistent and reliable manner.
- Establish the claims of organisations that use the different options of the scheme.
- **Contribute to an evidence base** on the effect of verifying against the CHS towards better quality, more effective and accountable humanitarian and development actions.




The purpose of the Scheme is to improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of development and humanitarian actions by supporting organisations with a standardised means to measure their application of the CHS.

VERIFICATION OPTIONS AND PROCESSES

The Verification Scheme provides **three complementary verification options** based on a step-wise approach towards compliance with the CHS.

Each option uses the same set of CHS indicators to ensure compatibility of data and analysis, but with increasing degree of rigour and objectivity, and generating different outputs. Organisations can select the option that best suits their needs.





Verification options

 CHS SELF-ASSESSMENT Led by the organisation itself. Helps organisations gain an understanding of their capacity and performance against the CHS.	 CHS INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION Provides organisations with an independent, external quality assurance assessment of capacity and performance against the CHS.	 CHS CERTIFICATION Provides organisations with an independent, external quality assurance assessment and certification of compliance with the CHS.
---	--	--



Verification Improvement Cycle

Table 2 – Summary table of CHS Verification options
 (please see below the processes of each option for further details)

OPTIONS			
	Self-Assessment	Independent Verification	Certification
PRIMARY PURPOSE	<i>Learning and improvement</i>	<i>Demonstrate commitment and documents level of compliance</i>	<i>Confirm compliance</i>
CHS Verification framework & guide			
TOOLS	Self-assessment manual, online questionnaires and dashboards	Audit tools developed by the conformity assessment body (CAB)	
		 CHS scoring grid	
LIFE CYCLE	2 years Year 0: Self-assessment Year1: Improvement plan implementation	3 years Year 0: Initial audit After 18 months: report to HQAI on actions taken to correct the weaknesses identified during the initial audit.	3 years Year 0: Initial audit Year 1: Maintenance audit Year 2: Maintenance audit
WHO IMPLEMENTS THE ASSESSMENT / AUDIT	The organisation itself, supported by CHS Alliance		Trained CHS auditors
CONTROL OF THE ASSESSMENT / AUDIT	CHS Alliance		Accredited and independent CAB
Detailed scores, on a scale of 0 to 4, for all 62 indicators of the CHS Verification framework and their related indexes.			
OUTPUT OF THE ASSESSMENT / AUDIT	Self-assessment report including dashboards illustrating results scale 0-4 and improvement plan CHS Alliance stamp recognising the completion of a validated self-assessment.	External audit report (whether independent verification or certification, including a private detailed version and public summary version published on the website of the CAB)	
		Certificate of compliance issued by the CAB	
OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT / AUDIT	First step towards external verification options.	Recognition by the CAB Potential step towards the Certification option.	Annual surveillance audits by the CAB to assure on-going compliance with the CHS.



CHS SELF-ASSESSMENT

A CHS Self-Assessment helps organisations gain an initial assessment of their capacity and performance against the CHS. The self-assessment process is supported by the CHS Alliance, which validates, for its members only, an organisation's commitment to adopting and integrating the CHS into their organisational processes and practice.

Repeated every two years, the process allows organisations to internally track and monitor continuous improvements against the CHS requirements. The outputs from this process can be used as a first step to prepare organisations for a more rigorous and objective third-party assessment (*independent verification or certification*).

Added Value of CHS Self-Assessment

- Self-assessment results can be used to support internal capacity strengthening and continuous improvement.
- For members of the CHS Alliance the completion of the process is validated by the CHS Alliance, providing a degree of confidence that the organisation is committed to apply and continuously improve against the CHS.
- The organisation can use self-assessment findings as an input into the third party verification options.

