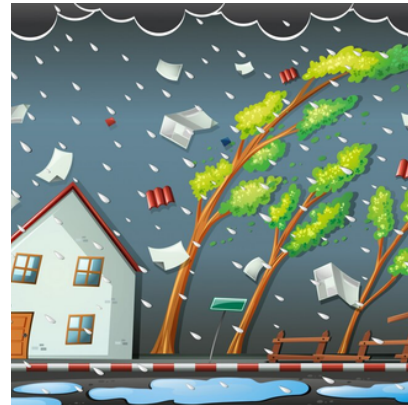


Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) Guide for the Private Sector in Humanitarian Response

SRI LANKA



The Core Humanitarian Standards presented in this guide are primarily based on the existing Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) Guide of the CHS Alliance. These standards are currently managed on behalf of the sector by Sphere, the CHS Alliance, and Groupe URD, who jointly hold the copyright. However, some of the commitments have been rephrased to make them more suitable for the private sector involved in disaster response work in Sri Lanka. The Core Humanitarian Standard was originally developed through a collective effort by the humanitarian sector to harmonize core standards from Sphere, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), People In Aid, and Groupe URD into a single framework. Each of the nine commitments addresses a specific area of concern in humanitarian disaster assistance. Together, they form a solid foundation and approach for the private sector to engage in effective and accountable humanitarian action.

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Message from The Disaster Management Centre

Major General H.M.U. Herath (Retd)
RWP RSP VSV USP MM Hdmc psc
Director General



The private sector plays a vital role in strengthening resilience, reducing risks, and enhancing disaster management efforts. As a key pillar of society, businesses not only provide essential goods and services but also bring innovation, expertise, and scalability to humanitarian initiatives.

The Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) guide serves as a valuable framework for the private sector, promoting accountability, quality, and effectiveness in disaster response and recovery. By aligning humanitarian principles with business practices, it ensures that interventions remain people-centered, inclusive, and respectful of local capacities.

With the increasing frequency and severity of disasters, collaboration between businesses, governments, civil society, and humanitarian organisations is more crucial than ever. Together, we can uphold the dignity and rights of those affected while fostering sustainable, resilient communities.

As the Director General of the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), I urge private sector entities to integrate the CHS into their operations in alignment with government initiatives, including the National Disaster Management Plan and Clean Sri Lanka. By doing so, businesses can enhance their crisis response capabilities and contribute meaningfully to long-term community recovery and well-being. The DMC strongly encourages public-private partnerships to drive collective Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) efforts. Let us work together towards a safer, more resilient, and equitable future.

Message from The World Food Programme

Mr. Abdur Rahim Siddiqui
Representative and Country Director
WFP Sri Lanka



The climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our time. From devastating floods to prolonged droughts, climate-induced disasters are becoming more frequent and severe, threatening lives, livelihoods, and food security across Sri Lanka. As these events grow in intensity, the role of the private sector in disaster response is made even more critical. Businesses are not just economic drivers—they are vital partners in building resilient communities and ensuring swift, effective responses when crises strike.

At the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), we are committed to strengthening Sri Lanka's capacities in disaster risk management as part of broader efforts to safeguard food and nutrition security. To better understand Sri Lanka's disaster landscape, WFP conducted a consultation workshop together with the government, private sector, and civil society organisations. This workshop revealed a significant gap: private sector responses to climate-induced disasters were often not aligned with established humanitarian standards, potentially limiting the effectiveness and inclusivity of their efforts. To bridge this gap, the Climate and Disaster Ready Project, in consultation with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, developed the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). This publication is more than just a set of guidelines—it's a commitment to fostering stronger partnerships, enhancing disaster preparedness, and reinforcing Sri Lanka's resilience to future crises. It serves as a roadmap for private sector organisations in Sri Lanka, guiding them to integrate humanitarian principles into disaster response initiatives.

We envision this initiative being sustainably integrated into national policies, under the ownership of the Disaster Management Centre. Together, through shared responsibility and collaboration, we can build a future where communities are better prepared, disasters are met with coordinated and humanitarian responses, and no one is left behind.

Message from The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Duminda Hulangamuwa
Chairman
The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce



As the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), we have accumulated years of experience working alongside government bodies, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities in the field of disaster management. We firmly believe that the involvement of the private sector in humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction is crucial to strengthening Sri Lanka's overall disaster management framework.

The economic risks posed by natural hazards are steadily rising, and the links between natural events and human-made systems that support our economic and social well-being have become increasingly evident. As global interdependencies deepen, these challenges underscore the urgent need for continuous improvement in how governments, NGOs (including INGOs), and the private sector prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

In this context, Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) Guide for the Private Sector – in Humanitarian Response – Sri Lanka serves as a critical tool. Developed under the guidance of the World Food Programme and in direct collaboration with the Disaster Management Centre of Sri Lanka, this guide aims to ensure that the private sector's humanitarian initiatives are effective, responsive, and aligned with the needs of disaster-affected communities. We are confident that, by following the principles outlined in this guide, private sector organisations can ensure that their humanitarian and community development efforts—especially those under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes—adhere to international humanitarian standards.

We would like to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the World Food Programme, the Disaster Management Centre, the consultants and the staff of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, whose collaboration and commitment made this guide possible. This invaluable resource would not have been achievable without their collective efforts. We hope that the information contained in this guide proves insightful and useful for the private sector, enabling the implementation of quality, transparent, and accountable humanitarian assistance projects. We are pleased to recommend this guide to all our private sector partners and stakeholders, encouraging them to apply it in their efforts to support humanitarian initiatives during emergencies, as well as in building community preparedness and resilience. Let us continue working together to create a safer, more resilient, and disaster-resistant Sri Lanka.

Introduction

The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) provides a vital framework for ensuring that humanitarian actions are conducted with respect for the rights and dignity of crisis-affected populations. Comprising nine commitments, the CHS serves as a globally recognized and measurable standard designed to promote equity, collaboration, and accountability between communities and those who support them. By addressing power imbalances and emphasizing the primary role of communities in crisis resolution, the CHS ensures that humanitarian efforts are both effective and aligned with the needs of the most vulnerable.

Grounded in the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality, the CHS is built on the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, which enshrines the right to life with dignity, the right to receive aid, and the right to protection and security in all phases of a disaster, including preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. This standard is not only applicable to private sector entities that engage in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response in crisis situations but is also highly relevant to organisations traditionally involved in humanitarian work.

