

Mission East

Recertification Audit – Summary Report 2021/07/08

This is the Stage One Report of the Recertification Audit. It includes the findings from the first phase of the audit process, the scope of which is limited to the open non-conformities (CARs) and relevant policy-level requirements. If no major non-conformity is identified at Stage One, the HQAI certificate is renewed.

Stage Two of the Recertification Audit will include site visits to the Head Office and a sample of country programmes. Upon completion of Stage Two, a final audit report will present all the complete findings of the audit and final conclusions on the performance of the organisation against all commitments of the CHS.

If major non-conformities are identified at Stage 2 of the audit process, the certificate will be suspended, possibly withdrawn following HQAI established procedure (PRO116 – Issuance, suspension, reinstatement and withdrawal of certificates).

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Federated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
Head office location	Copenhagen, Brussels & Berlin	
Total number of country programmes	8	Total number of staff 240

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Daniel Rogers
Second auditor	Karin Wierenga
Third auditor	-
Observer	Elissa Goucem
Expert	-
Witness / other	-

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit cycle	Second cycle
Phase of the audit	Recertification
Extraordinary or other type of audit	--

1.4 Interviews conducted during Stage 1

Position / level of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Head Office			
Management	5	2	Remote
Staff	2	3	Remote
Country Programme Office(s)			
Management			
Staff			
Partner staff			
Others			
Total number of interviewees	7	5	

1.5 Opening meeting

Date	2021/05/25
Location	Brussels, Copenhagen, Berlin (all remote)
Number of participants	10
Any substantive issues arising	-

2. Background information on the organisation

2.1 General information Mission East is an international relief and development organisation, which works to help vulnerable populations, supporting communities' capacities to organize and assist themselves, through activities ranging from disaster relief to development assistance. It was established in 1991 and its original focus was on former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe. Mission East has Head Offices in Copenhagen, Brussels and Berlin. As at end of 2020, Mission East had 210 staff worldwide and 30 staff at Head Offices.

The vision of Mission East is to empower people and communities in crisis affected countries to lift themselves out of poverty and marginalization. Mission East works in response to community needs, in Disaster Response and Rural Community Development. As well as direct implementation, Mission East works with and through local and international partners. Mission East's 'Values in Action' are honesty, integrity, compassion, valuing the individual and respect for all people. In its work, Mission East follows three key operational approaches: Inclusion; Resilience and Accountability & Partnership. Mission East key sectors are: Emergency Relief, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food Security, Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disability and Inclusion.

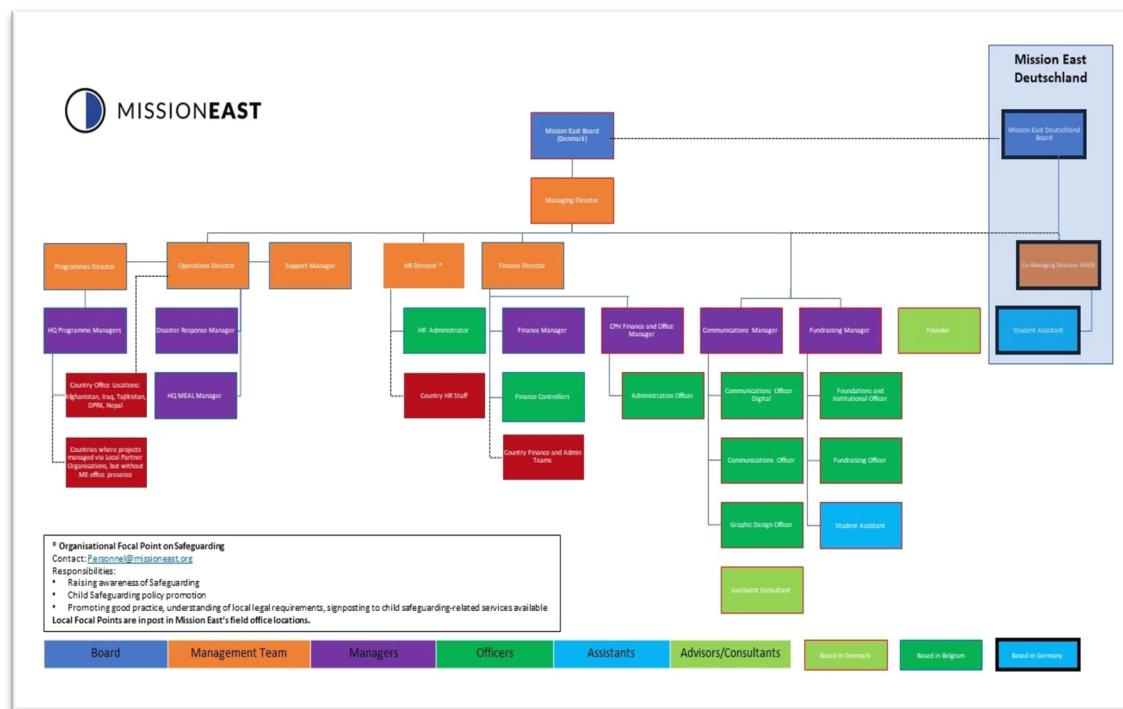
2.2 Governance and management structure Mission East is governed by a Board headed by a chairman with five members who were newly elected at the Mission East Annual General Meeting in 2020 for a two-year period. The new Managing Director was appointed by the Board in January 2021 and reports to the Board. A new Programme Director was also recently appointed.

The organisational structure has not significantly changed since the last audit. The Management Team consists of: Managing Director, Programme Director, Operations Director, HR Director, Finance Director and Managing Director Mission East Germany. Mission East's Head office has staff in 2 locations: Copenhagen and Brussels. There is a separate Mission East sister organisation in Berlin that focuses on fundraising in Germany.

Mission East's Operations Team in Brussels oversees the programme work of field offices and partners. Portfolios are divided geographically between country-focused Head Quarters Programme Managers, with cross-cutting programme support provided by other team members. Mission East's Team in Copenhagen consists of Administration, Finance, Communications and Fundraising staff.

Mission East has established field offices which operate humanitarian programming and which, in some contexts, support development programming through providing capacity building, monitoring and technical assistance to partners and/or running development programmes directly with communities. Mission East field teams contain both international and national staff and are typically managed via a Country Director. In 2021, Mission East has field offices in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal and Tajikistan, with programmes in other country locations (Armenia, Myanmar, