

HQAI & CHS Alliance Impact Study

Intermediary Report¹

February 2024

Executive summary

Since the 1990s “accountability revolution”, various initiatives to enhance NGOs’ accountability have emerged. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Verification options - i.e. self-assessment, independent verification, and certification - have been part of these accountability efforts. With an increasing number of organisations verifying their efforts to meet the CHS Commitments, it is important to consider the impact of these processes in contributing to more accountable and better quality support for people in crisis.

The goal of this research is to measure the impact of CHS verification options on quality and accountability. The purpose is to test the hypothesis that a verification process leads to greater accountability and better quality, hence benefits affected populations. To do so, a longitudinal analysis was carried out to analyse the CHS indicators and accountability metrics scores evolution over time. A correlation analysis tested whether scores improvement can be attributed to the verification options. Data was collected from self-assessments of 104 organisations, and 89 audit reports from 26 certified and 17 independently verified organisations.

The results obtained to date show that audited organisations improve their CHS and accountability performance over time, from one audit to the next. This is confirmed by the correlation analysis which shows positive correlation between performance on CHS indicators and accountability and the audit cycles. On average, certified organisations have a better CHS and accountability performance, but organisations in the independent verification cycle show faster and greater improvement between audits. In general, organisations doing the self-assessment present higher CHS and accountability scores than the independently audited ones at certification and independent verification initial audits. The causes remain to be tested but could be due to the increased surveillance independent audit entails.

The CHS Commitment with the highest average score for the three verification options is *Commitment 6 – Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary*, while the one with the lowest average score is *Commitment 5 – Complaints are welcomed and addressed*. The latter is also the one on which certified organisations show the greatest improvement over time. Accountability to people affected by crisis is the form of accountability with the lowest score for the three verification options, while internal accountability has the highest average score.

Results show that the organisations’ mandate (i.e. humanitarian and/or development), size, head office location, type of projects implementation (i.e. direct or through partners), human and financial capacities, and whether they are national or international, have no significant impact on the CHS and accountability performance. This demonstrates that all kinds of organisations have the same probabilities of performing well and that the CHS requirements are adaptable to both types of mandates, humanitarian and/or development.

These results will be triangulated with qualitative data obtained from a survey and semi-structured interviews that have yet to be conducted. A final report including these last analyses will be published in the course of 2024.

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1. Introduction & Study objectives

CHS Alliance & HQAI

CHS Alliance and the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI) are both working to support organisations to implement the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard of Quality and Accountability (CHS). CHS Alliance manages the CHS Verification Scheme and requires its large, global membership to apply one of the three forms of Verification. HQAI provides third-party quality assurance services to humanitarian and development organisations since 2016. It delivers independent verification and certification audits and is currently the only accredited body conducting these audits against the CHS. To date, 70 organisations are using HQAI's services, and several institutional donors require or accept independent CHS audits conducted by HQAI as part of their due diligence processes. CHS Alliance also provides direct support to a third verification option of the CHS, a self-assessment (SA). The SA is conducted by the organisations themselves and is validated by the CHS Alliance for its member organisations. Since 2016, more than 116 organisations have undertaken this self-assessment process.

Why is it important to assess impact?

Since the 1990s “accountability revolution”, various initiatives to globally enhance NGOs’ accountability have emerged (Hilhorst, 2002; Bugnion, 2002; Crack, 2019; Modgil, 2020). The CHS Verification Scheme has been part of this drive. However, to date, there is no systematic research done showing the impact of these processes on accountability. Indeed, despite positive feedback received from CHS audited and self-assessed organisations, the literature about verification tools in furthering accountability and quality is very limited and outdated (Ebrahim, 2003; Cavill and Sohail, 2007; Zarnegar Deloffre, 2016). For instance, little is known about the mutual benefits of internal and external tools to operationalise accountability (Becker, 2018). Notwithstanding organisations' efforts and increased donors' requirements for greater accountability and improved quality, we still lack a systematic analysis of the impact of management tools on accountability and quality, and specifically of the CHS verification processes.

Assessing impact is crucial to connect activities and processes, outputs and outcomes, and ultimately evaluate their long-term effects. However, it is a challenging task due to the difficulty in establishing clear causal linkages in complex environment, and to separate the audit and SA processes from other contextual variables – such as usual quality assurance processes in organisations or the CHS itself.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to measure the impact of the three CHS Verification Scheme options on programmes quality and accountability. The purpose is to test the hypothesis that a verification process leads to greater accountability and better quality programmes. It is important to highlight that the intention is not to measure the impact of the CHS per se, but if and how the CHS Verification processes lead to greater quality and accountability.

The respective impacts of the three processes (certification, independent verification, self-assessment) shall be assessed and compared over time.

To summarize, the primary goal of this study is to measure the impact of three Verification Scheme options – certification, independent verification, and self-assessment on:

- A. CHS scores and their evolution.

- B. Accountability indexes and their evolution. Three forms of accountability were selected: accountability to affected people (AAP), internal accountability, and accountability to partners & peers in the sector.
- C. CHS cross-cutting themes indexes: PSEAH, do-no-harm (DNH), gender & diversity (G&D), localisation, and internal quality control (IQC). The analysis of these indexes has not yet been carried out and thus the results are not discussed in this paper; they will be presented in a final report in 2024.

To do so, a three-steps methodology was developed and is presented below.²

2. Research methodology

Methodology Step 1: Defining the variables

The first step of the methodology was to define the variables of this study.

On the one hand, the dependent variables are the ones that are impacted by the three verification options (variables). These are:

- the CHS scores;
- the CHS cross-cutting themes indexes (PSEAH, DNH, G&D, IQC, and localisation indexes);
- accountability to affected people (AAP), internal accountability, and accountability to partners & peers in the sector. The accountability conceptual framework - build on academic literature - is presented in chapter 4.

On the other hand, there are the variables that are assumed to have an impact on the CHS, accountability and cross-cutting themes scores and their evolution (i.e. independent variables). Indeed, quality and accountability improvements are due to collective efforts and result from complex intertwined factors. In the literature, different variables are usually used to assess the impact of quality management tools (Shah, M., et al., 2011; Coule, T. M. 2015). To gain a fine-grained understanding of the impact of the CHS Verification Scheme on quality and accountability, this study relies on three main sets of variables that are assumed to be potentially influential in the evolution of CHS and accountability scores:

- the characteristics of the methodologies of the three CHS Verification options (i.e. certification, independent verification, and the CHS self-assessment);
- the audited and self-assessed organisation's characteristics;
- the audited and self-assessed organisations' level of engagement in the verification processes.

After defining the variables of this study, these were turned into measurable indicators. Annexe 1 shows the indicators that were selected to measure the characteristics of the three CHS Verification options. Annexe 2 introduces the indicators selected to measure the three forms of accountability considered in this study. Annexe 3 presents the indicators used by HQAI to measure the CHS cross-cutting themes. Annexe 4 presents the variables related to characteristics of the certified, verified, and self-assessed organisations.

² This methodology is derived from a Theory of Change (ToC) previously drawn by both, HQAI and CHS Alliance, which mapped four main desired impacts and respective pathways leading to improved quality and greater accountability through CHS Verification.

Methodology Step 2: Longitudinal analysis

As one of the goals of this research is to measure the impact of the three CHS Verification options on the evolution of the CHS scores, accountability scores and cross-cutting themes scores, a longitudinal analysis was carried out. This aimed to identify whether there is and what is the evolution of CHS scores, accountability, and cross-cutting themes indicators over years and from one audit to the other. At the time of this report there are no organisations that have carried out more than one self-assessment.³ The longitudinal analysis is, therefore, only carried out for the certification and independent verification services.

Methodology Step 3: Correlation analysis & identification of the control variables

Correlation analysis: The main objective of this study is not only to verify whether there is an improvement in the performance of organisations against the CHS, but to understand whether this positive development is related to one of the three CHS Verification options. To determine if there is and what is the strength of this link a correlation analysis was carried out.⁴

Control variables: Control variables⁵ were included in the correlation analysis. In fact, it was assumed that the evolution of the CHS, cross-cutting themes, and accountability scores could also be partly explained by specific characteristics of the organisations (e.g. available financial and human resources). It is also supposed that organisations' level of engagement in the audit or self-assessment process (e.g. commitment/willingness to implement corrective actions to address identified weaknesses) and understanding of the process as a learning exercise could influence the results of the audits or of the self-assessment. Therefore, two groups of control variables are included in the correlation analysis: the organisations' characteristics (Annexe 4) and the organisations level of engagement in the audit and self-assessment process. The first set of data was collected from the certification and independent verification audit reports and the self-assessment. To collect the second set of control variables an online survey was developed.⁶ The inclusion of these controls enriches our understanding of the factors influencing the outcomes of CHS-related audits and self-assessments.

To summarise, the methodology of this study is designed to analyse the evolution of the CHS scores, accountability scores and cross-cutting themes scores, and to measure their correlation with the three CHS Verification options.⁷

Some limitations

While the research team has confidence on the results and conclusions of this study, its limitations are acknowledged. In particular, the comparison of the CHS self-assessment and HQAI's CHS

³ This is because the self-assessment methodology has changed, and organisations had not the time yet to conduct a second self-assessment (see CHS Manual latest version, March 2022).

⁴ In statistical analysis, correlation expresses the strength of the link between two or more variables. For this research the Pearson's correlation analysis was chosen for its suitability in assessing linear relationships between variables. This analysis allows us to quantify the strength and direction of the association between engagement in different CHS Verification Services and changes in performance scores.

⁵ Variable that is not of primary interest in a study but that could influence the outcome and therefore must be considered in data analysis.

⁶ These control variables were integrated using multiple regression models, allowing to isolate the effect of the CHS Verification Services from these other factors.

⁷ Note: The analysis of the cross-cutting theme indexes has not yet been carried out and thus the results are not discussed in this paper; they will be presented in a final report in 2024.

certification and independent verification audit scores is challenging due to methodological differences between these verification options:

- While both the CHS Alliance’s tool and HQAI use a 4-point scale to score the CHS Commitments and indicators, the scores definition slightly differs between the two organisations.⁸
- Self-reported measurements risk to be biased due to the social desirability effect.⁹
- CHS SA scores used for this research rely on staff perception about how their organisations comply with CHS indicators while HQAI auditors systematically triangulate information from different sources to objectify the scores for each indicator.
- While the process and tools of the SA are validated by the CHS Alliance, the quality of the data collected is not evaluated.
- At the time of this research, only a limited number of independently verified organisations had a renewal audit, versus 13 certified organisations. Therefore, for the analysis only the results of initial and mid-term audits have been considered for organisations registered in the independent verification service. This entails that the comparison between certification and independent verification can be made only for initial and mid-term audits at the time of this report.

3. The CHS Verification Scheme

The CHS Alliance Verification Scheme sets out policies and rules to monitor and verify how well humanitarian and development organisations are doing in the application of the CHS in an objective, consistent, reliable, and trustworthy manner (CHS Alliance, April 2022). The three verification options are the **self-assessment**, **independent verification**, and **certification**. They vary in their methodologies, per degree of rigour, and confidence in the results but they use the same set of CHS indicators to ensure compatibility of data and analysis. Organisations select the option that best suits their needs (CHS Alliance, April 2022).

CHS Self-Assessment

The CHS Self-Assessment is led by the organisation itself, coordinated by its focal point, and is supported by the CHS Alliance. It is composed of seven surveys targeting different stakeholders - staff, partners organisations, and communities – as well as the guidance and policies of an organisation. It covers all CHS commitments. For this research and to enable a comparative analysis between the SA and the independent verifications options, we have collected data from three surveys: the preliminary survey, the staff perception survey on CHS key actions indicators, and the document review survey on CHS organisational responsibilities indicators. Only two of the seven surveys of the SA were kept as these are the ones directly related to CHS indicators – covering the 36 key actions and the 26 organisational responsibilities¹⁰.

The Self-Assessment begins with a preliminary survey collecting factual data on the organisation’s size, structure, and countries of operation, etc. This allows the CHS Alliance to define the scope

⁸ CHS SA uses a 4-point scales ranging from “very poorly” to “outstandingly” to assess organisations’ performance on the CHS Organisations Responsibilities and Key Actions. HQAI scores range from 0, meaning that the organisation does not meet the CHS commitment, to 4, when an organisation’s work goes beyond the requirements of the Standard. See Annexe 6.

⁹ Social desirability effect is the tendency of respondents to choose and over-estimate what they believe to be socially desirable or acceptable responses (Grimm, 2010). It means that staff and focal point could potentially over-rate their CHS performance.

¹⁰ The other surveys are not included in this study as they are not directly linked to the CHS indicators, and therefore not relevant for the purpose of this study.

of the self-assessment and the sampling rate for the different surveys. Then, a sample of organisation's staff will be requested to fill in an online perception survey on how the organisation applies the 36 key actions defined in the CHS. The staff sample size is calculated based on predetermined statistical formula ensuring a good level of confidence and representativeness.¹¹ The organisation is also requested to create an internal task force to work on the review of the organisation's existing guidance and policies to measure how it applies the 26 organisational responsibilities defined in the CHS. Following these consultations, the focal point of the organisations completes the document review survey. At the end of the SA process, and based on all surveys' results, the organisation's focal point develops a Self-Assessment report and an improvement plan. The report must be validated by the organisation's Senior Management Team and submitted to the CHS Alliance for review and validation. Only CHS Alliance's members can get this validation which confirms that the organisation has shown commitment to applying the CHS, learning and improving how they meet the CHS Commitments by conducting a Self-Assessment in line with the CHS Alliance Verification Scheme. Self-assessed organisations receive a "completion letter recognizing that the organisation has completed a CHS Self-Assessment using the tools and fulfilling the processes recommended by the CHS Alliance, and a stamp" (CHS Alliance, March 2022, p.10). The Self-Assessment is repeated every two years.

CHS Independent Verification

Independent verification is the independent and objective assurance that an organisation or a group of organisations are making demonstrated, continuous and measurable progress in applying the CHS. Independent Verification follows a three-year audit cycle: after the initial audit and after developing a workplan to address the weaknesses identified in the audit, an organisation is registered in the independent verification process for three years, during which it commits to closing its most serious weaknesses in its application of the standard. At the end of three years if the organisation wishes to renew its registration, a renewal audit must be undertaken. Between an initial and a renewal audit, independently verified organisations must submit a progress report on action taken towards solving the weaknesses identified in the previous audit.

Once registered into the Independent Verification service, an organisation can claim that it demonstrates both its commitment to strengthening its application of the CHS and its commitment to the standard itself.

CHS Certification

Certification is the independent and objective assurance that an organisation meets the requirements specified in the CHS. Certification allows organisations to demonstrate that they comply with the CHS, based on an independent and objective audit process. Indeed, certification follows a three-year audit cycle similar to the Independent Verification one, but, in line with international auditing practices, the certificate remains valid for three years provided that the organisation undergoes yearly surveillance audits, which provide on-going assurance that the organisation's compliance with the CHS.

