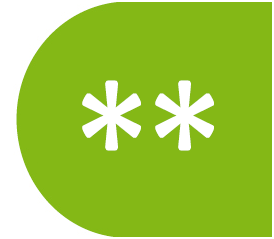
### Summary

An introduction to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and its usage for practitioners in association with other components of the Sphere Handbook.

### Aim

This module aims to introduce the CHS on Quality and Accountability, which replaces the Sphere Handbook’s Core Standards Chapter. The session will introduce the content and format of the CHS and link it to other sections of the Sphere Handbook. This will enable practitioners to use the CHS in a practical manner together with other sections of the Sphere Handbook to enhance the quality, accountability and effectiveness of humanitarian response.

### Learning objectives

*By the end of this session, participants will be able to:*

* List the nine commitments of the CHS
* Describe the format of the CHS, including commitments, quality criteria, performance indicators, key actions, organisations responsibilities and guidance notes
* Illustrate how the joint use of the CHS, Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and Sphere technical minimum standards reinforces the quality, accountability and effectiveness of humanitarian response.

### Key messages

* The CHS is a voluntary set of commitments, achievable actions and policies, processes and systems guiding a principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian response.
* It is a measurable and verifiable standard.
* The CHS is universal in its applicability across contexts, and the way to reach it is adaptable to local usage.
* The CHS, the Humanitarian Charter, the Sphere technical minimum standards and the Protection Principles should be used jointly. Together, they provide a complete framework of quality, effectiveness of humanitarian response and accountability towards disaster-affected population.
* The Humanitarian Charter is why do we do what we do, the technical chapters are what do we do and the CHS and the Protection Principles are how do we do it.
* The Sphere minimum technical standards and the CHS are not merely aspirational statements. They are measurable standards contributing to building a stronger humanitarian response.
* As with Sphere technical minimum standards, failure to meet the CHS key actions and indicators should be analysed, explained and can be used as a strong tool for advocating internally and externally for e.g. greater access, more resources, etc.

#### Preparation & resources

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| For the facilitator | For each participant | For each group of 3-5 participants |
| * Prepare nine pieces of flip chart paper, each with one of the nine Commitments written. Stick these around the room. * If participants have not brought their own Sphere Handbook, extra copies will be required. | * The CHS including Guidance Notes and Indicators * One excerpt from a CHS Commitment (Handout 1) * Optional activity – Sphere and the CHS activity cards and FAQs (Handout 3 and 4) | * A flip chart, marker pens, post-its, adhesive (tape, Blu-Tack) * One case study as part of the broad scenario (Handout 2) |

### You may also want to look at:

* **Module A1-A3 –** Sphere a brief tour, Sphere an in-depth tour and the Sphere Person
* **Module A4-A5 –** Sphere in context
* **Module A6 –** Sphere in practice
* **Module A14-A17** – Sphere technical chapters

### To know more:

* [Sphere Core Standards and CHS - a comparison.pdf](http://www.spherehandbook.org/~sh_resources/resources/Sphere_Core_Standards_and_CHS.pdf) for trainer background information (see Annexes)
* The [Core Humanitarian Standard](http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/) website for additional information on the background and development of the CHS.
* The [Sphere Project website](http://www.sphereproject.org/), the Sphere Project videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/TheSphereProject) for background on Sphere and a refresher on its role in accountability and effectiveness
* The [CHS Alliance](http://chsalliance.org) website, particularly for additional information on [verification](http://chsalliance.org/verification) or [additional training support](http://chsalliance.org/news-events/news/training-manual)