For the private sector, integrating CHS principles into their operations is crucial for enhancing the impact of their interventions. Aligning with these standards allows businesses to assess and improve the effectiveness of their humanitarian initiatives, ensuring they meet global benchmarks for quality and accountability. Furthermore, the CHS framework helps the private sector fulfill its corporate social responsibility (CSR) or their commercial involvement in disaster assistance by aligning efforts with internationally recognized humanitarian standards. This approach not only increases transparency and trust among affected communities but also secures ongoing access to critical resources during crises. In this way, the private sector's adherence to the CHS solidifies its role as an essential partner in disaster preparedness, response and community rehabilitation.

Private Sector Humanitarian Efforts

The increased involvement of the private sector in humanitarian efforts can significantly enhance overall capacity. By contributing a diverse range of skills, competencies, innovative practices, and fresh perspectives, private companies can effectively complement and support the work of traditional humanitarian organisations. Their contributions typically take two main forms: charitable donations or commercial engagements.

Commercial opportunities for private sector entities may arise during emergencies, where relief agencies contract them to provide essential services such as logistics, supply chain management, or technical support. By leveraging the private sector's efficiency, expertise, and resources, humanitarian efforts can become more streamlined and effective in reaching those in need.

However, for the private sector's involvement to yield maximum benefit, companies must work in close partnership with established humanitarian actors who possess a deep understanding of the complexities inherent in crisis response. These actors, including international Non-Government organisations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies, have the experience and knowledge necessary to navigate the unique challenges of humanitarian crises, including coordination, ethics, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Moreover, private sector companies must coordinate closely with national and local governments. In countries such as Sri Lanka, where governments frequently lead humanitarian initiatives, public authorities hold the legal authority and possess the infrastructure required to guide and manage large-scale responses. Aligning private sector efforts with government plans ensures that contributions are complementary rather than duplicative and adhere to national priorities and standards.

In the Sri Lankan context, where the government often spearheads humanitarian actions, the participation of private companies must be structured to support these government-led initiatives. Such coordination ensures the efficient delivery of humanitarian aid, maximizes resource utilization, and promotes a well-integrated and cohesive overall response. Consequently, while the private sector's role is valuable, it must be strategically aligned with the broader humanitarian ecosystem to enhance, rather than disrupt, ongoing efforts.

Glossary

For the CHS, the following definitions apply:

Accountability: the process of using power responsibly, and taking account of and being held accountable by different stakeholders, primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power. Accountability means putting people and communities at the centre of decisions on issues that affect them, as described in the nine commitments of the CHS.

Coherent organisational Approach: structured and systematic methods adopted within an organisation to address goals, adhered to consistently throughout the organisation based on best practices and tailored to its needs.

Diversity: the presence of differences among people in terms of their identities, backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and characteristics. These differences can include, but are not limited to, factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, abilities/disabilities, religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds.

Ensure: implies that there is some degree of internal review, oversight and control by the organisation to make sure commitments are happening.

Equity: a situation where individuals or groups are treated fairly according to their specific needs.

Inclusion: the deliberate and proactive effort to create environments and practice that respect, value and support the full participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds and with different identities.

Humanitarian Assistance: refers to humanitarian aid and support provided to individuals or communities threatened by or affected by disasters or crises, with the aim of saving lives, alleviating suffering, restoring dignity, and mitigating the overall impact. It encompasses all phases of a disaster, including preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Humanitarian assistance is guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence, ensuring that aid reaches those most in need without discrimination.

Humanitarian Needs: the basic and essential requirements necessary for the survival, well-being, and dignity of individuals or communities affected by a disaster. These needs are vital to ensuring immediate relief, recovery, and protection of affected populations. They encompass physical, emotional, and social aspects of assistance, including food, clean water, shelter, healthcare, sanitation, safety, and access to other critical services. Meeting these needs is fundamental to reducing suffering and supporting resilience in the aftermath of a disaster.

Most Marginalised: any individual in any context at risk of being subjected to or experiencing discrimination due to their identities, backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and characteristics.

Organisation: an entity or individual with the resources and commitment to apply the CHS. This includes, but is not limited to, any community-based structure, civil society organisation, charitable or non-profit organisation, private sector company, or public authority, international organisations, consortia or other bodies working at the local, national or international level.

Participation: the processes and activities that allow people and communities to play an active role in all decision-making processes that affect them. Meaningful participation involves all groups, including the most vulnerable and marginalised and is organised in accordance with people's specific needs and preferences. Participation is voluntary.

People and communities in situations of crisis and vulnerability: The entirety of women, men, girls, and boys with varying needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities who are affected or are highly likely to be affected by disasters, conflict, poverty, or other crises and challenges.

Private Sector: In the context of humanitarian work, the private sector refers to for-profit businesses and enterprises that are independent of government ownership or control. It encompasses companies, corporations, and business entities that contribute goods, services, resources, or funding to support humanitarian efforts.

Process: actions, tools and resources needed to accomplish a specific task or goal in a consistent and efficient way. These can be more or less formal, depending on context and factors like the size and capacity of an organisation.

Quality: a set of characteristics that ensures that the support provided to people and communities meets their implied or stated needs and expectations and respects the dignity of people.

Resilience: the ability of an individual or community exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner.

Resources: what the organisation needs of an organisation to deliver its mission, including but not limited to, natural, human, financial, capital, technological and informational.

Rights: people's right to life with dignity, their right to receive support and assistance and their right to protection and security, as described in the Humanitarian Charter.

Staff and volunteers: any designated representative of an organisation, including governance and leadership, permanent or short-term employees and consultants.

Support: any work or activity an organisation provides or shares with people and communities to achieve goals, address needs or overcome challenges.

About the Guide

The private sector has been an active partner in humanitarian assistance efforts in Sri Lanka. While the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) serves as the nodal government institution with primary responsibility for disaster assistance, many other government bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private sector entities are also involved in providing a wide range of humanitarian support to disaster-affected communities, both in anticipation of and in response to disasters or similar emergencies. Although certain regulatory provisions exist for the private sector's involvement in humanitarian efforts, there remains a need to enhance the quality and accountability of these efforts by aligning them with the highest internationally recognized standards of humanitarian response.

The role of the private sector in humanitarian settings can take various forms, as outlined below:

- **Direct Contributions:** Donating money, goods, or services to humanitarian organisations during crises.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with humanitarian organisations to deliver aid, such as logistics companies assisting with supply distribution or technology firms providing communication tools.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Private companies may have programs dedicated to supporting social causes, including disaster relief and long-term humanitarian development.
- **Innovation and Solutions:** Companies may develop innovative products or services (e.g., water purification systems, shelter solutions) that directly address challenges in humanitarian settings.
- **Skills and Expertise:** Businesses can offer specialized expertise in areas such as supply chain management, finance, or communication to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian operations.

