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Please take a moment to review the Commitments and Quality Criteria as a whole and provide your feedback in the box below. You can also provide specific suggestions on how to change the texts if you want.

**Commitment One**

**Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate to their needs.**

**Quality Criterion:** Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant.

**Key Actions**

1.1 Conduct a systematic, objective and ongoing analysis of the context and stakeholders.

1.2 Design and implement appropriate programmes based on an impartial assessment of needs[[1]](#footnote-1) and risks, and an understanding of the vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups[[2]](#footnote-2).

1.3 Adapt programmes to changing needs, capacities and context.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

1.4 Policies commit to providing impartial assistance based on the needs and capacities of communities and people affected by crisis.

1.5 Policies set out commitments which take into account the diversity of communities, including disadvantaged or marginalised people, and to collect disaggregated data.

1.6 Processes are in place to ensure an appropriate ongoing analysis of the context.

**Commitment Two:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.**

**Quality Criterion:** Humanitarian response is effective and timely.

**Key Actions**

2.1 Design programmes that address constraints[[3]](#footnote-3) so that the proposed action is realistic and safe for communities.

2.2 Deliver humanitarian response in a timely manner, making decisions and acting without unnecessary delay.

2.3 Refer any unmet needs to those organisations with the relevant technical expertise and mandate, or advocate for those needs to be addressed.

2.4 Use relevant technical standards and good practice employed across the humanitarian sector to plan and assess programmes.

2.5 Monitor the activities, outputs and outcomes of humanitarian responses in order to adapt programmes and address poor performance.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

2.6 Programme commitments are in line with organisational capacities.

2.7 Policy commitments ensure:

1. systematic, objective and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of activities and their effects;
2. evidence from monitoring and evaluations is used to adapt and improve programmes; and
3. timely decision-making with resources allocated accordingly.

**Commitment Three:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.**

**Quality Criterion:** Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.

**Key Actions**

3.1 Ensure programmes build on local capacities and work towards improving the resilience of communities and people affected by crisis.

3.2 Use the results of any existing community hazard and risk assessments and preparedness plans to guide activities.

3.3 Enable the development of local leadership and organisations in their capacity as first-responders in the event of future crises, taking steps to ensure that marginalised and disadvantaged groups are appropriately represented.

3.4 Plan a transition or exit strategy in the early stages of the humanitarian programme that ensures longer-term positive effects and reduces the risk of dependency.

3.5 Design and implement programmes that promote early disaster recovery and benefit the local economy.

3.6 Identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of:

a. people's safety, security, dignity and rights;

b. sexual exploitation and abuse by staff;

c. culture, gender, and social and political relationships;

d. livelihoods;

e. the local economy; and

f. the environment.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

3.7 Policies, strategies and guidance are designed to:

1. prevent programmes having any negative effects, such as, for example, exploitation, abuse or discrimination by staff against communities and people affected by crisis; and
2. strengthen local capacities.

3.8 Systems are in place to safeguard any personal information collected from communities and people affected by crisis that could put them at risk.

**Commitment Four:   
Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.**

**Quality Criterion:** Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.

**Key Actions**

4.1 Provide information to communities and people affected by crisis about the organisation, the principles it adheres to, how it expects its staff to behave, the programmes it is implementing and what they intend to deliver.

4.2 Communicate in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate for different members of the community, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups.

4.3 Ensure representation is inclusive, involving the participation and engagement of communities and people affected by crisis at all stages of the work.

4.4 Encourage and facilitate communities and people affected by crisis to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received, paying particular attention to the gender, age and diversity of those giving feedback.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

4.5 Policies for information-sharing are in place, and promote a culture of open communication.

4.6 Policies are in place for engaging communities and people affected by crisis, reflecting the priorities and risks they identify in all stages of the work.

4.7 External communications, including those used for fundraising purposes, are accurate, ethical and respectful, presenting communities and people affected by crisis as dignified human beings.

**Commitment Five:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.**

**Quality Criterion:** Complaints are welcomed and addressed.

**Key Actions**

5.1 Consult with communities and people affected by crisis on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.

5.2 Welcome and accept complaints, and communicate how the mechanism can be accessed and the scope of issues it can address.

5.3 Manage complaints in a timely, fair and appropriate manner that prioritises the safety of the complainant and those affected at all stages.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

* 1. The complaints-handling process for communities and people affected by crisis is documented and in place. The process should cover programming, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other abuses of power.
  2. An organisational culture in which complaints are taken seriously and acted upon according to defined policies and processes has been established.