#### Session plan

| Activity | Description | Timing |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Introduction | Introduce the learning outcomes (slide 2) and clarify the intended audience of the session: humanitarian practitioners new to Sphere but undertaking a broader introduction to the Handbook, and those with experience using the 2011 Sphere Handbook who will be familiar with the Sphere Core Standards being replaced by the CHS. Reinforce the collaborative and peer-supported group learning environment. Encourage participants to contribute their thoughts and experiences, and to reflect on their field experiences by considering how the CHS together with the other chapters of the Sphere Handbook will enhance the quality and accountability of their practice.  Provide a brief history of the Sphere Project and its role in principled and effective humanitarian response, coordination and accountability to stakeholders.  Emphasise that the usage of Sphere over the past 18 years has responded to increasing emphasis on accountability to disaster-affected communities, host governments and donors.  Give a short refresher of the Handbook’s layout, including the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and technical chapters. Explain where the CHS sits within the existing Handbook as a replacement for the 2011 Core Standards Chapter. (Slides 3-4) | 10' |
| The Core Humanitarian Standard: introduction | Present, in an interactive manner, slides 5-14, referring to the slide notes, notably:   * How the CHS was developed; a short explanation of how it came into being. * Introduce the nine commitments.   Have a participant read each one out loud as per the animation. | 10' |
| **Optional activity** – the CHS and Core Standards: A comparison | This is an optional exercise. Facilitators may consider it useful for some groups which are more intimately familiar with the 2011 Sphere Handbook, to anchor their understanding of the CHS by comparing its elements to the former Sphere Core Standards.  This slide is hidden. If using this activity, unhide slide 15.  Activity: using flash cards contained in the handouts, small groups (at their tables) will match the nine Commitments and quality criteria to the Core Standards. This will engage participants who have been previously accustomed to working with the Core Standards. In their groups, they are to stick the cards on their flip chart and using markers or any other technique, represent the linkages in any way they choose, but they must be able to justify the links. Some might take a linear approach using groups and arrows, and others might be more abstract and creative.  After spending approximately five minutes matching the Commitments to the actions, each table will present their findings and there will be an opportunity for feedback and discussion from other tables and the facilitator.  Handout 3: deck of cards per table with adhesive.  Handout 4: *The CHS and Sphere FAQs* and [*Core Standards (of the Sphere Handbook 2011 edition) and CHS - a comparison.pdf*](http://www.spherehandbook.org/~sh_resources/resources/Sphere_Core_Standards_and_CHS.pdf), at the end of the exercise for takeaway reading | 15' *(optional)* |
| Activity | Hand out to each participant a statement of positive practice in humanitarian response (Handout 1). The handout has three statements per Commitment: ensure a minimum of two per Commitment is used (if the group is smaller than 18, some participants will receive more than one statement).  Point out the nine sheets of flip chart paper around the room. There should be a CHS Commitment written on each one in large writing. Instruct them to read their slip of paper and using Blu-Tack or tape, walk around the room and identify which Commitment their statement supports. They should stick it on the flip chart which most strongly relates to their statement. Don’t yet reveal that these statements are elements of particular Commitments – just explain that they are broad statements of positive practice or considerations.  Once each participant has stuck their statement/s on the appropriate flip chart, keep everybody standing (it is best to do this exercise away from their tables) and conduct a short debrief of each of the nine flip charts, one at a time, asking participants to explain why they stuck their statement on that flip chart. Clarify any which were incorrectly placed – there may be crossover and participants might want to explain their choice. Use the group consensus to confirm whether each example is correctly matched and whether multiple options were possible. | 20' |
| The CHS and its elements | [This section breaks down each commitment into its elements, defines the elements and shows how the previous exercise used excerpts from various Commitments.]  **Part 1:**  Resume seats and hand out a copy of the full CHS to each participant. Continue presenting the slides 16-25, which describe the layout and functional usage of the CHS and each Commitment, including performance indicators, guiding questions, key actions, guidance notes, organizational responsibilities, etc.  Using Commitment 1 as an example (slides 26-27), participants should open their guide along so they can read along with the slides and become familiar with the layout. Point out that the CHS follow a slightly different format than the other standards in the Sphere Handbook with which they may be familiar. There are additional sections on guiding questions for monitoring and organisational responsibilities.  **Part 2:**  Recapping the previous activity - slides 28-31 will highlight a selection of statements from the previous exercise, each of which can now be revealed is an element of a particular Commitment. The selected statements shown are each a different element of a commitment (performance indicator, guidance note, etc). In a micro-activity, the slides have been animated to reveal the statement first, then to give time to participants to locate it within the CHS, and then the animation will reveal the statement’s correct placement. Participants should thumb through the CHS and identify the section/page number, calling out when it has been located.  Facilitator notes: Allow for participants to contribute their own examples to support these statements. This will help highlight how the CHS could concretely be used in real situations. For example: Commitment 1 (“Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate to their needs.”) Key Action 1.1 first guidance note refers to the importance of needs assessments and analysis. The facilitator or participants might refer to an example of where strong/weak needs assessment led to effective/ineffective humanitarian response. Allow for this within the time frame allocated.  Stress that the CHS and its guidance notes and indicators are about process effectiveness. They contain aspirational statements, concrete measures (key actions and organisational responsibilities associated with guidance notes) to deliver higher quality humanitarian assistance and means to measure performance (performance indicators and guiding questions). They are to be used in conjunction with the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and Sphere technical minimum standards (and other technical standards, like Sphere companion standards, where applicable). | 15' |
| Activity + debrief: Cyclone Esther | Introduce the scenario using slides 32-35. Stress that this is a fictitious scenario drawn from a combination of real-world experiences.  **This exercise will allow groups to consider how the CHS and the other chapters of the Sphere Handbook jointly support quality, effectiveness and accountability, and how, when used together, provide humanitarians and agencies with tools to improve their programs.**  Provide instructions: each table (ideally 3-5 people) will receive a different case study (Handout 2) to explore a different aspect of the fictitious Cyclone Esther response. At their tables, they have 25 minutes to discuss and agree on a minimum of three remedial actions and considerations using the CHS together with the Sphere Protection Principles and technical minimum standards.  It is preferable that when groups present, they include page numbers – this helps other groups quickly find the relevant standard, key action, etc. and will assist other groups with being more engaged in other groups’ presentations.  Instructions are on the slides. Participants should use their CHS and a Sphere Handbook.  After 25 minutes, groups will present their case study in a gallery walk. Groups should be ready to present their flip chart/s creatively and visually; they should be stuck on the walls or around the room prior to the debrief section commencing. Encourage participants to reflect on their own experiences and to share these in plenary as appropriate. The key consideration is: how would the CHS together with the other chapters of the Sphere Handbook jointly support quality and accountability, OR, how have you seen humanitarian action compromised in the absence of such quality and accountability frameworks. (Eg/ a participant might like to reflect on corruption, sexual abuse and exploitation or lack of participatory program design.)  Time management is very important here in order to allow each group to present and receive feedback and questions.  In the handout for this exercise, there are extensive trainer notes for some of the ‘correct’ technical answers for each case study. Please note: they are simply suggestions for the facilitator to support debriefing, to elicit discussion with groups and to pose fresh considerations the group had not addressed. | 60' (30' + 30') |
| Conclusion and questions | Allow time for questions.  (Slide 36). Stress that the CHS is a voluntary set of commitments and achievable actions and policies, processes and systems, which, when measured, can indicate whether humanitarian response has been accountable, effective and principled. Remind the group that, as with the entire Sphere Handbook, when indicators show shortcomings, this provides an excellent opportunity to reflect and advocate for the changes required to enable the actions and policies to be achieved/indicators to be met. Rather than pointing out poor performance or organisational weaknesses, perhaps the security situation is prohibitive, staff are overworked, supply chain/procurement is unrealistic, technological systems are not able to deliver, or coordination with other actors is not taking place. When field staff and organisations can use shortcomings to advocate for improved outcomes, the strength of the response can only be enhanced. This is particularly linked to CHS Commitment 2.  Stress again that the CHS should to be used in conjunction with the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and Sphere technical minimum standards (and other technical standards where applicable).  Further reading and additional support: slide 37 | 5' |

### Tips for facilitators

* This module is designed for those who have some previous exposure to the Sphere Handbook. It is not designed for beginners. It would best be served by at least one day’s introduction to Sphere in a training environment. Try to mix groups so that there is a range of participants with varied exposure to Sphere, accountability or field work. This will enhance the quality of discussions and analysis in the exercises. Establish prior to the session the level of experience of the participant group.
* Become familiar with the CHS and the background materials provided by the CHS website to prepare for this module.
* Seek out the field expertise of the participants. Their experiences will guide discussions around accountability and effectiveness of humanitarian response, and how this can be enhanced by using the CHS. During the major exercise in particular, participants will have many and varied examples to contribute and should be encouraged.
* Prepare the nine flip charts ahead of time and place them around the room away from the seating area if possible. Each flip chart should have one of the nine Commitments written up in large letters, with space for participants to attach the relevant examples.
* Familiarise yourself with the fictitious case study and, depending on participant numbers, select the appropriate number of scenarios for the exercise. You may prepare ahead some of your own real-world examples of a time when you have been exposed to this particular scenario and how it played out.