In this context, the private sector is recognized as a key partner that can bring efficiency, innovation, and additional resources to humanitarian efforts, complementing the work of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Against this backdrop, the Private Sector Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Guide was developed by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) through collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the DMC. This guide is designed to be concise and user-friendly, incorporating the nine CHS Commitments with associated requirements and guidelines under each commitment to guide the private sector in humanitarian assistance projects in Sri Lanka.

The CHS Guide aims to articulate humanitarian principles and provide essential guidance to the private sector for shaping their regulatory frameworks in humanitarian endeavors. Adherence to the CHS Commitments will significantly enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided to disaster-stricken communities. This guide will serve as a valuable resource for the private sector in decision-making during their involvement in complex disaster assistance efforts across different phases of disaster situations. By following the CHS guidelines, the private sector can expect to achieve:

- 1 Fairness and transparency in beneficiary selection
- 2 Transparency in contract tendering procedures
- 3 Increased trust and acceptance from affected communities
- 4 Enhanced organisational credibility and legitimacy
- 5 Commitment to the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence
- 6 Ensured continuous access during emergencies and crises

Humanitarian Principles

At the core of all humanitarian actions are the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. These principles, which are rooted in international humanitarian law, underpin the definition of what constitutes a 'humanitarian' response. They have been formally embraced by the United Nations through General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114.



Humanity

Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.



Impartiality

Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no adverse distinction on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinion.



Neutrality

Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature



Independence

Humanitarian action must be autonomous from political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

These principles form the foundation of widely accepted codes of conduct, commitments, and core standards, including the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, and the CHS on Quality and Accountability.

Humanitarian Principles and CHS

The CHS are a set of commitments and associated guidelines designed to ensure that humanitarian organisations deliver quality assistance to people affected by crises. These standards are directly derived from the four foundational Humanitarian Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, and Independence. To fully understand this relationship, it is essential for humanitarian organisations and their staff to explore how these principles inform the operational framework and ethical approach outlined in the CHS.



Humanity and the CHS

The Humanitarian Principle of Humanity emphasizes the need to alleviate human suffering, protect life and health, and uphold dignity. This principle underpins several standards in the CHS, which focus on prioritizing the well-being of crisis-affected populations. For instance, CHS Commitment-1 ("Humanitarian response is need-based and relevant") aligns with the humanitarian imperative to meet the basic needs of affected communities, ensuring that assistance is responsive to their immediate needs and designed to prevent further harm.



Impartiality and the CHS

Impartiality dictates that aid should be provided based on need, without discrimination based on nationality, race, religion, or other factors. The CHS emphasizes this principle through standards that promote fair and equitable access to humanitarian assistance. For example, CHS Commitment-2 ("The response is effective and timely") supports this by highlighting the importance of a needs-based approach in decision-making processes, ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable groups first. Additionally, CHS Commitment-5 ("Establish responsive mechanisms to handle complaints and create safe conditions for people to report concerns and complaints") underscores the importance of fairness in humanitarian assistance. It ensures that affected communities have active involvement in the humanitarian process and guarantees their right to safe access to reporting channels for complaints, with fair and transparent complaint management.



Neutrality and the CHS

Neutrality requires humanitarian organisations to refrain from taking sides in hostilities or engaging in political, racial, or religious controversies. This principle is reflected in the CHS through operational guidance that ensures neutrality is maintained, preventing the humanitarian response from exacerbating conflict dynamics. For example, CHS Commitment-9 ("The resources are managed and used ethically and responsibly") calls for a coherent organisational approach to responsible capacity and resource management, including financial resources, to ensure that humanitarian responses avoid actions that could inadvertently fuel tensions or conflicts. In this way, neutrality is upheld, with the focus remaining solely on addressing humanitarian needs.



Independence and the CHS

The principle of Independence emphasizes that humanitarian action must be carried out autonomously, free from interference by political, economic, or military agendas. The CHS upholds this principle by ensuring that organisations make decisions based solely on humanitarian needs, without external pressures. For instance, CHS Commitment-4 ("The humanitarian response is based on participation and feedback") ensures that affected populations are involved in decision-making, thereby preventing external forces from influencing aid delivery. Additionally, CHS Commitment-8 ("Humanitarian staff are competent, respectful, and well-managed") requires the establishment of competent staff and management structures that are aligned with organisational values and standards, thus ensuring both operational autonomy and accountability.

The CHS operationalize these principles to guide the effective, impartial, neutral, and independent delivery of humanitarian aid, ensuring that aid organisations prioritize the dignity and well-being of affected populations at all stages of response. These principles also provide a framework for the private sector, ensuring that their humanitarian efforts are responsive to all sectors of the communities they serve.

What is The Core Humanitarian Standard?

To ensure the quality, accountability, and consistency of humanitarian assistance provided by the private sector, it is essential to have a set of commonly agreed-upon humanitarian standards in place. Clearly defined guidelines help avoid redundant and ineffective approaches that can lead to inconsistent or adverse outcomes.

The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) consists of nine commitments that private sector organisations involved in humanitarian response, including NGOs and INGOs, can adopt to engage in effective humanitarian assistance and achieve positive outcomes. The CHS facilitates the integration of crisis-affected individuals and communities, making them aware of the commitments of humanitarian actors and enabling them to hold these actors accountable for their actions.

Humanitarian organisations should understand that the CHS commitments are not specific to any programme cycle. They can be applied at both the response and programme levels, across all phases of a crisis. Each commitment is supported by a quality criterion, performance indicators, key actions, and organisational responsibilities.



Essence of the Nine Commitments

Private Sector Humanitarian Assistance

1

Must be based on the actual and specific needs of the community.

.....

2

Must be effective, well-managed, and provided at the right time.

.....

3

Should reduce the risk and facilitate better preparedness and resilience.

.....

4

Must empower people and integrate them into the assistance process.

.....

5

Must establish responsive and safe mechanisms to handle complaints.

.....

6

Must ensure that people receive well-coordinated humanitarian assistance.

.....

7

Must ensure program improvement through experience, and reflection.

.....

8

Should be delivered by competent, respectful, and well-managed staff.

.....

9

Must ensure that resources are managed ethically and responsibly.

Private Sector Activities Prior to Humanitarian Action

It is important for the private sector organisation to reflect on the relevance of humanitarian assistance endeavor before embarking on any such humanitarian action. Such humanitarian involvement should be within the company's mission, vision, and core values.

In this context, the organisation may ask the following questions:

1. What is the mission-vision of the company?
2. What are the core values and principles that guide the company?
3. How relevant is the proposed humanitarian action vis-à-vis its mission, vision, goals, and core values?

Preparatory Requirements

- Organise a project team to handle the humanitarian action.
- Brainstorm to understand the relevance of the intended humanitarian action in terms of the company values.
- Discuss the affected community about the intended humanitarian assistance plan.
- Consult the relevant government authorities about the plan.
- Obtain details of needs assessment and impact of the disaster from the DMC, other relevant government institutions, or NGOs/INGOs to understand the extent of the devastation and to identify the actual needs.
- If the organisation has the capacity, the organisation may to conduct needs assessment to identify the real needs of the affected communities.
- Ensure the decisions on the intended assistance are based on the needs assessment.
- Make sure that the nature of humanitarian assistance undertaken are attuned to the mission vision and values of the private sector organisation.
- Based on the situation and available resources, decide if there is a need to collaborate with other private sectors for better delivery of the assistance.
- Implement the humanitarian assistance plan.
- Monitor progress and make necessary adjustments based on the feedback.
- Evaluate results for continuous improvement and learn from experience.

Core Commitments

Commitment

01

Humanitarian assistance must be based on the actual and specific needs and priorities of the affected community

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian Response is need-based and relevant.

Requirements and Guidelines

1.1

Needs-Based Service Provision

Private organisations must ensure that services provided address the genuine and specific needs of crisis-affected communities, whether through formal needs assessments or coordination with relevant authorities and stakeholders when formal assessments aren't feasible.

1.2

Conducting Needs Assessments

Organisations should conduct comprehensive needs assessments (qualitative and quantitative) through methods such as focus groups, surveys, and consultations, or leverage available data from government and community stakeholders when formal assessments are not possible.

1.3

Leveraging Disaster-Related Information

Organisations should gather disaster-related data from credible sources, including the Disaster Management Center (DMC) and other relevant government authorities, to understand the extent of the destruction and the specific needs of affected communities.

1.4 Integrated and Inclusive Approach

Based on the findings from the needs assessment, organisations should develop and implement an integrated approach that considers the varying vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups, with a special focus on the most marginalized populations.

1.5 Alternative Needs Identification

If conducting a formal needs assessment is not feasible, private organisations should coordinate with government authorities, community leaders, and other stakeholders, such as NGOs and other private entities, to identify the actual needs of vulnerable or crisis-affected communities. Utilizing available resources, such as disaster maps, emergency response plans, and other relevant data from the DMC and government authorities, can further support this process.

1.6 Fair and Transparent Criteria for Assistance

Organisations must use fair, impartial, and transparent criteria when defining programmes and selecting beneficiary communities. All programmes should meet relevant technical standards and adhere to recognized best practices in humanitarian assistance to ensure they effectively address the needs of the affected populations.

Operational Considerations

- If the private sector is involved in needs assessments, they should refer to recognized standards such as the Sphere Minimum Standards or local guidelines, such as the Rapid Needs Assessment Guide developed by the National Disaster Relief Service Centre.
- For the needs assessment, the private sector may hire an external consultant or conduct a desk review using existing reports from DMC, NGOs, INGOs, etc.
- Use the needs assessment as the basis for ensuring programme relevance and planning assistance.
- Identify and address the actual needs of the community in the assistance programme.
- Consider the unmet needs of the affected community that have not been addressed by other humanitarian organisations.
- Evaluate whether the company/organisation, given its resources and capacity, is capable of delivering the expected humanitarian assistance.
- Assess the severity of the disaster's impacts on individuals and communities.
- Properly evaluate the available resources and capacities.
- Understand needs based on gender, age, ethnicity, and varying levels of vulnerability.

“Humanitarian action must be driven by the needs of the affected populations, with assessments forming the basis for understanding the specific requirements and delivering appropriate responses. It is essential to prioritize the needs of those impacted, ensuring that assistance aligns with local contexts and community-defined priorities.”

Source: Sphere Association. (2018). The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. Geneva, Switzerland: Sphere Association.

Commitment

02

Assistance must be effective, well-managed, and provided at the right time

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian response is effective and timely.

Requirements and Guidelines

2.1 **Prioritization of Critical Needs**

In disaster situations, prioritize the most critical individual and community needs to save lives and support rapid recovery, focusing on interventions that have the greatest immediate impact.

2.2 **Timely Response and Decision-Making**

Humanitarian assistance must be delivered promptly and at the optimal time based on assessment and coordination with government authorities, ensuring that aid is relevant to the immediate needs of affected communities.

2.3 **Business Continuity for Affected Enterprises**

If businesses themselves are impacted by the disaster, prioritize rapid recovery and restoration of business operations to maintain resilience and support the broader community response.

2.4 **Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation**

Organisations must implement continuous monitoring and regular evaluation of humanitarian activities to ensure timely, effective responses and adapt programs based on performance and evolving needs.

2.5

Referral of Unmet Urgent Needs

If any urgent humanitarian needs are beyond the organisation's capacity to address within a reasonable timeframe, refer these needs to other organisations or networks within the private sector that have the relevant expertise and mandate.

2.6

Stakeholder Mapping and Coordination

Incorporate stakeholder mapping into processes to ensure efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance. Maintain proper coordination with government and other stakeholders to facilitate timely and effective service delivery.

2.7

Regular Programme Evaluation and Adjustment

Regularly monitor and adjust programmes to ensure that humanitarian actions are timely, accessible, and effectively address the priority needs of affected or vulnerable individuals and communities.

Operational Considerations

- The private sector should conduct stakeholder mapping to enhance the efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- Coordinate with the DMC, other government institutions, NGOs, and INGOs to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- The private sector should address organisational constraints and adhere to specific standards throughout the programme cycle to ensure realistic programme implementation.
- Continuously monitor system implementation to verify the expected delivery of humanitarian assistance and track aid movement against established targets.
- Clearly define responsibilities and decision-making processes within the organisation and ensure all members are well-informed of their individual responsibilities and organisational procedures.
- Private sector organisations involved in humanitarian assistance should document the progress of humanitarian actions and implement systematic, rigorous monitoring and evaluation for continuous improvement.

“Humanitarian assistance, whether provided by public or private actors, must be efficient, well-coordinated, and responsive to the needs on the ground to maximize impact. Timely response is critical to saving lives and alleviating suffering, requiring robust management and coordination among all stakeholders involved.”

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2020). Global Humanitarian Overview. New York: OCHA.

Commitment

03

Assistance should reduce the risk of potential crises and help people become better prepared and more resilient.

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian response reduces risk and strengthen resilience

Requirements and Guidelines

3.1 Strengthening Local Partnerships

The private sector should collaborate with both formal and informal community leaders and establish partnerships to support locally led humanitarian actions. These efforts aim to enhance the capacity and resilience of disaster-prone individuals and communities.

3.2 Avoiding New Risks

Humanitarian actions undertaken by the private sector should reduce existing risks and avoid creating new ones, including those related to people's safety, security, dignity, and rights; sexual exploitation and abuse by staff; and challenges related to culture, gender, social and political relationships, livelihoods, the local economy, vaccine hesitancy, and the environment. Ensure that all interventions minimize potential negative impacts and contribute to long-term resilience.

3.3 Prioritizing Local Resources

Whenever possible, prioritize the use of local resources over sourcing from outside the local area. Partner with local SMEs to procure necessary goods for humanitarian purposes, thereby supporting the local economy.

3.4 Collaborative Restoration of Services

Work closely with government authorities, other NGOs, and the crisis-affected population to restore essential services promptly, ensuring these services continue beyond the emergency programme's conclusion. Humanitarian action plans should include a transition or exit strategy to secure lasting positive impacts on the affected community.

Operational Considerations

- Private organisations should understand the roles, responsibilities, capacities, and interests of different stakeholders involved in humanitarian action.
- Ensure that the humanitarian response complements the efforts of national and local authorities as well as other humanitarian organisations.
- Share necessary information with partners, coordination groups, and other relevant organisations through appropriate communication channels to avoid duplication and promote best practices in humanitarian response.
- Humanitarian organisations must maintain a clear distinction from military entities to safeguard impartiality, independence, credibility, security, and access to affected populations.
- When authorities are parties to a conflict, humanitarian organisations should exercise discretion regarding the authorities' independence, keeping the interests of the affected populations as the primary focus in decision-making.
- Address people's needs in a holistic manner rather than in isolation (e.g., coordinating mental health and psychosocial support across relevant sectors such as health, protection, and education through technical working groups involving specialists).
- Respect the mandate, vision, and independence of partner organisations while seeking opportunities for mutual learning and development.
- Humanitarian efforts should be responsive to the evolving needs of the local population and consider the responses of local and national governments.
- Private sector humanitarian actions should be adaptable and flexible, aligned with the needs on the ground.
- The private sector can establish long-term partnerships with national and local communication channels to facilitate effective resource mobilization.

"Engagement from the private sector in humanitarian assistance can play a crucial role in building resilience and improving preparedness. Effective collaboration can leverage private sector resources and expertise to reduce risks and strengthen the capacity of communities to withstand and recover from future crises."

Source : Banerjee, T., & Gillespie, P. (2019). Private Sector Engagement in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building: A Review of Global Practices. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 39, 101245.

Commitment

04

Empower affected people by enabling them to exercise their rights and actively participate in actions and decisions that impact them, ensuring they are fully integrated into the assistance process.

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian response is based on participation and feedback

Requirements and Guidelines

4.1 **Transparent Communication**

Organisations must ensure clear, transparent, and culturally sensitive communication with affected communities, providing timely information about their rights and assistance programs. Staff must be trained to communicate responsibly, considering cultural sensitivities and ensuring the safety of vulnerable individuals.

4.2 **Culturally Sensitive and Accessible Communication**

Be attentive to the preferred language and communication formats of the community. Tailor communication methods to ensure clarity, while respecting cultural and religious sensitivities. Give special consideration to vulnerable, marginalized, and differently-abled groups to ensure inclusivity.

4.3 **Ensuring Meaningful Participation**

Develop a coherent organisational approach to facilitate the meaningful participation of crisis-affected people in decisions and actions that impact them. Engage them at all stages of the program and align their involvement with their preferred methods of engagement.

4.4 Navigating Politically Sensitive and Conflict Situations

In politically sensitive or conflict situations, promptly consult with affected individuals, local government authorities, private institutions, community leaders, and active political groups to gain accurate situational awareness. Establish positive and respectful relationships and promote a culture of open communication to capture and address their specific concerns and interests.

4.5 Facilitating Feedback and Safe Reporting

Encourage and facilitate feedback from crisis-affected individuals on the quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance they receive. Pay special attention to gender, age, and diversity in feedback collection. Develop effective, safe, accessible, and inclusive communication channels, and allow sufficient time for information processing. Prioritize confidential feedback mechanisms to protect individuals from potential negative repercussions.

Operational Considerations

- Private organisations should share accurate, timely, understandable, and accessible information to build trust, enhance participation, and maximize the overall impact of a project.
- Ensure representation is inclusive, with active participation and engagement from communities and individuals affected by the crisis at all stages of the humanitarian project.
- Facilitate effective, safe, accessible, and inclusive communication, recognizing that certain social groups may require time to privately discuss and decide on the information they wish to share
- Ensure that private organisations have the informed consent and explicit willingness of crisis-affected individuals or communities to participate in disaster assistance-related communication.
- Communicate promptly and effectively with affected individuals and local institutions at the start of the response to leverage existing knowledge and foster positive relationships. Exercise caution to avoid actions that could be perceived as politically motivated, particularly in conflict zones.
- Recognize that affected individuals may fear that providing critical feedback could lead to negative repercussions. Ensure that a confidential and secure feedback mechanism is available to them.

- Private organisations should incorporate feedback from crisis-affected individuals to refine and update their strategy and programme development.
- Share information with other stakeholders on a need-to-know basis to prevent the exposure or embarrassment of groups or individuals associated with such data.
- Ensure that external printed communications, especially those involving images and stories, do not inadvertently harm or identify vulnerable individuals, people, or communities.
- Prompt communication is essential in humanitarian response, as it provides disaster victims with the necessary information to become resilient and recover as quickly as possible.

“Humanitarian efforts must prioritize the empowerment of affected communities, ensuring that they have a voice in the process and are actively involved in decision-making. This approach not only strengthens local capacity but also fosters ownership and sustainability of humanitarian programmes. The private sector, with its unique resources and capabilities, can play a significant role in facilitating inclusive participation and supporting community-led initiatives.”

Source: IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies). (2018). World Disasters Report: Leaving No One Behind. Geneva, Switzerland: IFRC.