5.6 Communities and people affected by crisis are fully aware of the expected behaviour of humanitarian staff, including organisational commitments made on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

5.7 Complaints that do not fall within the scope of the organisation are referred to a relevant party in a manner consistent with good practice.

**Commitment Six:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.**

**Quality Criterion:** Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.

**Key Actions**

6.1 Identify the roles, responsibilities, capacities and interests of different stakeholders[[4]](#footnote-4).

6.2 Ensure humanitarian response complements that of national and local authorities[[5]](#footnote-5) and other humanitarian organisations.

6.3 Participate in relevant coordination bodies and collaborate with others in order to minimise demands on communities and maximise the coverage and service provision of the wider humanitarian effort.

6.4 Share necessary information with partners, coordination groups and other relevant actors through appropriate communication channels.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

6.5 Policies and strategies include a clear commitment to coordination and collaboration with others, including national and local authorities, without compromising humanitarian principles.

6.6 Work with partners is governed by clear and consistent agreements that respect each partner’s mandate, obligations and independence, and recognises their respective constraints and commitments.

**Commitment Seven:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.**

**Quality Criterion:** Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.

**Key Actions**

7.1 Draw on lessons learnt and prior experience when designing programmes.

7.2 Learn, innovate and implement changes on the basis of monitoring and evaluation, and feedback and complaints.

7.3 Share learning and innovation internally, with communities and people affected by crisis, and with other stakeholders.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

7.4 Evaluation and learning policies are in place, and means are available to learn from experiences and improve practices.

7.5 Mechanisms exist to record knowledge and experience, and make it accessible throughout the organisation.

7.6 The organisation contributes to learning and innovation in humanitarian response amongst peers and within the sector.

**Commitment Eight:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.**

**Quality Criterion:** Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Key Actions**

8.1 Staff work according to the mandate and values of the organisation and to agreed objectives and performance standards.

8.2 Staff adhere to the policies that are relevant to them and understand the consequences of not adhering to them.

8.3 Staff develop and use the necessary personal, technical and management competencies to fulfil their role and understand how the organisation can support them to do this.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

8.4 The organisation has the management and staff capacity and capability to deliver its programmes.

8.5 Staff policies and procedures are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant with local employment law.

8.6 Job descriptions, work objectives and feedback processes are in place so that staff have a clear understanding of what is required of them.

8.7 A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.

8.8 Policies are in place to support staff to improve their skills and competencies.

8.9 Policies are in place for the security and the wellbeing of staff.

**Commitment Nine:**

**Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.**

**Quality Criterion:** Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.

**Key Actions**

9.1 Design programmes and implement processes to ensure the efficient use of resources[[7]](#footnote-7), balancing quality, cost and timeliness at each phase of the response.

9.2 Manage and use resources to achieve their intended purpose, so minimising waste.

9.3 Monitor and report expenditure against budget.

9.4 When using local and natural resources, consider their impact on the environment.

9.5 Manage the risk of corruption and take appropriate action if it is identified.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

9.6 Policies and processes governing the use and management of resources are in place, including how the organisation:

a. accepts and allocates funds and gifts-in-kind ethically and legally;

b. uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way;

c. prevents and addresses corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and misuse of resources;

d. conducts audits, verifies compliance and reports transparently;

e. assesses, manages and mitigates risk on an ongoing basis; and

f. ensures that the acceptance of resources does not compromise its independence.

1. “Needs” includes assistance and protection. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This may refer, for example to: women, men, girls, boys, youth, and older persons, as well as persons with disabilities and specific minority or ethnic groups without any such distinction. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For instance, humanitarian access, security, logistics and funding. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Including local actors, humanitarian organisations, local authorities, private companies and other relevant groups. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Where authorities are a party to the conflict humanitarian actors should use their judgment vis-à-vis the independence of the action, keeping the interests of communities and people affected by crisis at the centre of their decision-making. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Staff are: any designated representative of the organisation, including national, international, permanent or short-term employees, as well as volunteers and consultants. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The term “resources” should be understood in its broader sense, encompassing what the organisation needs to deliver its mission, including but not limited to: funds, staff, goods, equipment, time, land area, soil, water, air, natural products and the environment in general. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)