1. Introduction

CHS Alliance, Sphere and Groupe URD have launched a multi-stakeholder consultation process to collect feedback on how to update and improve the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). As copyright holders, the three organisations are responsible for managing the revision process, following international good practices for standards development. This means ensuring the process is accessible, inclusive and participatory for as many stakeholders as possible. More information about the process is available [here](#).

These Consultation Guidelines are aimed at supporting organisations to provide feedback on the CHS at the first phase of consultation. They provide a set of guiding questions, suggestions on different consultation methods and formats, and a reporting template to submit inputs to the CHS Revision Managers. These inputs will be analysed and used to inform the drafting of an updated and improved standard.

The revision process does not aim to replace the existing standard but to update and improve it.

2. Purpose of the first phase of consultation

The first consultation round will take place from June to December 2022. The main purpose is to collect organisational stakeholders’ perspectives on the CHS to:

- Share experiences and lessons learned on the relevance of the CHS for the sector.
- Collect feedback on how to improve the content, structure and presentation of the Standard
- Consider how emerging issues and new developments could be reflected in the Standard

The feedback from phase one of the consultation process will provide guidance for identifying the issues that need to inform the updated standard.

3. Scope of the first phase of consultation

This first phase focuses on generating stakeholders’ inputs on three related aspects of the CHS: structure, content and presentation, against the following criteria.

A. Structure
- Maintain and improve the overall structure of the CHS as a set of accountability commitments to affected people and organisations’ responsibilities to meet these commitments
- Ensure the CHS continues to follow international good practices as a measurable standard that supports continuous improvements in organisations and programme quality, effectiveness and accountability.

B. Content
- Maintain and improve on the essential elements that contribute to better quality and more effective and accountable organisations and programmes
- Identify and address gaps, duplications or other issues that require clarification
- Incorporate emerging good practices and other developments in the sector
- Ensure compatibility with existing data on use and application of the current Standard
C. **Presentation**
   - Simplify language and reduce complexity when possible
   - Present the standard in more user-friendly, accessible formats for different stakeholders
   - Identify ways to raise awareness and increase use of the standard by a greater number of stakeholders
   - Build links and synergies with other accountability-related standards and initiatives in the humanitarian, development and other sectors

Issues identified through the consultation process that are beyond the scope of the revision will be documented and directed to relevant stakeholders for further discussions and action.

4. **Guiding Questions**

A series of questions have been developed. They are intended to facilitate an open but structured discussion.

**Not all questions need to be answered! Organisations can focus on the commitments and issues that are most relevant or a priority to them.**

**Introductory questions:**
1. *How familiar are you and your organisation with the CHS?*
2. *How is your organisation currently using the CHS (or other relevant technical, quality assurance and management standards, etc.) to ensure your organisation is effective and accountable?*

**CHS Commitments as a whole**
1. *Are the Commitments a good description of what people affected by crisis can expect from organisations that aim to support them?*
2. *Are there any areas that needs strengthening? What are they?*
3. *Are there areas that need changing? What are they?*
4. *Are there any other issues, gaps or duplication that should be addressed? What are they?*

**Individual Commitments, Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities**
1. *Does the Commitment reflect the most essential elements of what people and communities want and expect from organisations? What needs to be strengthened? What needs to be changed?*
2. *Do the Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities describe the most essential elements needed for organisations to meet this commitment? What needs to be strengthened? What needs to be changed?*
3. *Are there any other issues, gaps or duplication that need to be addressed? What are they?*

**Cross-cutting issues**

*Are there any essential cross-cutting issues that need to be considered in the updated standard? What needs to be strengthened? What needs to be changed?*

**Presentation**

*Are there any other suggestions or recommendations to increase awareness and use of the CHS by a wider range of organisations and stakeholders.*

These questions are included in the reporting template to facilitate collecting feedback in a structured manner.
5. Practical suggestions to organise consultations

Decide which stakeholders will participate in your consultation

Consultations within your organisation can help identify areas for clarification and improvement, gaps, duplication and other issues that could help make the standard more accessible, inclusive and user-friendly. Participants can include staff and volunteers, management, governance and other stakeholders.

Engaging with partners, donors and your wider networks be a useful way to raise awareness of the standard while gaining insights on how it can support improve coordinated approaches to improving quality and accountability.

Some stakeholders may not be familiar with the CHS, but use other standards, tools and frameworks to ensure their work is effective and accountable. Feedback and inputs from these stakeholders on the standard can provide valuable inputs on how to improve it and make it more accessible and user-friendly for more organisations.

Find the right time for your consultations

Ideally, organisations can organise stakeholder consultations sessions specifically dedicated to reviewing the CHS and providing feedback on how to improve and update it. This could be done by organising:

- Meetings (with staff, management teams, or governance bodies)
- Online consultations or webinars
- In-person workshops, or a hybrid approach (online and face-to-face)
- A series of workshops or events for more in-depth discussions
- Side events in other events such as trainings, conferences, etc.

The list above is not exhaustive, please feel free to be creative! Please contact the CHS Revision Managers to share your plans and get inputs on how to organise your consultation events.

Decide on the focus and approach for your consultation

There are many different options to focus your consultations depending on the time available and your areas of interest: including the CHS as a whole, the Nine Commitments, single Commitments or a cross-cutting theme.

Design your session

Depending on the number and availability of participants, your session can range from an hour to a full-day (or more) workshop or even a series of workshops over several days. The agenda should be adapted to the context and needs of the participants and the focus of discussions.