Process

A CHS Self-Assessment is conducted by the organisations themselves who are strongly encouraged to follow the tools and process offered by the CHS Alliance, as it provides a standardised means for consulting various data sources (including guidance and policies, staff, partners, and affected communities themselves), and allows user organisations to reach a comparable and fair representation of their performance in fulfilling the CHS requirements. The process and tools developed by the CHS Alliance can be found here on the CHS Alliance website. Note while any organisations can access the tools, only CHS Alliance members can have their Self-Assessment reports reviewed and validated, receive full access to individual and benchmarking dashboards, and access services which support their improvement.



CHS INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION

Independent verification allows organisations to obtain a comprehensive, rigorous, and objective assessment of their capacity and performance against the CHS. This process determines the degree to which systems and processes integrate and meet the CHS requirements.

The requirement is that the most serious weaknesses in the application of the standard are eliminated within a three-year cycle, within which organisations are required to report to the Conformity Assessment Body on the actions taken to correct the weaknesses identified during the initial audit.

Added value of independent verification

- The audit process is conducted by an independent, accredited body, providing a greater degree of objectivity, credibility and confidence in the findings.
- The organisation can use the independent verification report as a baseline to identify gaps and areas for improvement against the CHS.
- Results can be used for organisational development processes aimed at promoting better application and continuous improvement against the Standard.
- The findings also provide a credible means to verify the organisation's current capacity and performance against the CHS and confirm that the organisation is committed to continuous improvement against the standard.
- The results can be used as inputs into a certification process.

.....
Rules for eventual bridges between independent verification and certification are established by the conformity assessment bodies themselves without compromising integrity of ISO standards application and best practice.

Process

An *independent verification* is conducted by an approved conformity assessment body. It provides a more rigorous and in-depth analysis than the self-assessment of the organisation's application of the CHS, as it requires analysing, cross-checking and validating evidence from a number of data sources (including guidance and policies, staff, partners, and affected communities themselves), to verify the degree to which the organisation meets the CHS.

.....
Note that the specific processes and procedures for data collection and analysis may vary depending on the conformity assessment body, which is responsible for developing its own internal procedures in line with international standards on auditing processes and management systems.

The process and tools developed by HQAI can be found [here](#).



CHS CERTIFICATION

Certification allows organisations to **demonstrate that they comply with the CHS, based on an independent and objective audit process.** This process determines whether or not an organisation’s systems and processes meet the requirements set out in the Standard.

The certification audit process is similar to an Independent Verification, but includes a regular series of annual audits over a three-year period to assess if the organisation consistently complies with the CHS and to monitor continuous improvement in its application of the standard.

Added value of certification

- The audit process is conducted by an independent and accredited conformity assessment body, providing a greater degree of objectivity, credibility and confidence in the findings.
- The organisation can use the certification audit reports as a means to identify and address gaps and areas for improvement against the CHS.
- The results can be used for organisational development processes aimed at promoting better application and continuous improvement against the standards.
- The certification process and findings provide a credible means to verify the organisation’s current capacity, performance and compliance with the CHS and confirm that the organisation is committed to continuous improvement against the Standard.

Process

If the outcome is different, the process (data collection, analysis and interpretation, and validation) used for conducting certification is technically almost the same as the one for the *independent verification* option. The difference is that, in line with ISO standards on certification, the certification cycle includes annual surveillance audits to assure on-going compliance with the CHS.





.....
Note that the specific processes and procedures for data collection and analysis may vary depending on the conformity assessment body, which is responsible for developing its own internal procedures in line with international standards on auditing processes and management systems.
.....

The process and tools developed by HQAI can be found [here](#).

VERIFICATION CLAIMS

Organisations that have undergone one of the verification options and have met the criteria established in the Scheme can publicly communicate the outcomes in line with the following:

Table 3 – Summary of claims

VERIFICATION OPTION	ACCESSIBILITY OF THE CLAIM AND SIGNS OF RECOGNITION	CLAIM	DISCLAIMER	RECOGNITION SIGN
 <p>CHS SELF-ASSESSMENT</p>	CHS Alliance members only – no recognition of non-members' Self-Assessments.	<p>The CHS Alliance confirms that (Name of organization) has shown their formal commitment to applying the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), learning and improving how they meet the CHS Commitments by conducting a Self-Assessment in line with the CHS Alliance Verification Scheme.</p> <p>(Date and expiry)</p>	The CHS Alliance recognises the completion of the CHS Self-Assessment process described in the Verification Scheme. It should be noted though that the CHS Alliance is unable to endorse the organisation's current or future capacity, performance against the CHS, or the quality, effectiveness and accountability of its programmes and services.	<p>CHS Alliance members are issued with a stamp and an official letter. Below is an example we use:</p> 
 <p>CHS INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION</p>	All organisations	(name of the organisation) demonstrates a reasonable level of commitment to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and its inclusion in the Independent Verification scheme is justified.	N/A	N/A – the organisation can use its audit report.
 <p>CHS CERTIFICATION</p>	All organisations	(name of the organisation) complies with the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS:2014), following the requirements of the CHS Alliance verification scheme.	(name of the CAB) conducted the certification audit in line with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and examined, on a sample basis, evidence of compliance with the CHS.	Compliance certificate issued by the Conformity Assessment Body, with certificate registration number, and relevant date of approval and expiry.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

INDIVIDUAL ORGANISATIONS

Organisations that have adopted the CHS have the primary responsibility for ensuring the aims and purposes of the Standard are respected and applied within their own organisation. This includes the responsibility for developing internal quality assurance processes and quality control mechanisms to monitor if the organisation and/or its partners are meeting the spirit and intent behind the CHS Commitments, Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities.

The CHS Quality Assurance Verification Scheme and verification options outlined here are open and accessible to any organisation, be they a CHS Alliance member or not. The decision to use or participate in any of the CHS verification options is made by individual organisation. However, at a minimum, organisations are strongly recommended to undergo a self-assessment process, and consider participating in other recognised verification options as a means to support continuous, verified improvements against the Standard.

While any organisation can measure themselves against the CHS using the self-assessment process, only CHS Alliance members can be validated by the CHS Alliance.

Any organisation is welcome to undertake independent verification and certification with a conformity assessment body.

CHS ALLIANCE

CHS Alliance has overall responsibility for the management and oversight of the CHS Quality Assurance Verification Scheme. CHS Alliance ensures that the different quality assurance verification options set out in the Scheme meet the needs of stakeholders, including people vulnerable to and affected by crises; adhere to internationally-recognised good practices for verification, are open and accessible to all interested organisations; and are conducted in a fair and consistent manner for all participating organisations. Working in consultation with stakeholders, CHS Alliance establishes the framework for the different CHS verification options and the overarching criteria to assess and determine compliance with the CHS. The specific roles and responsibilities of CHS Alliance are laid out below.

The CHS Alliance Governing Board

The CHS Alliance Governing Board has overall responsibility for approval of the Scheme and any modifications to it, based on the recommendations from the CHS Verification Advisory Panel. The Board approves accredited third-party conformity assessment bodies to provide independent third-party audits and certification against the CHS Quality Assurance Verification Scheme. The Board also ensures that the decisions around the Verification Scheme are consistent with the aims and purpose of the CHS, are void of conflict of interest and are in accordance with the CHS Alliance's statutes and policies.

Key functions:

- ✓ Approve the Scheme and any modifications to it.
- ✓ Validate and approve any policies relating to the Scheme, based on inputs from the CHS Alliance secretariat and/or the CHS Verification Advisory Panel.
- ✓ Approve accredited third-party conformity assessment bodies to provide independent verification and certification services against the CHS Quality Assurance Verification Scheme.



CHS Verification Advisory Panel

The [CHS Verification Advisory Panel](#) provides expert technical advice on CHS verification issues, including interpretation of the CHS indicators and provides recommendations and advice on the management, oversight and improvements to the Scheme. This includes developing proposals and recommendations to the CHS Alliance Governing Board on potential modifications to the Scheme.

