



# Global Conference on Sustainability and Transparency

Amsterdam, May 7 –9

# Outline

- Accountability: HAP's definition
- HAP-International: an introduction
- Defining the problem
- The HAP Proposition
- The HAP Standard
- HAP Certification
- Openings for further research

# Accountability

"Accountability is the means by which power is used responsibly" (HAP)

- Power brings responsibility, and with responsibility comes accountability
- Accountability is about the **right** to a say and the **duty** to respond
- An accountable organisation manages the quality of its products and services, and strives to continuously improve these for the benefit of its customers, clients or claimants.

# The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International

## Vision:

Founded in 2003: "The vision of HAP International is a humanitarian sector with a trusted and widely accepted accountability framework, which is transparent and accessible to all relevant parties"

## Mission:

To achieve and promote the highest principles of accountability through self-regulation by members linked by common respect for the rights and dignity of **beneficiaries**

# HAP full-members (May 2008)

1. ACFID (Australia)
2. ACTED (France)
3. CAFOD (Caritas UK)
4. CARE International
5. Christian Aid (UK)
6. Church World Service –  
Pakistan/Afghanistan
7. COAST Trust (Bangladesh)
8. CONCERN Worldwide
9. DanChurchAid (Denmark)
10. Danish Refugee Council
11. Medair (Switzerland)
12. Medical Aid for Palestinians (UK)
13. MERCY Malaysia
14. Muslim Aid (UK)
15. Norwegian Refugee Council
16. OFADEC (Senegal)
17. Oxfam GB
18. Save the Children UK
19. Sungi Development Foundation  
(Pakistan)
20. Tearfund (UK)
21. Women's Commission on  
Refugee Women and Children  
(USA)
22. World Vision International

# Current Donors (May 2008)

## **Official donors**

- AusAID
- DFID (associate member)
- Danish MFA (associate member)
- Swedish MFA (associate member)
- Irish MFA
- **Netherlands MFA**
- Norwegian MFA

## **Foundations**

- Oak Foundation
- Ford Foundation

# Defining the Problem

The Imbalance of Power in  
Humanitarian Action

# The Rights-based Argument:

Clear international legal foundation rooted in:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - International Refugee Law,
  - International Humanitarian Law,
  - The Convention on the Rights of the Child,
  - The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women,
- For the right to humanitarian protection and assistance;
  - For the right to a say in the manner in which this is provided, and;
  - For the right to be heard in all stages of the project cycle

# The Challenge ....

- Imbalance of power between humanitarian principals and humanitarian agents. For example:
  - Disaster survivors are only rarely represented in:
    1. Donor resource allocation procedures
    2. UN coordination mechanisms
    3. NGO governance arrangements
  - Disaster survivors are:
    1. Often not consulted in assessments by relief agencies
    2. Given no choice in selection of relief agency
    3. Often treated as a homogenous group
    4. Often subjected to "veterinarian" style relief interventions
    5. Rarely able to submit a complaint or seek redress

## .....the consequences

- The humanitarian system is thus particularly vulnerable to the risks of:
  - Moral hazard (e.g. sexual exploitation of children by aid workers)
  - Inappropriate choice (i.e. agencies taking on jobs that they are not qualified to do – e.g. post-tsunami boat building and house reconstruction)
- The relative power of donors (both official and private) means that market-share “success” is a function of supply-side contracting and marketing rather than demand-driven programming

# ...the “Accountability Deficit”

The gap between promises made by aid agencies to deliver accountable and effective disaster relief and persistent evidence to the contrary

- A growing perception that much emergency relief work is not accountable to affected populations
- The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition found that agencies failed to consult and involve local communities and authorities

## ....the prospect:

- The credibility of international humanitarian action is threatened by perceptions of:
  - lack of impact
  - poor coordination
  - waste/inefficiency
  - corruption and fraud
  - political instrumentalisation/co-option
  - lack of professionalism
- Increasing calls for official regulation (e.g. International Disaster Response Treaty)

# HAP's proposition:

- The adoption of HAP's accountability and quality management standard improves the impact and cost effectiveness of humanitarian action
- HAP's certification
  - ✓ assures optimal programme quality in any given context
  - ✓ improves risk management
  - ✓ helps to curb abuse of corporate power thereby reducing vulnerability to hostile legal action
  - ✓ benefits all stakeholders (staff, donors, partners and disaster survivors)
  - ✓ strengthens the comparative advantage of certified agencies

# What is different about the HAP Standard?

- Based on extensive research and consultation with aid workers, disaster survivors and quality management experts
- Focussed only upon those elements of management that leverage programme quality
- Designed to meet the criteria of "humanitarian mission-criticality", measurability, affordability and feasibility.
- Prepared in accordance with the ISO (International Standards Org) guidelines for the development of international quality management standards

# Benchmarks for the HAP Standard

## **Benchmark 1:**

The agency shall establish a humanitarian quality management system

## **Benchmark 2:**

The agency shall make the following information publicly available to intended beneficiaries, disaster-affected communities, agency staff and other specified stakeholders: (a) organisational background; (b) humanitarian accountability framework; (c) humanitarian plan; (d) progress reports; and (e) complaints handling procedures

## **Benchmark 3:**

The agency shall enable beneficiaries and their representatives to participate in programme decisions and seek their informed consent

## **Benchmark 4:**

The agency shall determine the competencies, attitudes and development needs of staff required to implement its humanitarian quality management system

## **Benchmark 5:**

The agency shall establish and implement complaints-handling procedures that are effective, accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries, disaster-affected communities, agency staff, humanitarian partners and other specified bodies

## **Benchmark 6:**

The agency shall establish a process of continual improvement for its humanitarian accountability framework and humanitarian quality management system

...and designed to be realistic and  
supportive



## HAP certification offers the sector:

- A more informed choice for staff, volunteers, partner agencies, donors and disaster survivors
- Enhanced credibility and standing of certified agencies
- Strengthening of accountability and professionalism

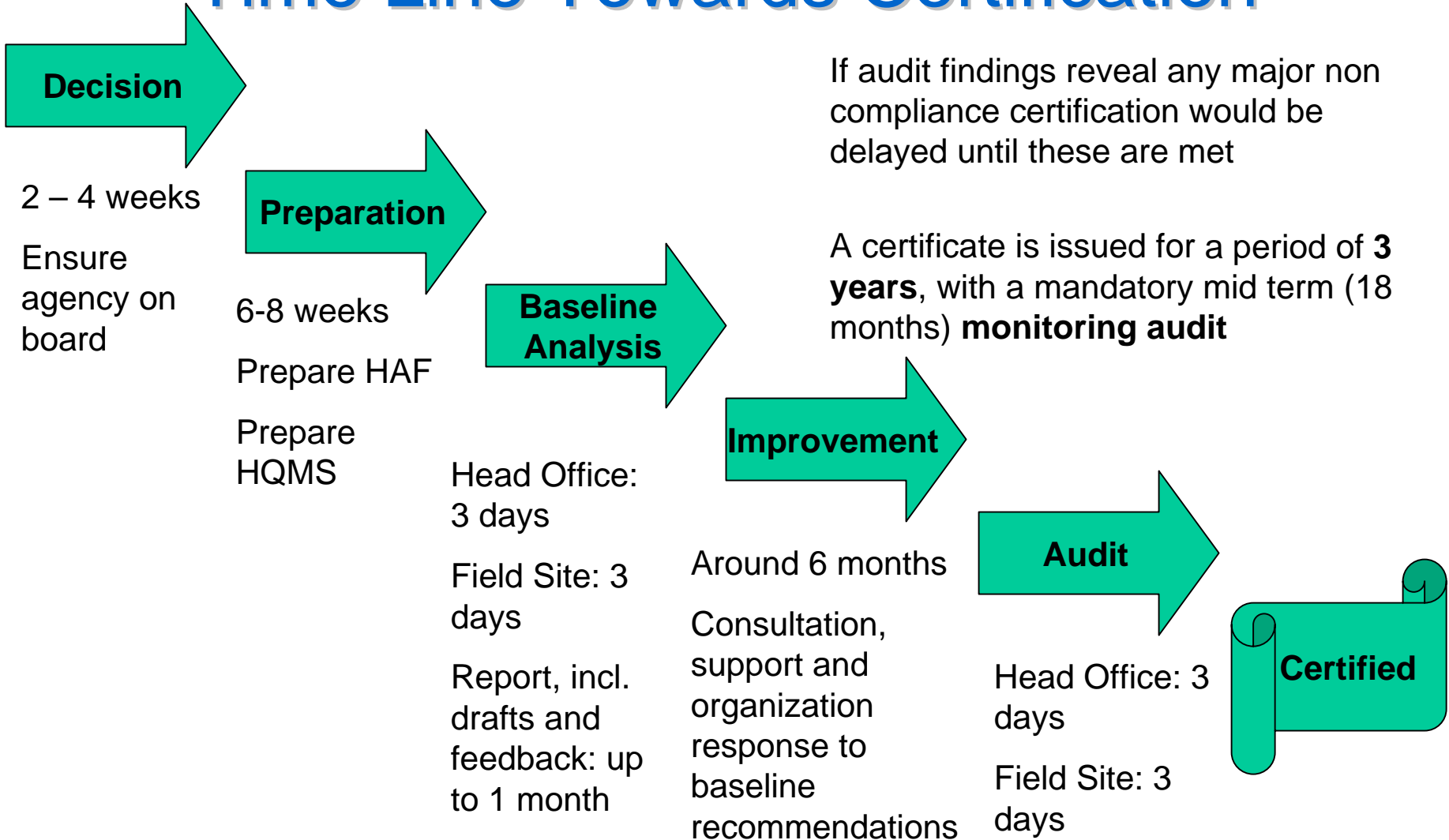
## HAP certification is:

- Applicable regardless of agency size, place of origin, operational or partner-based
- Available to all agencies who meet the qualifying norms

# Steps to Certification

- Baseline analysis
- Submission of application
- Preparation of documentation
- Self-assessments of all field sites
- Head office audit
- Field site audit
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Auditor's report
- Authorisation by HAP Certification and Accreditation Review Board
- Certification – 3 year validity with interim check

# Time Line Towards Certification



## Possible further Research

1. It is quite extraordinary that there is still almost no comparative research on humanitarian quality management systems. The sector is perhaps unique in this respect and this no doubt is another symptom of the accountability deficit.
2. HAP believes that accountability is good for all stakeholders. This may be difficult to prove with regard to mortality and morbidity (case controlled studies would not be allowed), but more rigorous opinion surveying could certainly be conducted. (Of the sort pioneered by the Fritz Institute)