Commitment

05

Establish responsive mechanisms to handle complaints and create safe conditions for people to report concerns and complaints, ensuring they are addressed appropriately

Quality Criterion

Complaints are facilitated, welcomed and addressed

Requirements and Guidelines

5.1 Integrating Complaints Systems into organisational Culture

A robust complaint reporting and feedback system should be an integral part of the organisational culture in disaster response. The private sector should actively involve crisis-affected communities in the design and implementation of the organisation's complaint management systems.

5.2 Educating Communities on Complaints Handling

Educate crisis-affected communities about the organisation's complaints handling and monitoring processes. Clearly define the scope of issues that the monitoring process can address to manage expectations and avoid the misconception that all problems can be resolved through the feedback mechanism.

5.3 Safe and Accessible Reporting Channels

Establish safe, accessible, and appropriate channels for community members to provide feedback and report concerns or complaints, in accordance with recognized best practices. Ensure that all community members, staff, and partner organisations have the opportunity to report complaints through these channels. Organisations may consider implementing suggestion boxes and online platforms to facilitate the submission of feedback and complaints.

5.4 Fair and Timely Complaint Management

All complaints should be received, acknowledged, and managed in a timely, fair, and appropriate manner, ensuring the safety of the complainant. Maintaining confidentiality is essential when handling complaints using victim-centered approaches, particularly when addressing sensitive issues such as sexual exploitation or abuse.

5.5 Training on Handling Sensitive Allegations

Private sector staff must be trained in investigating allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment by humanitarian workers. Organisations should have a staff code of conduct endorsed by senior management, which should be communicated clearly and promptly to the affected population.

5.6 Protocols for Criminal Activity or Legal Violations

Staff should be aware of how to contact the appropriate authorities in cases of criminal activity or violations of international law. Such cases must be managed, investigated, addressed, and/or referred appropriately, in accordance with recognized good practices.

5.7 Mechanisms for Feedback Collection and Analysis

Develop a mechanism for collecting feedback and complaints, along with a clear plan for how these will be analyzed, validated, and communicated. Establish a strategy to provide regular updates to the community on the changes implemented based on the feedback and complaints received.

Operational Considerations

- Consult with crisis-affected communities and individuals on the design, implementation, and monitoring of complaint-handling processes.
- Establish a robust mechanism to ensure confidentiality in handling complaints and involve vulnerable and marginalized populations in the design and implementation of the complaint mechanism.
- Private organisations should maintain a staff code of conduct that is endorsed by senior management and made publicly available.
- When working with partners, organisations should agree on procedures for raising and handling complaints, including those made against one another.

- Raise awareness about the complaint-making procedure and manage expectations to prevent unrealistic assumptions about the feedback mechanism.
- Private organisations should be cautious in determining who within the organisation needs access to confidential information, ensuring that only trained staff investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers.
- Develop strategies to handle different types of complaints effectively.
- Identify procedures for analyzing, validating, and appropriately sharing feedback and complaints with relevant stakeholders.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint or grievance, private sector organisations should consider utilizing existing local mechanisms, such as the Mediation Board (Samatha Mandala), local police, or religious leaders, to facilitate resolution.

“Private sector actors engaged in humanitarian assistance must implement robust and secure mechanisms for handling complaints to ensure accountability and trust. These mechanisms should be responsive, confidential, and accessible to all, especially vulnerable populations. Effective complaint-handling systems not only enhance transparency but also contribute to the continuous improvement of assistance programs.”

Source: ALNAP (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance). (2018). The State of the Humanitarian System 2018. London: ALNAP/ODI.

Commitment

06

Ensure that crisis-affected people receive coordinated and complementary humanitarian assistance

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary

Requirements and Guidelines

6.1 Promoting Coordination and Complementarity

Private sector should strive to ensure humanitarian responses are coordinated and complementary with national, local authorities, and other organisations to maximize coverage and effective resource mobilization.

6.2 Defining Roles and Aligning Efforts

Organisations should define the roles and capacities of all stakeholders and ensure their efforts align with locally led, community-based actions including initiatives of other relevant national and local stakeholders.

6.3 Exercising Independence in Crisis Situations

In crises or conflicts where authorities are involved as parties, private sector humanitarian organisations should exercise judgment regarding the independence of those authorities. Decisions should prioritize the interests and needs of the affected populations over any political considerations.

6.4 Maintaining Distinction from Military Operations

Private sector humanitarian organisations must remain distinct from military operations to preserve impartiality and credibility. This separation is critical to preserving the organisation's objectives and uninterrupted access to affected populations.

6.5 Supporting Quality and Accountability Standards

Support partners in applying commitments to quality and accountability at all stages of their work with people and communities. Regularly assess the quality and effectiveness of relationships with partners and take corrective actions when necessary to maintain high standards in humanitarian assistance.

6.6 Understanding the Community

Humanitarian response must be grounded in a thorough understanding of the affected community's socio-economic background, vulnerabilities, and cultural context. The private sector should prioritize the collection and analysis of secondary data before engaging directly with the community. This information will provide valuable insights into the community's needs, strengths, and sensitivities, ensuring that interventions are relevant, appropriate, and aligned with the principles of "Do No Harm."

Operational Considerations

- Private organisations should be aware of the roles, responsibilities, capacities, and interests of different stakeholders involved in humanitarian action.
- Ensure that humanitarian response complements that of national and local authorities and other humanitarian organisations.
- Make sure to share necessary information with partners, coordination groups and other relevant stakeholders through appropriate communication channels in order to avoid duplication and to promote humanitarian good practice.
- Where authorities are a party to the conflict, humanitarian organisations should use their judgement regarding the authorities' independence, keeping the interests of the affected populations at the center of their decision-making.
- Address people's needs holistically rather than in isolation (e.g. coordination on mental health and psychosocial supports must be done across all relevant sectors such as health, protection, education, through a technical working group with specialists).

- The mandate, vision and independence of the partner organisations should be respected, while exploring opportunities for mutual learning and development.
- The humanitarian efforts should be sensitive to the changing needs of the local population and should always consider the responses of the local and national government.
- Private sector humanitarian actions should be flexible, depending on the needs on the ground.
- Private sector can forge permanent partnerships with national and local channels of communication for effective mobilization of resources.

“Effective humanitarian assistance requires strong coordination among all stakeholders, including private sector actors, to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize the reach and impact of relief activities. The private sector, with its logistical capabilities and resources, can play a crucial role in supporting coordinated responses that ensure timely and efficient aid delivery to affected populations.”

Source: UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2016). Engaging the Private Sector in Post-Disaster Recovery: Guidelines for Decision Makers. New York: UNDP.

Commitment

07

Ensure continuous programme improvement and adaptation through feedback, experience, and reflection.