Certified organisations are the only ones entitled to claim that they comply with the CHS. Indeed, certification is the most robust of the three CHS Verification options as it requires yearly independent audits and a certificate will not be issued or is suspended or withdrawn, if a major non-conformity (i.e. a score 0 at CHS indicator or Commitment level) is identified.

¹¹ See the CHS Self-Assessment Manual, March 2022, p.11.

Both, independent verification, and certification are carried out by an independent, and accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB). Today, HQAI is the only CAB performing third-party quality assurance against the CHS. Audits are carried out by HQAI's auditors, who analyse, triangulate, and validate evidence from documentary sources, interviews and direct observation, to assess the degree to which organisations meet the CHS commitments. Audits begin with a scoping and profiling phase aimed at establishing the scope of the audit and identifying any key risks to compliance with the standard. Following this phase, auditors start reviewing the organisation's documentary evidence and conducting interviews with key head office staff to assess the organisation's quality control and risk management. The auditors sample a number of country programmes and projects to be assessed onsite and remotely. During onsite and remote assessments, the auditors interview a selection of local staff, relevant partners and community members. At the end of the audit activities, the auditors draw up a comprehensive report, describing how the audited organisation is performing against each CHS indicator. On this basis, HQAI decides on the organisation's certification or registration into independent verification.

4. Conceptualisation of « Accountability »

The CHS is a quality and accountability standard. This study aims at understanding how the three CHS Verification options impact the accountability of the organisations. To do so, accountability must be defined and indicators to measure it developed. This was done by resorting to the main literature. The final accountability indicators are presented in Annexe 2.

Defining central concepts

Despite its popularity since the 1990s, the concept of accountability has often been ill-defined (Ebrahim, 2003; Cavill & Sohail, 2007; Brinkerhoff, 2003; Hilhorst et al., 2021). The CHS defines accountability as "the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power" (CHS, 2014: 19).

Based on the literature, accountability can be captured and measured along five dimensions: responsiveness, transparency, answerability, sanctions, and participation.

Responsiveness is the ability of an organisation to take into consideration its experience and its stakeholders' views and adapt, change and improve (Leigh, 2019). As Blagescu *et al.* (2005:27) stated, the commitment of an organisation to accountability is "reflected in its responsiveness to stakeholders' concerns and needs, and the willingness to adjust policies when necessary". It can be illustrated, for instance, by the adoption of changes in programmes, based on feedback from communities or partners organisations.

Transparency is about information provision from the accountable actor(s) to the overseeing actor(s) (Brinkerhoff, 2004). This dimension can include, but is not limited to, information about the results of needs assessments, monitoring & learning, budget, available resources, services, rules and regulations on expected staff behaviour, levels of achievement, narrative description of activities and outputs, etc.

Answerability goes beyond transparency and reporting of facts and figures; it includes explanations, justifications, and reasons (Brinkerhoff, 2003). Answerability is not just about what was done but why. This dimension sets a dialogue between the accountable and the overseeing actors. It is the obligation to answer questions regarding decisions and actions (Brinkerhoff, 2003). This dialogue can happen internally, within an organisation (e.g. project manager answering to their hierarchical superiors), between organisations, in more public arenas (e.g. steering committees, public officials, civil society groups), and with other stakeholders (e.g. communities).

Sanctions are "the ability of the overseeing actor(s) to impose punishment on the accountable actor(s) for failures and transgressions" (Brinkerhoff, 2003). Sanctions are generally imposed following violations of requirements, standards, laws, statutes, and regulations. But sanctions can be thought of more broadly as negative publicity, bad reputation, mistrust from donors, and thus loss of donor funding, prohibition to work in a given territory imposed by a local government, etc. In relation to HQAI's work, a sanction can be the issuance of a minor or major non-conformity, the suspension or withdrawal of the certificate. Sanctions are what gives "teeth" to accountability (Brinkerhoff, 2003).

Participation is not usually considered in the literature as a fundamental dimension of accountability. However, since the CHS Alliance and HQAI aim at "putting people at the centre", this dimension was included in the conceptual framework. Participation of affected communities in decision making, design, evaluation, and monitoring is a central part of the CHS standard. Participation includes consultations and the involvement of affected people and communities in planning and decision-making, but also complaints and feedback mechanisms.

Accountability can also be defined based on its recipient. For this study, three forms of accountability were identified and are described below: accountability to people affected by crisis (PAC), to peers & partners within the humanitarian and development sector, and internal accountability.

Accountability to people affected by crisis

Also called forward accountability, it refers to NGOs as "responsible for delivering on people's entitlements to services" (Hilhorst *et al.*, 2021: 368). This form "places beneficiaries squarely at the heart of the NGO's mission and grants normative power to the demands of communities to play a full role in the design and implementation of projects" (Crack, 2019: 624). While each organisation has its own definition of what forward accountability entails, Crack identifies a few main dimensions of this accountability: "(a) being answerable to communities for actions/inactions; (b) enabling communities to participate in decisions about NGO activities that potentially affect them; (c) enabling communities to have input in monitoring and evaluation processes; and (d) an obligation on NGOs to reflect on 'lessons learned' as a result of community interaction" (2019: 624). Feedback and complaints handling mechanisms are central for this form of accountability, which contributes to building trust between organisations and communities.

Given that the CHS aims at putting people at the centre, accountability to people affected by crisis is at the foundation of all the CHS Commitments.

Internal accountability

Internal accountability concerns staff, managers and board within an organisation and it is about how they can be held accountable to the stated organisational mission, organisation's procedures, and values (Cavill & Sohail, 2007), but also towards their staff and colleagues. Internal accountability can be reported to induction processes, performance appraisals, personal development plans, codes of conduct, management structures, and incentives to stimulate learning within and across programmes (Cavill & Sohail, 2007).

Internal accountability is mainly covered by the CHS Commitments 7 and 8 (see Annexe 2).

Accountability to peers and to partners within the sector

Sometimes called sideways, system, peer or mutual accountability, horizontal accountability is an inter-organisational and collective form of accountability that describes "the responsibilities that NGOs have to work with their counterparts to raise accountability standards across the sector" (Crack, 2019: 628). It means "that humanitarian workers hold each other to account in formal and

informal ways" (Hilhorst et al., 2021: 370). Actors collect and share information, use this information as an organisational learning tool to make sector-wide improvements (Cavill and Sohail, 2007). They work in coordination and partnership with others, empowering partners within the sector to improve effectiveness. Other mechanisms are self-regulation initiatives (for instance, a code of conduct, or a CHS self-assessment, the Sphere standard), independent certifications (such as the external audit options of the CHS), peer regulation initiatives, standards and accountability "clubs".¹²

This form of accountability is particularly important as through coordination of NGOs practices, it contributes to social learning and the construction of "global accountability communities" (Zarnegar Deloffre, 2016). Moreover, organisations are encouraged to hold each other accountable as "communities experience aid as an ensemble, and hence the reputation of one agency can severely affect the intervention of all humanitarian actors" (Hilhorst et al., 2021: 370). According to this model, quality improvement is a shared responsibility with a collective commitment to accountability (Zarnegar Deloffre, 2026).

This accountability form is covered by different CHS Commitments, but complementarity and coordinated work requirements are mainly captured by Commitment 6 "Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance".

Mapping accountability to the CHS indicators

As presented in chapter 2. *Research methodology*, the literature review and definition of accountability helped turning this concept into measurable indicators. To do so, rather than developing new indexes, the CHS indicators were used and mapped to the 5 dimensions – i.e. participation, responsiveness, transparency, answerability, sanctions - of the three forms of accountability (see Annexe 2). In other words, for this study, the CHS indicators are used to measure the three forms of accountability identified – accountability to PAC, to peers & partners, and internal accountability.¹³

5. Analysis & Findings

Data

Analyses and findings presented in the following chapters originate from a dataset of 104 organisations having conducted a CHS Self-Assessment since 2016, 26 HQAI certified organisations, and 17 organisations registered in HQAI independent verification since 2016. Data for the certified organisations includes 26 initial audits, 24 midterm audits¹⁴, and 13 renewal audits. The data from organisations registered in independent verification includes data from 17 initial audits and 9 midterm audits.

¹² Organisations' motivations to join self- or external regulation initiatives are questioned by scholars and two main approaches co-exist: a club theory informed by the principal-agent theory and a constructivist approach focusing on social identities and shared norms (Crack, 2019). These theories will be tested in the survey on organisations' motivation and engagement in regulation processes.

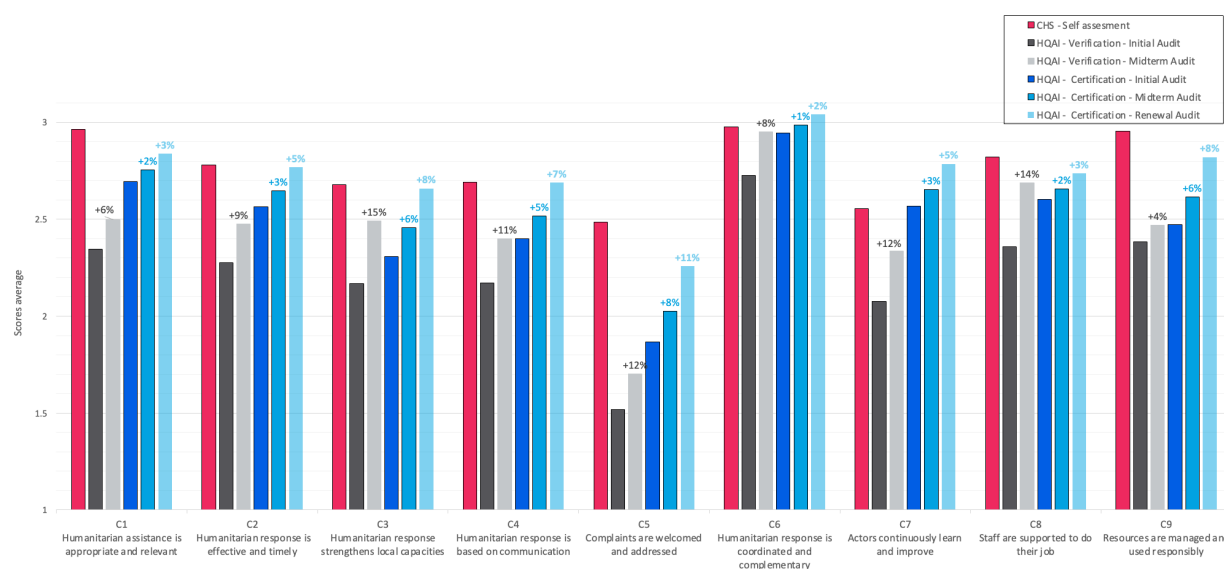
¹³ Using the CHS commitments as performance dimensions of accountability to affected people has been used in past research. See the joint Dan Church Aid, Save the Children Denmark, and Ground Truth Solutions project "Listen, Learn, Act" (2017).

¹⁴ Mid-term audits are no longer in place since 2022. These were conducted within two years after the initial audit for both, independently verified and certified organisations.

I. Longitudinal analysis: CHS scores evolution

The longitudinal analysis shows the evolution of the CHS and accountability scores over time. At the time of this report there are no organisations that have carried out more than one self-assessment.¹⁵ The longitudinal analysis was therefore only carried out for the certification and independent verification services. Moreover, as only a limited number of independently verified organisations went through a renewal audit, only the scores of initial and mid-term audits were considered for these organisations. The results of the longitudinal analysis are presented below.

The CHS Commitments scores evolution



Graph 1: CHS Commitments average scores per CHS Verification Scheme and audit type

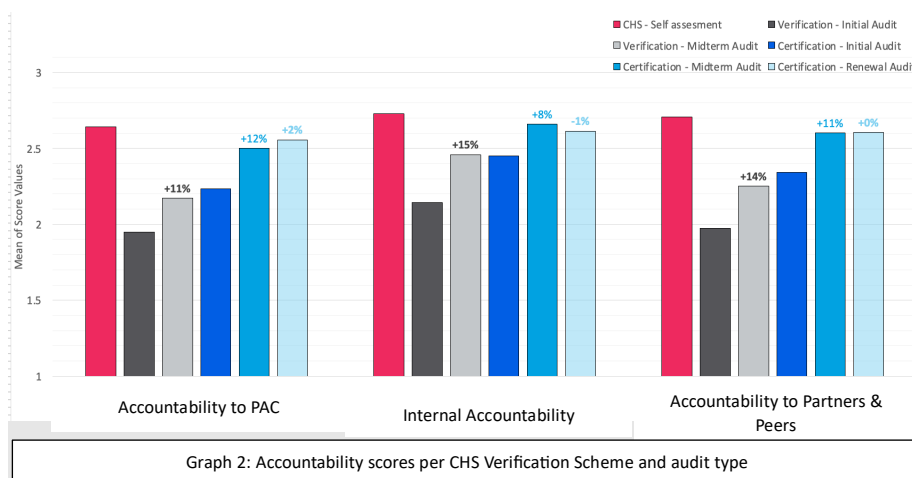
Graph 1 shows the average scores for the first CHS Self-Assessment, for initial and mid-term Independent Verification audits, and Certification initial, mid-term and renewal audits (see HQAI scoring system in Annexe 6). Data show that:

- For both, the certification and independent verification services, there is always and for all CHS Commitments an increase in scores at the next audit. **This proves that organisations that undergo third-party quality assurance audits, address weaknesses identified in audit reports and improve their performance from one audit to the following one.**
- At initial audits, certified organisations have higher scores for all CHS Commitments than independently verified ones. On average, this is also true for the performance at mid-term audits (besides for C3 and C8). In other terms, **the performance of certified organisations is higher than that of organisations in the independent verification service.**
- On the other hand, when looking at improvements **between initial and mid-term audits, the scores improvement is higher for independent verification than for certification.** In fact, between initial and mid-term audits, the average increase of scores for the independent verification service is 10%, while for certification is 4%. In other words, while certified organisations generally perform better, **verified organisations show greater improvements.** This is probably because verified organisations have more room to progress due to lower scores at initial audits.

¹⁵ This is because the self-assessment methodology has changed, and organisation had the time to conduct a second self-assessment (see CHS Manual latest version, March 2022).

- It is also important to note that **certified organisations present a greater scores improvement between mid-term and renewal audits** rather than between initial and mid-term audits. The explanation is twofold. On one hand, organisations might need more than 2 years to develop a work plan, put it into practice and show results. On the other hand, they might feel the pressure of the renewal audits, and they might put a greater effort into their improvement plans to avoid losing their certificate in case of major non-conformity.
- **Commitment 5 (Complaints are welcomed and addressed) is the CHS Commitment with the lowest score at all stages of the audit cycle for all verification options, while Commitment 6 (Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary) the one with the highest ones**, as also presented in the Humanitarian Accountability Report 2022. **Commitment 5 is also the only CHS Commitment for which average scores are below 2 at initial audits, and therefore show non-conformity.** While certified organisations on average manage to increase their scores above 2 on commitment 5, independently verified organisation have an average score which remains below 2 at mid-term audits.
- **While C5 has the lowest scores, this is also the Commitment in which certified organisations show greater improvements**, while independently verified organisations have greater improvements on Commitment 3 (Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoid negative effects).
- **Overall, for all CHS commitments, the CHS SA scores are 10,5% higher than HQAI initial audits scores.**

The accountability scores evolution



Graph 2 presents the average scores of the different forms of accountability for the three Verification services and for the different audits. The results show that:

- For both the certification and independent verification options, accountability scores improve between initial and mid-term audits. Therefore, **organisations undergoing independent quality assurance audits increase their internal accountability, accountability to PAC, and to partners & peers in the sector.**
- However, for certified organisations only, between mid-term and renewal audits, internal accountability scores decrease by 1% and those of accountability to peers & partners remain the same. The decrease is not statistically significant as it is due to the smaller sample size of certification renewal audits as compared to the sample of certification mid-term audits.