Key functions:

- ✓ Provide oversight, technical advice and quality control on the application of the Scheme.
- ✓ Review questions and make decisions on interpretation of the CHS indicators.
- ✓ Ensure processes are in place to regularly review the Scheme and its verification options to ensure it meets the needs of its users and stakeholders and is aligned to internationally-accepted good practices for standards verification.
- ✓ Review and make recommendations to the CHS Alliance Secretariat on the self-assessment methodology and process.
- ✓ Review and make recommendation to the CHS Alliance Governing Board on acceptance and approval of third party conformity assessment bodies providing independent CHS independent verification and/or certification.
- ✓ Provide inputs and advice to CHS Alliance, and if appropriate, approved conformity assessment bodies, on feedback and concerns by users of the Scheme.

CHS Alliance Secretariat

The CHS Alliance Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Scheme and support to the Verification Advisory Panel and the Governing Board.

The Secretariat maintains a close working relationship with stakeholders and users of the Scheme, and establishes formal mechanisms for cooperation and information sharing with third-party conformity assessment bodies approved to provide independent verification and certification against the CHS.

The Secretariat manages the self-assessment verification option, including quality control, validation and recognition of the self-assessment results.

It also provides guidance and assistance to organisations for meeting the CHS Commitments, including opportunities for peer learning to share experiences around application and verification of the standard.

Key functions:

- ✓ General management of the Scheme, including providing advice and orientation on the use and application of the Scheme to stakeholders.
- ✓ Regular consultation with stakeholders and users of the Scheme to identify issues and areas for improvement.
- ✓ Design, methodology, quality control and validation of the Self-Assessment process for participating organisations
- ✓ Sign the “Agreement on the use of the CHS Verification Scheme by Conformity Assessment Bodies”¹ with accredited conformity assessment bodies
- ✓ Acts as the Secretariat for the CHS Verification Advisory Panel
- ✓ Secured and confidential storing and use of all the CHS Verification data collected from organisations.

1 See in the annex

THIRD-PARTY INDEPENDENT CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES

CHS Alliance approves third-party conformity assessment bodies to provide both independent verification and certification services.

Conformity assessment bodies operating independent verification and certification within the CHS Verification Scheme, need to be accredited against *ISO 17065* by an official accreditation body operating in line with the requirements of Regulation EC 765/2008 and with the international standard ISO/IEC 17011.

As far as pertinent, the processes they use for certification must be applied to independent verification. This to ensure the integrity, replicability, and robustness of the Scheme while ensuring comparability and compatibility of verification results.

Accredited organisations must demonstrate that any verification and certification services conform to the CHS Verification Scheme, are open and accessible to interested organisations, and can be provided in an independent fair, objective and credible manner. They must also commit to and align with the CHS's objective of continuous improvement in quality, effectiveness and accountability for vulnerable, at-risk and crisis-affected people.

Approved Conformity Assessment bodies must ensure, as stipulated by international requirements for accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, that:

- ✓ The organisation has the capacity to operate audits, which is then followed by reviewing and approving audit findings and issuing certificates/statements, this supported by internal quality control mechanisms.
- ✓ The organisation has the requisite knowledge and understanding of the humanitarian and development sectors, quality and accountability issues, and the CHS itself.
- ✓ The organisation maintains its independence from CHS Alliance, the standard setting process, and management and governance of the Scheme.
- ✓ The organisation has sufficient capacity and experience in social auditing practices, and has obtained ISO 17065 accreditation to provide certification against the CHS.
- ✓ The organisation works in conformity with the CHS Verification Scheme through a formal "Agreement on the use of the CHS Verification Scheme by Conformity Assessment Bodies" – see in the annex below – signed with the CHS Alliance, outlining each organisations' roles and responsibilities, mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation.
- ✓ The organisation has a viable business plan that ensure its services are open, accessible and affordable to all types of organisations, particularly smaller national organisations.
- ✓ The organisation has adequate measures in place for addressing complaints or concerns from clients and users of its services, as well as for managing conflicts of interest.