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian action improves through experience, and reflection

Requirements and Guidelines

7.1 Leverage Past Experiences

Utilize lessons learned and prior experiences when designing and implementing programs to enhance effectiveness. This approach helps in avoiding past mistakes and enhancing program effectiveness.

7.2 Learn, Innovate, and Adapt

Continuously learn and innovate based on feedback, complaints, monitoring, and evaluation. Implement changes to programs using insights gained to improve the organisation's overall effectiveness.

7.3 Data-Driven Decision Making

Use data from monitoring, feedback, complaints, and learning to inform decision-making processes. Regularly update programs and organisational practices based on this data to drive improvements.

7.4 Empower Affected Communities

Incorporate feedback from affected people as they are often best positioned to judge the changes necessary in their lives. Support their innovations and adaptations by providing guidance and resources to make these changes prudent and systematic.

- 7.5 Collaborate with Other Agencies**
Work closely with other agencies, including government entities, to gain fresh perspectives and maximize the use of limited resources through shared learning and joint efforts
- 7.6 Systematic Application of Key Lessons**
Ensure that key lessons and identified areas for improvement are systematically addressed. Learning should lead to demonstrable changes in current or future responses to be considered effective.
- 7.7 Implement Knowledge Management Practices**
Develop a coherent organisational approach for continuous learning and improvement. This includes collecting, developing, sharing, storing, and effectively using knowledge to enhance quality and accountability.
- 7.8 Collect and Utilize Disaggregated Data**
Gather disaggregated data that reflects the diversity of people and communities, ensuring it is used for decision-making and minimizing the burden on data providers. Avoid collecting data that will not be analyzed or utilized.
- 7.9 Long -Term Feedback**
The private sector should establish and maintain a long-term feedback mechanism that ensures sustained engagement with communities beyond the immediate or short-term response phases. This mechanism will help identify emerging issues, assess the impact of interventions, and ensure that humanitarian assistance remains responsive to evolving needs. By fostering continuous improvement, it not only enhances the effectiveness of the humanitarian response but also strengthens the resilience of both the community and the private sector involved.

Operational Considerations

- Avoid collecting data that is not essential for analysis.
- Collect disaggregated data that reflects the diversity of affected populations and use it to inform decision-making processes.
- Apply lessons learned from past experiences in program design.
- Take into account feedback from affected individuals for course correction, as they are the best judges of changes in their own lives.
- Provide professional support and involve affected individuals more systematically, recognizing that people impacted by crises are continuously innovating as they adapt to changing circumstances.
- Gain new perspectives and ideas through collaborative learning with other agencies, government and non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions.
- Systematically incorporate key lessons learned to effect tangible improvements in current or future responses.
- Share insights, feedback, and innovations internally and with stakeholders to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

“Humanitarian actors, including those in the private sector, must prioritize adaptive learning and continuous improvement to enhance program effectiveness. This involves reflecting on past actions, assessing their impact, and applying those insights to future initiatives. By embedding mechanisms for systematic learning and reflection, private sector contributions can be more impactful and responsive to the evolving needs of affected communities.”

Source: Bennett, C., & Foley, M. (2016). Time to Let Go: Remaking Humanitarian Action for the Modern Era. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

Commitment

08

Humanitarian assistance should be delivered by competent, respectful, and well-managed staff and volunteers

Quality Criterion

Humanitarian staff are competent, respectful, and well-managed

Requirements and Guidelines

8.1 **Establishing Effective Human Resource Management**

Private sector organisations should develop a coherent organisational approach to ensure that human resources are managed effectively in a fair, non-discriminatory, and transparent manner, in line with recognized good practices.

8.2 **Developing Competencies and Professional Growth**

Staff must develop and utilize the necessary personal, technical, and management competencies to fulfill their roles effectively. organisations should ensure that staff are aware of opportunities for growth and development, as competencies can be enhanced through experience, training, mentoring, or coaching.

8.3 **Promoting Inclusivity and Respect**

Organisations should raise awareness among staff and volunteers about marginalized groups to avoid stigmatization and discriminatory practices.

8.4 **Ensuring a Safe and Inclusive Work Environment**

Maintain a safe and inclusive working environment by taking measures to protect the safety, security, well-being, and dignity of all staff and volunteers. Provide immediate psychological first aid to workers who have experienced or witnessed extremely distressing events.

8.5 Flexible Performance Review Processes

Performance review schedules should be flexible enough to accommodate staff working on short-term contracts as well as those with open-ended contracts, ensuring regular and meaningful performance assessments.

8.6 Providing Safe Channels for Reporting Concerns

Ensure that there are safe, confidential, and accessible ways for all staff and volunteers to raise concerns and report misconduct. Implement appropriate protections for those reporting to maintain a secure and trustworthy reporting environment.

Operational Considerations

- Private sector staff involved in humanitarian work should function according to the mandate, values, agreed objectives, and performance standards of the organisation.
- Staff should work in accordance with the organisation's mandate, values, and performance standards, including a commitment to gender balance and inclusivity.
- 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
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand and adhere to a code of conduct that prohibits exploitation, abuse, harassment, discrimination, or misuse of resources. Address any misconduct promptly and appropriately, in line with recognized good practices.
- Private sector should be committed to maintain gender balance within staff and volunteers, as well as to keep the work environment open, inclusive, and accessible to persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have the necessary competencies and are supported in their roles through training, mentoring, and coaching.
- Provide easy access to all staff manual facilitates for the staff to be aware of policies and the consequences of non-adherence.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are in a safe and inclusive environment, with immediate psychological first aid available when needed.

“Effective humanitarian assistance relies not only on the resources provided but also on the quality and professionalism of the staff delivering it. For the private sector to contribute meaningfully, it must ensure that staff are adequately trained, managed, and uphold principles of respect, competence, and accountability. This approach enhances the trust and effectiveness of the aid provided and supports the dignity of those receiving assistance.”

Source: Stoddard, A., Harmer, A., & DiDomenico, V. (2009). Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: 2009 Update. Humanitarian Policy Group Report 34. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

Commitment

09

Ensure that resources are managed effectively and ethically, with the highest degree of responsibility

Quality Criterion

Resources are managed and used ethically, and responsibly

Requirements and Guidelines

9.1 Coherent Organisational Approach

Private organisations should adopt a coherent approach to manage resources efficiently and ethically, ensuring sufficient capacity and minimizing waste at each phase of the response. When using local and natural resources, consider their environmental impact

9.2 Responsible Financial Management

Private sector organisations should manage financial resources responsibly, in line with recognized good practices. Constantly monitor and report expenditures against the budget, and initiate investigative audits when there is an evident or suspected issue, such as misappropriation or fraud. Ensure that fundraising, resource mobilization, and fund allocations are ethical and do not compromise the organisation's commitments and values.