- **On average, the form of accountability with the highest average score is internal accountability, followed by accountability towards peers and partners in the sector. The form of accountability with the lowest average score is accountability to PAC.** This is not surprising since Accountability to PAC is measured mainly through Commitment 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback” and Commitment 5 “Complaints are welcomed and addressed”, which on average are the CHS Commitments with the lowest scores (see Graph 1).
- Similarly to the results presented above on the evolution of the CHS Commitments scores, Graph 2 also shows that between initial and mid-term audits organisations independently verified improve quicker their performance on internal accountability and accountability to partners & peers than organisations certified. The only exception is for accountability to PAC, where the evolution is 1% higher for certified organisations than for verified.
- It is interesting to notice that while certified organisations showed a greater improvement of CHS Commitment scores between mid-term and renewal audits rather than between initial and mid-term audits, this does not apply to the forms of accountability. Indeed, certified organisations have greater accountability performance improvements during the first two years of their cycle (i.e. between initial and mid-term audits) rather than during the third and fourth year (i.e. between mid-term and renewal audits).
- At initial audits, the average scores of the independent verification service for accountability to PAC and accountability to partners & peers is below 2 - i.e. non conformity. The average scores improve by 11% for accountability to PAC and by 14% for accountability to partners & peers, allowing for conformity - i.e. the average of the scores is above 2, which means that an organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying the requirement, but that certain key points are still not addressed, see Annexe 6 for details on scores. However, **none of the three services reaches score 3 (i.e. the full conformity with the requirement) on any of the three forms of accountability.**

II. Comparative analysis of the different verification options

This comparative analysis allows to assess how the scores from the different CHS Verification options vary. The aim is to compare self-reported measurements from the CHS SA with the independent verification and certification audits scores for the 9 CHS commitments and the three accountability indexes.¹⁶

It is important to highlight that the comparison was done between the CHS initial SA and the initial audits of the certification and independent verification service. Since the introduction of the new CHS SA methodology in 2020, 7 organisations did 2 consecutive SAs. This number is too small to make a statistical analysis on SA scores evolution. Therefore, all comparative analyses are carried out between HQAI initial audits and CHS initial SAs.

Comparison of the CHS Commitments scores

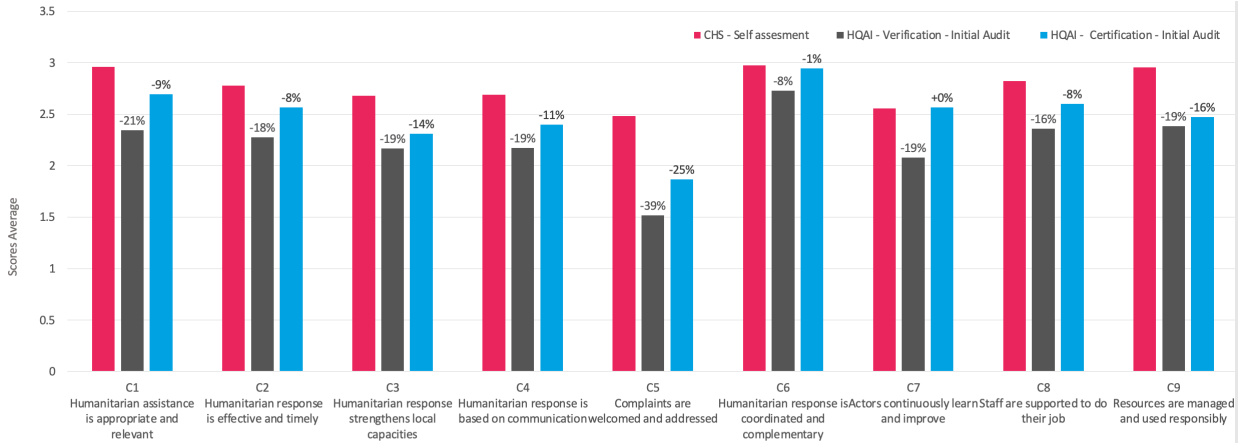
When comparing the average of the CHS Commitments scores of Independent Verification & Certification Services with those of the CHS Self-Assessment, Graph 3 and 4 below show that:

- Besides the exception on C7, **the CHS Commitments scores of the CHS Self-Assessment are always higher than those of independent verification and certification initial audits.** Graph 4 shows that on average, **the Self-Assessment has 20% higher scores than independent verification initial audits and 10% higher scores than certification initial**

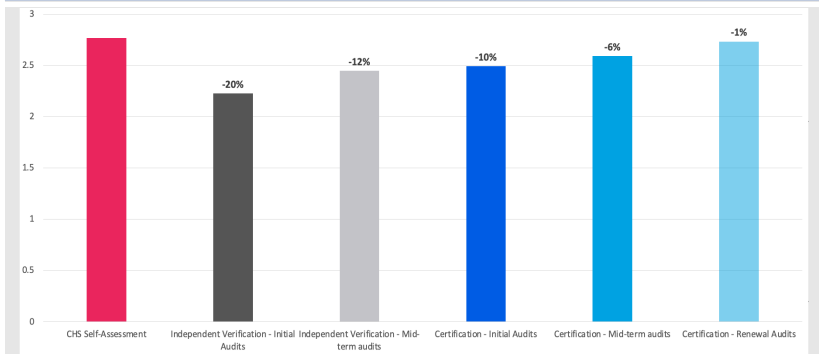
¹⁶ At a later stage, comparison will be also conducted in regard to the cross-cutting thematic indexes.

audits. This difference decreases at the next audit. Indeed, on average **Certification Renewal audit scores are only 1% lower than those of the first Self-Assessment.**

- **The greatest score difference between the CHS SA and the Independent Verification and Certification initial audits is seen at Commitment 5 “Complaints are welcomed and addressed”.** On this Commitment, self-assessed organisations have an average score 39% higher than organisations that have concluded an Independent Verification initial audit and 25% higher than organisations that have concluded a Certification initial audit.

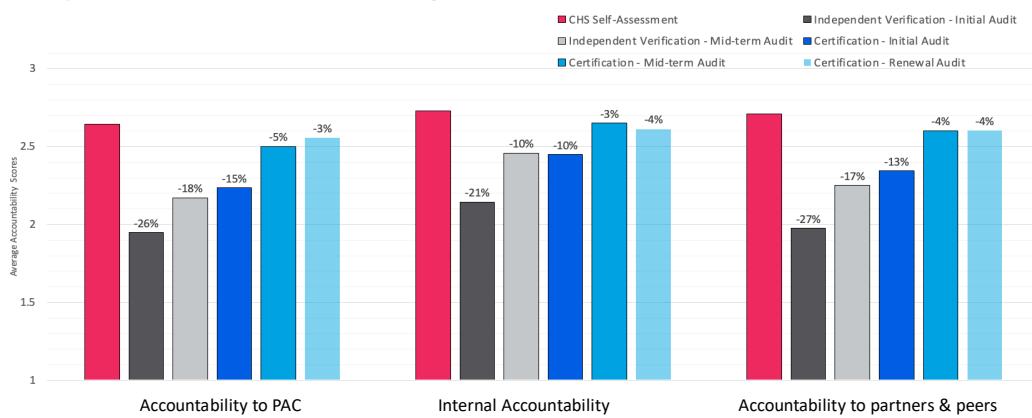


Graph 3: Average CHS Commitment scores for the CHS Self-Assessment and the initial audits of the Independent Verification and Certification schemes



Graph 4: Average scores of all aggregated CHS Commitments for the Self-Assessment (SA), Independent Verification and Certification. The percentages show the difference of scores in comparison to the SA.