The criteria may be modified at any time in order to conform with international standards and good practices around standards, verification, certification and accreditation or other criteria that support better access to and use of third-party verification against the CHS. Any change to the Verification Scheme will be followed by a transition phase allowing organisations involved in any of the options to adapt without disruption.

Note that the above is a summary of key functions and not an exhaustive list. Approved conformity assessment bodies need to fulfil other requirements in order to obtain ISO accreditation, and other functions in accordance with their own statutes, compliance with legal requirements, etc.



Photo: GFS.

ANNEX

AGREEMENT ON THE USE OF THE CHS VERIFICATION SCHEME BY CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES

This Agreement governs the use of the CHS Alliance Verification Scheme by Conformity Assessment Bodies (hereinafter called CAB) to carry out Independent Verification and Certification processes within the CHS Verification Scheme.

PREAMBLE

- CHS Alliance is an association constituted under Swiss law, whose members are organisations committed to improving humanitarian and development work through the application of the CHS;
- CHS Alliance, Sphere and Groupe URD jointly hold the copyright of the CHS (2014).
- CHS Alliance holds the copyright of the CHS Verification Scheme and the CHS Alliance Verification Framework.
- Signing this MOU is an essential condition to be granted the right by CHS Alliance to offer Independent Verification and Certification services within the CHS Verification Scheme; it is however not a guarantee in itself that CAB will be granted this right.

ARTICLE 1: DEFINITIONS

1. **“Agreement”** means this agreement, any signed amendment to it, as well as any attached exhibit, Protocol, annex, appendix, schedule, or other equivalent addendum.
2. **“CHS”** means the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, published initially in 2014.
3. **“CHS Verification Advisory Panel”** The CHS Verification Advisory Panel (CHS VAP) provides expert technical advice on CHS verification issues, including interpretation of the CHS indicators and provides recommendations and advice on the management, oversight and improvements to the CHS Verification Scheme. This includes developing proposals and recommendations to the CHS Alliance Governing Board on potential modifications to the Scheme.
4. **“CHS Verification Scheme”** is a document, approved by the CHS Alliance Governing Board, providing the framework to assess through a structured process the activities of humanitarian and development organisations against the CHS.
5. **“Effective Date”** means the date of signature of this Agreement by the last Party to sign.
6. **“Force majeure”** is an event or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled (such as war, labour stoppages, or extreme weather), that is not the fault of any party and that make it difficult or impossible to carry out normal business.
7. **CHS Steering Committee** is the committee to oversee the revision or changes to the CHS.

ARTICLE 2: SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT

This agreement outlines the reciprocal rights and duties of the parties to this Agreement concerning the use of the CHS Verification Scheme.

ARTICLE 3: OBLIGATIONS OF THE CAB

1. The CAB shall sign the CHS Alliance Code of Conduct
2. The CAB shall use the CHS Verification Framework (CHS VF) in providing Independent Verification and Certification services within the CHS Verification Scheme (CHS VS).
3. The CAB understands and agrees that the CHS Steering Committee is exclusively responsible for revising and amending the CHS, and that CHS Alliance is exclusively responsible for revising and amending the CHS Verification Scheme and CHS Verification Framework.
4. The CAB shall report to CHS Alliance suggestions for improvements of the CHS, CHS VS or CHS VF, as often as necessary but at least once a year.
5. The CAB shall consider any reasonable suggestions requested by the CHS Alliance for amending the CAB's Independent verification and/or Certification schemes in relation to the CHS Verification Scheme.
6. CAB's certification scheme against the CHS shall be accredited under the latest version of ISO/IEC 17065, or equivalent as applied to the CHS verification Scheme². Their accreditation status shall be shared with the CHS Alliance.
7. To ensure flexibility and comparability of the accreditation process, the accreditation body shall be a member of the International Accreditation Forum.
8. The CAB shall inform the CHS Alliance immediately if they lose, or if limitations are put on, their accreditation.
9. In the case the CAB's accreditation is suspended or withdrawn, the CAB shall immediately cease to emit any CHS certificate under the CHS Verification Scheme until such time the accreditation is reinstated.

