



General Assembly 2025 Paper 5: Update of the Verification Scheme

Why the Verification Scheme is Being Updated

The CHS Verification Scheme is evolving to meet the growing demand for stronger accountability and quality assurance across the humanitarian and development sector. As organisations navigate increasingly complex environments, it is more important than ever to ensure all organisations serving people in situations of vulnerability and crisis are upholding principled, people-centred aid.

Momentum around CHS verification has grown in recent year, particularly among national and local NGOs, highlighting the relevance of the scheme and the need to ensure it remains fit for purpose. At the same time, many organisations face persistent challenge of constrained funding and the burden of increasing due diligence requirements.

Updating the CHS Verification Scheme responds to these dynamics. It aims to reinforce the Scheme's value, enhance its accessibility, and ensure it continues supporting accountability, quality and organisational learning.

The update seeks to ensure:

- A Scheme that continues to drive **continuous improvement for organisations** in applying the CHS, particularly in their work with vulnerable and crisis affected people.
- A clear and flexible verification pathway that **remains accessible and financially viable** for a wider range of organisations, **bridging an accessibility gap** between Self-Assessment and Independent Verification/Certification
- **Credibility with donors and partners**, through meaningful assurance that is appropriate to each organisation's context, with robust oversight that helps reduce duplication and complexity in due diligence; and

What We Heard During Consultations

Between May and July 2025, the CHS Alliance consulted members, donors, pooled funds, networks, independent organisations, and assurance bodies to hear their view on how to improve the Scheme.

Key messages included:

- **New Verification Modality:** Broad support for creating a new option between Self-Assessment and Independent Verification/Certification, the **Independent Validation of the Self-Assessment (IV-SA)**.
- **Implementation Model:** A preference from donors and national NGOs for this new modality to be delivered by an additional Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)¹ to ensure consistency and credibility. Independent auditors were also explored, but concerns were expressed about consistency.

¹ This is similar to our current CAB for certification, which is HQAI – Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative.



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- **Strong recognition of the value of Certification:** Donors confirmed they will continue to prioritise Certification as the most robust assurance tool, but welcomed the IV-SA as a helpful step for organisational development and preparedness. Some stakeholders said the IV-SA could be useful for assurance for smaller partners or for due diligence passporting.
- **Mixed views on Independent Verification (IV):** some advocated for dropping it for simplicity of the scheme, some donors supported repositioning it as a step towards Certification, while many organisations valued keeping it as a, stand-alone, learning-focused service.
- **Affordability** was highlighted as a key concern across all groups.
- **Clear communication:** Members and donors asked for simpler, clearer communication on what each verification option means.
- **Donor Recognition:** Stakeholders stressed the need to clearly articulate which modalities will be recognised by donors and how these align with due diligence requirements

Moving Forward

Based on the consultation findings and an analysis of risks and opportunities, the CHS Alliance Board in September 2025 endorsed the following direction of travel:

1. **Introduce the IV-SA** as a new option between Self-Assessment and Independent Verification/Certification (see annex one for more information).
2. **Develop the IV-SA using a CAB-led model**
3. **Retain the current Independent Verification (IV) modality**
4. **Harmonise** all verification options to a three-year cycle to improve consistency.
5. **Strengthen communication** so that members, donors, and partners can easily navigate the Scheme.

Next Steps and Timeline

- October 2025 – General Assembly: Feedback and questions from the general Assembly
- Q4 2025: Selection and approval of a potential CAB for IV-SA; early design and preparation of pilots.
- Q1 2026: Presentation of a draft methodology and pilot plan for IV-SA to the Board.
- Q2 2026: Launch of IV-SA pilot tests.
- Q3 2026: Review of pilot results and Board approval of the final IV-SA model.
- Beyond 2026: Continued engagement with donors to expand recognition, and a review of the role of Independent Verification once greater buy-in is secured.

The Role of Members

CHS Alliance Members will play a central role in this process by:

- Providing feedback during the General Assembly.
- Providing feedback to ensure the updated Scheme is clear, relevant, and practical.
- Supporting efforts to engage donors and networks in recognising the updated Scheme.



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Annex One : More About the Independently Validated Self-Assessment (IV-SA)

The Independent Validation of the Self-Assessment (IV-SA) is a new verification option designed to fill the gap between Self-Assessment and Independent Verification/Certification. It combines the learning and improvement benefits of a self-assessment with an external layer of assurance.

Under the IV-SA, organisations will carry out a self-assessment against the CHS as usual. A qualified Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) will then conduct a remote validation, limited in scope, of the results by:

- Reviewing the organisation's internal quality assurance system and its risk profile.
- Examining selected findings and specific areas identified during the self-assessment.
- Checking that selected commitments and requirements are applied in practice, based on the organisation's risk profile.

This approach will make the IV-SA:

- A credible stepping-stone for organisations not yet ready for Independent Verification or Certification.
- A verification option that reinforces the credibility of the self-assessment, giving donors and stakeholders greater confidence.
- A lighter, limited in scope, and more affordable verification option, facilitating its accessibility, especially for smaller organisations.
- A driver of continuous improvement, by linking internal reflection with external assurance.

For more information or to share your views, please contact verification@chsalliance.org