Comparison of the accountability indexes scores



Graph 5: Average Accountability Scores per CHS Verification Scheme and audit type. The percentages represent the difference with the Self-Assessment scores.

Graph 5 above shows that while for certification and independent verification there is a relatively clear difference between the forms of accountability, this is not the case for the CHS Self-Assessment. Indeed, the three forms of accountability have similar scores: 2.6 for accountability to PAC, 2.7 for internal accountability, and 2.7 for accountability to peers & partners.

In line with the results presented above, the comparison of the accountability scores shows that **the CHS SA scores are higher than those of certification and independent verification at initial audits for the three forms of accountability** - i.e. accountability to PAC, to peers & partners, and internal accountability.

- On average, in comparison to certification initial audits, the CHS SA has 15% higher scores for accountability to PAC, 10% for internal accountability, and 13% for accountability to partners & peers.
- Similarly, in comparison to independent verification initial audits, the CHS SA has 26% higher scores for accountability to PAC, 21% for internal accountability, and 27% for accountability to partners & peers.

These difference decreases when comparing the first Self-Assessment accountability scores with those of Certification and Independent Verification mid-term and renewal audits.

- In comparison to certification mid-term audits, the CHS SA scores are higher by 5% for accountability to PAC, 3% for internal accountability, and 4% for accountability to partners & peers.
- In comparison to certification renewal audits, the CHS SA scores are higher by 3% for accountability to PAC, 4% for internal accountability, and 4% for accountability to partners & peers.
- In comparison to independent verification mid-term audits, the CHS SA scores are higher by 18% for accountability to PAC, 10% for internal accountability, and 17% for accountability to partners & peers.

Graphs 3, 4, and 5 show an overall difference of self-assessment scores compared to third-party assessments. This is probably due to the significant methodological differences between the verification processes (see the section above "*Some limitations*"). While HQAI auditors systematically triangulate data to decide on scores - including document review and interviews with staff, communities, and partners - the SA scores used in this analysis come from two separated surveys – the staff perception survey on key action indicators and the document review survey on organisational responsibilities, completed by the organisation focal person. At this stage of the research, the analysis did not include the other SA surveys – i.e. the partners and the community perception surveys.

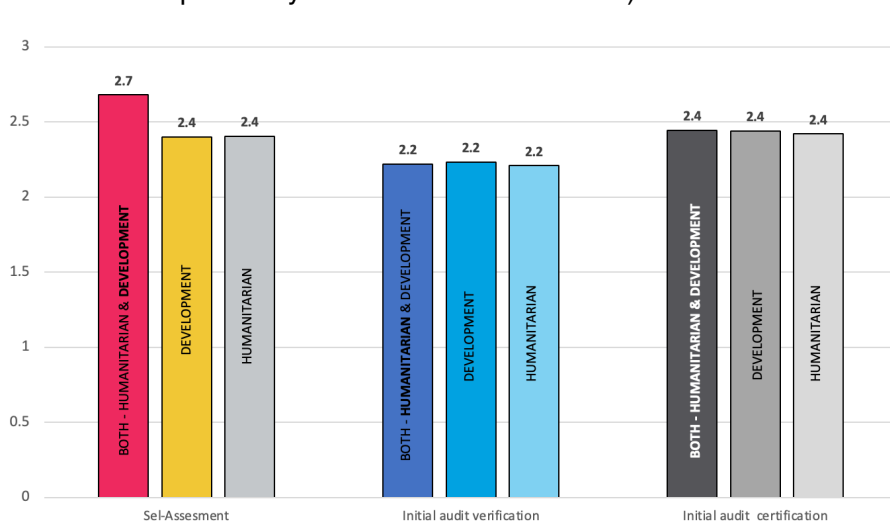
Comparison by verified mandate

Some NGOs working in the development sector perceive the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) applies only to humanitarian response interventions for crisis-affected communities – perhaps because of the prominence of the word “humanitarian” in its title and commitments. The analysis shows a different reality.

Graph 6 below shows the average score of all 9 CHS Commitments per verified mandate (i.e. humanitarian, development or both together) for organisations undergoing the CHS Self-Assessment and those having concluded the initial audit of the Certification and Independent

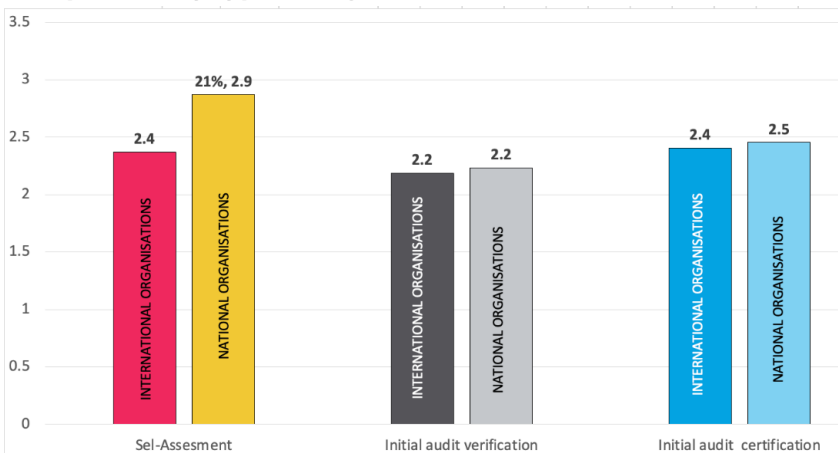
Verification. This graph clearly shows that **there is no significant difference in performance/scores between organisations undergoing a CHS Self-Assessment or HQAI initial audit for their humanitarian or development mandate.** In other words, data show that **the average scores are similar for organisations verifying their humanitarian mandate only or development mandate only. Humanitarian and development organisations perform similarly on the CHS. This contradicts some perceptions of the CHS as a purely humanitarian standard and show that it applies to both, humanitarian and/or development organisations.**

However, only in the case of self-assessed organisations, scores are higher when the organisation assesses both mandates (humanitarian and development) at the same time. This finding does not apply to the certification & independent verification services (the average performance scores are the same independently from the mandate verified).



Graph 6: Average scores of all aggregated 9 CHS Commitments per mandate verified during the CHS Self-Assessment and Independent Verification and Certification Initial Audits

Comparison by type of organisation



Graph 7: Average CHS Scores per CHS Verification Scheme and related to the type of organisation

Graph 7 above presents the average scores of all the aggregated CHS Commitments per type of mandate verified. Data show that **for self-assessed NGOs, on average, national organisations score 21% higher than international ones. No difference is seen on the performance of national and international organisations undergoing certification and independent**

verification audits. These results were confirmed by the p-value analysis and the results are presented in the following chapter.¹⁷

III. Correlation analysis: measuring p-values

To refine our understanding of the impact of the three CHS Verification options, a correlation analysis was done via the analysis of the *p-value*. The *p-value* analysis shows the likelihood that an observed outcome - i.e. the CHS and accountability scores - is the result of chance, as opposed to the effect of other factors - i.e. the three CHS Verification options. Therefore, it allows to assess whether the CHS and accountability scores can be explained to some degree by the effect of the three CHS Verification options. The lower the *p-value*, the greater is the statistical significance of a variable. A *p-value* of 0.05 or lower is generally considered statistically significant.