10. The CAB shall report annually to the CHS Alliance, the activities undertaken under the CHS VS, plans for the year to come and confirmation of continued accreditation status.
11. The CAB shall provide CHS Alliance with the public summary report (in accordance with the requirements as set out in the Verification Scheme) upon completion of the audit and an annual overview of anonymised indicator data scores.
12. CHS Alliance has the right to audit the CAB to confirm their compliance with this agreement.

ARTICLE 4: OBLIGATIONS OF CHS ALLIANCE

1. Expressions of interest to use the CHS VS are submitted to CHS Alliance, considered by the VAP who issues a recommendation and approved or rejected by CHS Alliance Governing Board.
2. CHS Alliance shall list accredited CABs as part of CHS Alliance approved CABs.
3. CHS Alliance shall consider through the CHS VAP suggestions from CAB(s) for amending the CHS Verification Scheme or the CHS Verification Framework.
4. CHS Alliance commits not to change the CHS VS or the CHS VF without consulting with the CABs involved in the CHS verification and to provide sufficient time to implement any change to either the CHS VS or the CHS VF. This timeframe will be confirmed by the VAP and clearly communicated to the CABs.
5. CHS Alliance undertakes to apply the same requirements to all CABs entitled to use the CHS VS.

² It is the responsibility of the CAB to demonstrate the equivalence. The final decision on the equivalence will be made by the CHS Alliance.

ARTICLE 5: TERM AND AMENDMENTS

1. This Agreement shall come into effect upon the Effective Date and shall then continue for an unlimited period of time, subject to Articles 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.
2. Each party shall have the right to terminate this Agreement with 365 days prior notice. This shall only happen following a process of conflict resolution aimed at resolving any issue amicably.
3. Except in cases of Force Majeure, each Party shall have the right to terminate this Agreement within 180 days in case of a material breach of this Agreement by the other Party. This shall only happen following a process of conflict resolution aimed at resolving any issue amicably.
4. Notwithstanding clause 5.3 above, the termination can happen with a 90 days' notice in cases of material breaches that:
 - i. create a significant damage to the other party; and
 - ii. is either not curable or not resolved within 90 days of reception, by the breaching Party, of a written notice of breach sent by the non-breaching Party.
 - iii. The CAB loses its accreditation.
5. In any circumstances, the termination of this agreement shall be made taking the interests of the organisations audited by CAB into account.
6. Any amendment to this agreement will be shared with all CABs approved by CHS Alliance to operate within the CHS VS and implemented within a reasonable period that avoids disruptions for the organisations audited by the CAB.
7. A CAB that does not agree with the proposed amendment can withdraw from this agreement with a 365 days' notice, as per clause 5.2, above.

ARTICLE 6: DISPUTES, GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

1. This Agreement shall be governed exclusively by, and construed in accordance with the laws of Switzerland, without giving effect to any conflict of law rules.
2. The Parties undertake to make a good faith attempt to resolve any dispute or claim arising out of or in relation to this Agreement through negotiations between representatives of each of the party who have the authority to settle the relevant dispute.
2. If the dispute cannot be settled amicably within thirty (30) days from the date on which either Party has served written notice on the other of the dispute then the remaining provisions of this Article shall apply. If it is the impression of CHS Alliance that an amicable solution can be reached shortly after this deadline, it can be prolonged, but the conciliation period shall not go over a period of 45 days in total.
3. Performance of this Agreement shall continue during arbitration proceedings or any other dispute resolution mechanism.
4. The Parties agree that any dispute which cannot be resolved amicably shall be submitted exclusively to the competent courts of Canton de Genève, Switzerland, subject to appeal to the Swiss Federal Tribunal.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have signed this Agreement.

CHS Alliance:

CAB:

Place / Date

Place / Date



Photo: CAFOD.



www.chsalliance.org