9.3 Accountability to Donors and Affected Populations

Private sector humanitarian organisations are accountable to both donors and affected populations for the judicious use of resources provided. organisations should demonstrate that resources have been used wisely, efficiently, and effectively to achieve their intended outcomes.

9.4

Risk Management and Transparency

Take appropriate actions to manage risks of fraud, corruption, and misuse, maintaining transparency with stakeholders and establishing on-site monitoring mechanisms.

Operational Considerations

- The private sector should employ experienced humanitarian staff during acute crises to manage assistance programs ethically and responsibly.
- Consistently monitor budget performance and report expenditures in relation to the budget.
- Ensure effective collaboration and coordination with all stakeholders to optimize resource utilization and improve humanitarian response.
- Initiate swift actions for effective risk mitigation, balancing the need for timely responses with adherence to standards and the minimization of waste.
- Ensure the judicious, transparent, and accountable use of resources.
- Foster an organisational culture where staff are encouraged to report any suspected fraud, corruption, misuse of resources, or conflict of interest.
- Engage with community members effectively and respectfully, supplemented by on-site monitoring mechanisms to mitigate corruption risks.
- Implement policies regarding gifts that may create a sense of undue obligation among staff, and encourage the polite refusal of such gifts.
- Ensure the implementation of best practices in financial management and reporting within the organisation.
- Create an environment where staff feel empowered to discuss and disclose any potential conflicts of interest openly.
- Integrate investigative audits into organisational processes and conduct them as needed.

“Ethical and responsible management of resources is critical in humanitarian assistance, particularly for private sector actors who bring unique capabilities and resources to the table. This involves not only financial accountability but also ensuring that all actions respect the dignity and rights of affected populations, adhere to humanitarian principles, and promote sustainable development outcomes.”

Source: Higgins, J., & N. Simon (2018). Ethics in Humanitarian Action: A Study of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP). Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International.

Contact Points and Support Organisations

In the event that a private sector organisation seeks guidance or support in providing humanitarian assistance to a crisis-affected community, the following national or local authorities may be contacted for guidance and assistance.



Disaster Management Centre (DMC)

Coordinates national disaster response efforts and provides guidance on humanitarian actions.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC),

Tel: + (94) 112 136 222

+ (94) 112 670 002

+ (94) 112 136 136

+ (94) 773 957 900

+ (94) 763 117 117

Call Centre,

117 (Operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

District Disaster Management Coordinating Units (DDMCU)

Located at District Secretariats

Local Authorities (e.g., Provincial Secretariats, Divisional Secretariats, Grama Niladharis)

Provide localized support and guidance specific to affected communities.

Religious and Community Leaders

Play a vital role in engaging communities and identifying local needs.

Ministry of Disaster Management (MODM)

Oversees national disaster management policies and collaborates with various agencies.

Sri Lanka Police

Assists in maintaining law and order, as well as coordinating emergency responses

NGOs Operating in the Area of Concern (e.g., Red Cross, Save the Children, Janathakshan, etc.)

Provide specialized support and relief activities.

Core Humanitarian Standard Checklist

The CHS checklist outlined in the following chart is designed to guide private sector organisations involved in humanitarian action in the planning and implementation of their projects, ensuring that key elements such as effectiveness, inclusivity, and efficiency are adequately addressed. Any “no” answer to the questions posed in this checklist indicates that a requirement has been overlooked, and the company or organisation should seriously consider addressing these gaps in planning future humanitarian actions.

	Item	Yes	No
1.	Did you engage with the community to understand their immediate needs (e.g., food, medicine, shelter, clothing, or nutrition services)?		
2.	Did you identify the most effective communication methods to convey messages related to your intended humanitarian actions to the community?		
3.	Did you gather relevant and sufficient data and information regarding the potential channels for delivering humanitarian assistance?		
4.	Did you consult all relevant sectors (e.g., women, the elderly, adolescent boys and girls, people with disabilities, etc.) or groups within the community to understand their specific needs?		
5.	Did you consider the applicable Core Humanitarian Standards during your needs assessment?		
6.	Did you engage local community leaders, including religious leaders, during your humanitarian relief operations?		
7.	Did you consider the applicable Core Humanitarian Standards during the planning of your humanitarian actions?		

	Item	Yes	No
8.	Did you inform the community about your project's mandate, who the beneficiaries will be, and the criteria for their selection in the humanitarian action?		
9	Are your staff and volunteers adequately trained to effectively manage the humanitarian project?		
10	Did you inform the local government authorities about your intended humanitarian actions in their area?		
11	Did you allocate sufficient resources (human, financial, material) for the intended humanitarian assistance project?		
12	Have you established a clear mechanism for receiving complaints and feedback, and are the crisis-affected people adequately informed about the complaint procedure?		
13	Did you conduct a mapping exercise to understand the challenges and limitations related to your courses of action during humanitarian operations?		
14	Did you ensure that all sectors of the community (e.g., women, boys, girls, the elderly, people with disabilities) are equally engaged in your humanitarian action?		
15	Did you adhere to humanitarian principles and Core Humanitarian Standards during the implementation stage of your humanitarian action?		
16	Did you collect and analyze data to identify gaps and positive aspects in the implementation of your humanitarian action?		
17	Did you collect data to assess the impacts and outcomes, including the overall satisfaction of the crisis-affected people with your humanitarian action?		

Interpretations

- If your organisation's **score is between 8 and 9**, it indicates that your organisation has adhered to approximately 50% of the core principles of humanitarian assistance.
- If your organisation's **score is above 9**, it suggests that you have followed a significant number of the core standards of humanitarian assistance.
- If your organisation's **score is below 8**, it highlights the need for your organisation to give serious consideration to the core principles of humanitarian assistance.

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Legal Frameworks

- Article 12 of the Sri Lanka Constitution (Fundamental Rights)
- National Disaster Management Policy (NDMP) of Sri Lanka.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Ratified by Sri Lanka)
- National Child Protection Authority Act (No. 50 of 1998)
- Child Rights Convention (CRC)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Ratified by Sri Lanka)
- Prevention of Domestic Violence Act No. 34 of 2005
- Geneva Conventions (1949) and Additional Protocols
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Guidelines
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- Sri Lanka's National Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility
- Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)
- Sphere Standards
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings
- IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