To this analysis, some indicators related to the verified organisations' characteristics were added as "control variables", to assess whether they also have an impact on the CHS and accountability scores performance.

This statistical method provides an understanding of the relationship between various indicators and organisations' performance on the CHS and accountability. However, it is important to recognise the limitations of this analysis, particularly in relation to "non-significant" indicators, and to consider the wider context and potential confounding factors when interpreting these results. Therefore, this analysis should be complemented by other data analysis methods – i.e. the survey and a qualitative analysis (see chapter 6. *What's next?*).

The results of this correlation analysis with further explanations are represented in Annexe 5 and discussed below.

Analysis of the Self-Assessments (SA)

The correlation analysis shows that for the SA, two specific characteristics of organisations have an impact on the CHS and accountability scores: the mandate and the type of organisation (see Matrix 1 and 2 in Annexe 5). Data show that when the **organisations undergoing the SA for both their mandates (humanitarian & development) together, they have more probability of scoring themselves with higher scores than organisations undergoing the SA only for one of the two mandates**. This is also in line with the results of Graph 6. This may indicate that multi-mandate organisations have more comprehensive systems in place that are aligned with the requirements of the CHS commitments.¹⁸

The type of organisations has also an impact on the SA CHS and accountability scores (see Matrix 2 in Annexe 5). Indeed, data show that **being a national organisation (rather than an international one) is correlated with higher CHS and accountability scores**. This confirms the results of Graph 7, which shows that on average national NGOs undergoing the Self-Assessment score themselves higher compared to international organisations. This could be due to closer community ties or a better understanding of local contexts.¹⁹

¹⁷ It is important to clarify that the similar performance between national and international organisations undergoing an audit could be biased by the sample used for the analysis. Indeed, while for the self-assessment the sample of national (nr.=27) and international (nr.=30) organisations is similar, this is not the case for independently verified (2 national vs. 15 international) or certified organisations (6 national vs. 20 international). This potential bias was mitigated by the fact that similar results were obtained from the p-value analysis, which takes into consideration the sample effect.

¹⁸ This is an assumption that has to be tested in future research.

¹⁹ This is an assumption that has to be tested in future research.

The HO location, size of the organisation, type of implementation, human and financial capacities are not correlated to the CHS scores performance of organisations conducting a Self-Assessment (see Matrix 2 in Annexe 5).

Analysis of the Certification & Independent Verification Audits

For certification and independent verification audits (see Matrix 3 in Annexe 5), the indicator the most correlated to organisations' CHS performance is 'Audit Cycle'. In other words, CHS scores improvements are positively correlated to the number of audit cycle: **the more audits and audit cycles an organisation goes through, the more likely it is to improve its scores.** This is very likely a reflection of the hypothesis that audits are learning and improvement exercises.

Other indicators i.e. audit modalities, the number of community interviews, or the auditor's identity, and sample rates - are non-significant, meaning, not correlated to the evolution of the CHS scores.²⁰ This is also the case for the variable "mandates verified": the mandate being verified in the audit does not have an impact on the scores attributed to the organisation. This finding is in line with what showed in Graph 6 and Graph 7 and proves that **the CHS can be adopted by organisations with both, humanitarian and development mandates without this having an impact on their performance on the CHS and accountability indicators.**

Contrary to the Self-Assessment results, the "type of organisation" does not influence the CHS and accountability scores, meaning that whether an organisation is a national or international one, this will not have an impact on their performance towards the CHS or accountability indicators. The other control variables - i.e. head office location, size of the organisation, type of implementation, human and financial capacities – do not have an impact on the CHS scores and accountability indicators (see Matrix 4 in Annexe 5).

6. What's next?

From the outset, this impact study has been seen as an evolving research effort. The mixed method and the step-by-step approach allow us to test new hypotheses and to refine our understanding of the impact at a systemic level. To complement the quantitative analyses presented in this report and to develop further the interpretation of its results, a survey and qualitative interviews will be carried out in 2024.

Analysis presented in this report show the improvement of CHS and Accountability scores over time for certified and independently verified organisations. The *p-value* analysis confirms that these two services are positively correlated with the CHS and Accountability Scores – i.e. the more audits an organisation undergoes, the better it will perform. However, audit scores and performance improvements are not solely the result of audits: there are also other variables that can impact an organisation's performance, such as its staff, board and senior managers' engagement in the audit process (Shah et. al., 2011; Brajer-Marczak, 2014; Bugnion, 2002; Van Praag and Sattler, 2022), financial and human resources available, incentives and motivations to participate in one verification option, etc. To test these variables, a survey will be developed and sent to CHS verified organisation's focal point and senior managers. The purpose of the survey will be to test to which degree the mentioned variables play a role and impact the CHS and accountability scores and performance improvement over time. To this end, the survey results will be integrated and complement the correlation analysis.

²⁰ It is important to consider the possibility that there is insufficient variability in these indicators across different NGOs, leading to a lack of detectable effect. Interactions between different indicators could mask individual effects.

The interviews will help to understand how the three verification processes are learning and improvement tools for organisations. Therefore, similarly to the survey, the interviews will complement and support the interpretation of the quantitative and statistical results obtained and presented in this report.

Following the analysis of the survey and interviews results, this report will be completed, and a final version published towards June 2024.²¹ The longitudinal and correlation analysis for the CHS cross-cutting themes (i.e. PSEAH, DNG, G&D, IQC, localisation) will also be added in the last version of the report.

Finally, this research methodology will be partly integrated into CHS Verification Scheme. The automation of data collection and analysis through the development of an IMS and dashboards will allow both HQAI and CHS Alliance to continuously measure the impact of their work and the evolution of verified organisations performance.

7. Key findings from the quantitative analysis

In Chapter 5, the results obtained from the longitudinal and correlation analyses are presented and discussed. The key findings are summarised here below:

- Organisations that undergo third-party quality assurance audits address weaknesses identified in audit reports and improve their performance from one audit to the following one. Indeed, CHS scores increase over time as well as the scores of internal accountability, accountability to PAC and to partners & peers in the sector.
- Certified organisations perform better than independently verified ones, but the latter show greater and faster improvement across the audit cycle.
- Certified organisations show greater improvements between mid-term and renewal audits rather than between initial and mid-term audits.
- On average, the CHS scores are 10.5% higher for the SA than those of independent verification and certification at initial audits.
- Commitment 5 (Complaints are welcomed and addressed) is the CHS Commitment with the lowest score at all stages of the audit cycle for all verification options, while Commitment 6 (Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary) the one with the highest performance.
- On average, all organisations perform better on internal accountability, followed by accountability towards peers and partners in the sector. The form of accountability with the lowest average score is accountability to PAC. None of the three CHS Verification options reaches score 3 (i.e. the full conformity with the requirement) on any of the three forms of accountability.
- For the three verification options, there is no significative difference of CHS and accountability performance by mandate verified (i.e. humanitarian and/or development). However, organisations that conduct the self-assessment for both mandates jointly score higher than organisations undergoing a SA for one mandate only.
- For certification and independent verification audits, the audit cycle is positively correlated with higher CHS performance, meaning that successive audits are a driver for improvement.
- The HO location, size of the organisation, type of implementation, human and financial capacities are not correlated to the CHS and accountability scores performance of organisations conducting the self-assessment, certification or independent verification.

²¹ This deadline is subject to available funds and the availability of interviewees.