**Note:** Whatever method is used, it is important to use the recommended consultation questions and reporting template to ensure that response can be compiled, compared and analysed at the global level.

A sample agenda for a two-hour session can be found below. Please contact the CHS Revision Managers if you would like specific suggestions for the agenda and how to organise your session. In some cases, we may be able to participate and facilitate the sessions or recommend other facilitators.

Register participants

Please make sure to complete the participant information section of the reporting template so the revision team can consolidate and prepare a global overview with disaggregated data on who has participated and contributed to the revision process. This includes the roles of individual participants, the types of organisation they are in, and their thematic areas of work.

This is important, as all individuals and organisations that contribute to the process will have an opportunity to comment on and validate the final draft versions of the updated standard at the end of the process.
Before beginning the consultation session, it is good to formally ask participants for their consent to participate in the session and inform them that their views and inputs will be collected and shared as contributions to the revision process. For online events, this should also include permission to record the session.

**Note:** Any personal information provided by participants or the event organisers will be considered as confidential and will not be shared with any other organisation except the CHS Revision Team.

Assess participants’ awareness and understanding of the CHS ahead of the consultation

You may want to consider using a short questionnaire or poll to determine the level of awareness and understanding of the CHS before you organise your consultation. This will help you to design a consultation and discussion questions that are adapted to your participants.

For participants that are not familiar with the CHS or accountability concepts, it could be better to start with a general overview of the CHS before asking general questions around the relevance and value of the standard, and suggestions on how to improve it.

For participants with a good level of understanding and experience with the CHS, it might be better to begin with a discussion sharing experiences of how the standard is being used, before moving to more specific questions around the current content, structure and presentation of the CHS.

**Additional suggestions**

- Keep the focus on the current structure and content of the CHS and what is needed to improve it.
- Be as specific as possible when proposing changes or additions to the text.
- Feedback around the use and application of the CHS are welcome but should be aligned to provide constructive suggestions on how to improve the text of the CHS.
- Consider inviting a guest speaker or expert to introduce the CHS and the revision process or provide reflections on a specific topic or theme relating to quality and accountability.
- In some cases, the Revision Managers or other representatives of the CHS copyright holders or Steering Committee may be able to participate.

**Report on your Consultation**

The CHS Revision Managers will consolidate the feedback from a large number of consultations. It is therefore very important that you report on your session using the reporting guidelines and template in the Annex below.

Please follow these guidelines carefully, so that your contribution can be fully considered.

Please share the report (in English, Spanish or French) with the Revision Managers at CHSrevision@chsalliance.org within one week after the consultation.
### Sample Session plan for a 2-3 hour consultation meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10’</td>
<td>Introduction to the meeting objectives and participants</td>
<td>Conduct or share poll findings on participants’ prior knowledge and understanding of the CHS. Stress that all participants have relevant experiences, perspectives and contributions to make to the revision process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5’</td>
<td>Review the agenda and ways of working during the meeting</td>
<td>Remind participants that the focus is on providing feedback and suggestions on the current CHS and how to improve it.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Remind participants that their feedback will be collected and shared with the Revision Team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10’</td>
<td>Background on the revision process and experiences of participants.</td>
<td>Stress the importance of grounding these global consultations in local realities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiding questions:</td>
<td>Suggested PPT is available at <a href="http://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources">corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. <em>How familiar are you and your organisation with the CHS?</em></td>
<td>Share background documents and the FAQs on the process with participants beforehand if useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30’</td>
<td>Introductory plenary discussion:</td>
<td>This can be done in plenary, using either the table format of the Nine Commitments or the CHS flower.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The CHS Nine Commitments as a coherent accountability framework for people and communities.</td>
<td>Stress that commitments are based on inputs from communities, and are intended to be used a coherent, integral set, not selectively focusing on one at the expense of all the others (for example, feedback mechanisms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiding Questions for CHS Commitments as a whole</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. <em>Are the Commitments a good description of what people affected by crisis can expect from organisations that aim to support them?</em></td>
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<td>2. <em>Are there any areas that need strengthening? What are they?</em></td>
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<td>3. <em>Are there areas that need changing? What are they?</em></td>
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<td>4. <em>Are there any other issues, gaps or duplication that should be addressed? What are they?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-45’</td>
<td>Small group discussions on each Commitment and its related Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities. Guiding Questions Individual Commitments, Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities 1. <em>Does the Commitment reflect the most essential elements of what people and communities want and expect from organisations? What needs to be strengthened? What needs to be changed?</em> 2. <em>Do the Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities describe the most essential elements needed for organisations to meet this commitment? What needs to be strengthened? What needs to be changed?</em> 3. <em>Are there any other issues, gaps or duplication that need to be addressed? What are they?</em></td>
<td>Groups will depend on number of participants and time available. Commitments can be divided amongst groups based on interest and experience, or assigned randomly to ensure different points of views and perspectives. Be sure all groups have a reporter and a means to capture discussions (jamboards, flipcharts, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20’</td>
<td>Working group feedback session</td>
<td>Have reporters share their group’s feedback to plenary. Have groups also report back on any disagreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15’</td>
<td>Plenary discussion</td>
<td>Review the answers after all groups have fed back and identify points of consensus or disagreements, possibly gaps across different groups and commitments. Another brief discussion round as needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>5’</td>
<td>Concluding remarks and ways to stay engaged</td>
<td>Consider doing a short evaluation of the session to get feedback on the design and facilitation, but also to assess participants’ engagement in the process</td>
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