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Annexes

Annexe 1: Variables and indicators representing the Certification, Independent Verification and Self-Assessment methodologies.

Certification & Independent Verification audits	Audit modality	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully remote <input type="checkbox"/> Remote & On-site assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g. work with local consultants)	Validated Self-Assessment	N/A
	Audit cycle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st audit cycle <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd audit cycle <input type="checkbox"/> ...		<input type="checkbox"/> 1st SA <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd SA
	Sample rate	<input type="checkbox"/> 100% <input type="checkbox"/> 80%		<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (standardised)
	Mandates verified	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/> development <input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/> development <input type="checkbox"/> both
	Number of community interviews	Ratio between the number of community members interviewed and number of country programmes selected for onsite visits		N/A (standardised, organisations are required to conduct 20 interviews with key informants and people affected with direct experience of the services delivered.)
	Number of staff interviews	Ratio between the number of staff interviewed and the total number of staff		N/A, normalised; using a statistical formula, a sample is calculated based on the total number of staff.
	Lead Auditor	- Who is the lead auditor - Same as previous audit: yes/no		- Who is the focal person - position and seniority - Same as previous SA: Yes/No
	Second Auditor	- Who is the lead auditor - Same as previous audit: yes/no		N/A

Annexe 2: Accountability indicators

Accountability to Affected People (AAP)	Transparency & Answerability	1.1 / 1.2 / 3.8 / 4.1 / 4.2 / 4.3 / 4.4 / 4.5 / 5.2 / 5.3 / 5.5 / 5.6 / 7.2 / 7.3
	Participation	3.1 / 3.2 / 3.3 / 3.4 / 3.5 / 3.6 / 3.7 / 4.3 / 4.4 / 4.6 / 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 6.1 / 7.2
	Responsiveness	1.3 / 2.5 / 2.7 / 3.2 / 3.6 / 4.4 / 4.6 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 5.7 / 7.1 / 7.2 / 7.4 / 7.5 / 9.4
	Sanctions & Incentives	-
Accountability to peers & partners	Transparency & Answerability	1.1 / 1.4 / 4.5 / 4.7 / 5.2 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 5.6 / 5.7 / 6.3 / 6.4 / 6.6 / 7.3 / 7.6 / 8.7 / 9.1 / 9.5
	Participation	2.1 / 2.2 / 2.3 / 2.4 / 3.1 / 3.2 / 3.3 / 3.7 / 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.7 / 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.5
	Responsiveness	1.3 / 2.5 / 2.7 / 5.1 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 6.6 / 7.1 / 7.2 / 7.4 / 7.5
	Sanctions & Incentives	-
Internal Accountability	Transparency & Answerability	1.3 / 2.6 / 2.7 / 4.4 / 4.5 / 4.6 / 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 5.6 / 6.5 / 7.3 / 7.4 / 7.6 / 8.1 / 8.2 / 8.3 / 8.4 / 8.6 / 8.7
	Participation	1.3 / 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 7.2 / 7.4 / 8.1 / 8.2 / 8.3 / 8.4 / 8.6 / 8.7
	Responsiveness	2.5 / 2.7 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 5.7 / 7.1 / 7.2 / 7.4 / 7.5 / 8.1 / 8.8 / 8.9 / 9.5
	Sanctions & Incentives	8.2 / 8.7

Annexe 3: CHS cross-cutting themes

Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment (PSEAH)	1.2 / 2.1 / 3.6 / 3.7 / 3.8 / 4.1 / 4.3 / 4.5 / 4.6 / 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.3 / 5.4 / 5.5 / 5.6 / 5.7 / 6.1 / 6.4 / 6.6 / 8.1 / 8.2 / 8.7 / 8.9 / 9.5
Gender & Diversity (G&D)	1.2 / 1.5 / 3.3 / 3.6 / 3.7 / 4.2 / 4.3 / 4.4 / 8.5 / 8.7
Localisation	3.1 / 3.2 / 3.3 / 3.4 / 3.5 / 3.6 / 3.7 / 4.2 / 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.5 / 6.6 / 9.4
Do-no-harm (DNA)	1.1 / 1.2 / 1.6 / 2.1 / 3.1 / 3.4 / 3.6 / 3.7 / 3.8 / 4.6 / 5.1 / 5.4 / 8.2 / 8.7 / 9.4 / 9.5
Internal Quality Control (IQC)	1.1 / 1.3 / 1.6 / 2.4 / 2.5 / 2.7 / 3.6 / 4.3 / 4.4 / 4.6 / 5.2 / 7.1 / 7.2 / 7.3 / 7.1 / 7.5 / 8.1 / 9.1 / 9.2 / 9.3 / 9.5 / 9.6

Annexe 4: Organisation's characteristics

Head Office Location	Country
Size of the organisation	Total number of country programmes or project sites
Type of organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> International
Type of implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Only direct implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Through partners <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid (direct and through partners)
Human capacities	Total number of staff
Financial capacities	Annual budget

Annexe 5: P-value analysis

What is the p-value analysis? The p-value analysis shows the likelihood that an observed outcome - i.e. the CHS and accountability scores - is the result of chance, as opposed to the effect of other factors - i.e. the three CHS Verification options. It allows to assess whether the CHS and accountability scores can be explained to some degree by the effect of the three CHS Verification options or other factors.

How to read the p-value? The lower the p-value, the greater is the statistical significance of a variable. A p-value of 0.05 or lower is generally considered **statistically significant**, meaning that the independent variable (e.g. self-assessment) influences the dependent one (e.g. CHS scores). In the matrices presented below, the significant variables are represented by the **cells in grey**.

Indicator	CHS Scores	Accountability scores
Mandate: Humanitarian	0.53	0.35
Mandate: Development	0.45	0.19
Mandate: Hum. & Dev.	< 0.01	< 0.01
Community Interviews	0.84	0.68

Matrix 1: P-values showing the relationship between the **Self-Assessment**, the CHS and accountability scores

Indicator	CHS scores	Accountability scores
Head Office location: Country	0.21	0.19
Size of organisation	0.48	0.44
Type of organisation: National	< 0.05	< 0.05
Type of Organisation: International	0.10	0.09
Human capacities	0.55	0.52
Financial capacities	0.36	0.33

Matrix 2: P-values showing the relationship between the characteristics of organisations doing the **Self-Assessment** and the CHS and accountability

Indicator	CHS Score	Accountability scores
Audit Modality: Fully Remote	0.30	0.35
Audit Modality: Remote & On-site	0.21	0.20
Audit Modality: Other	0.42	0.45
1st Audit Cycle	< 0.05	< 0.05
2nd Audit Cycle	< 0.01	< 0.01
Sample Rate: 100%	0.55	0.62
Sample Rate: 80%	0.50	0.53
Mandates: Humanitarian	0.23	0.25
Mandates: Development	0.15	0.13
Mandates: Both	0.18	0.21
Nr. community Interviews	0.64	0.65
Auditors (First/second)	0.87	0.64

Matrix 3: P-values showing the relationship between the **independent verification** and **certification schemes**, and the CHS and accountability

Indicator	CHS scores	Accountability scores
Head Office location: Country	0.22	0.18
Size of organisation	0.47	0.39
Type of organisation: National	0.08	0.07
Type of Organisation: International	0.12	0.11
Type o implementation	0.31	0.28
Human capacities	0.53	0.51
Financial capacities	0.34	0.29

Matrix 4: P-values showing the relationship between the characteristics of organisations doing **independent verification** and **certification** audits, and the CHS and accountability scores

Annexe 6: HQAI scoring system

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p>Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Independent verification: major weakness. <input type="checkbox"/> Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Independent verification: minor weakness <input type="checkbox"/> Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>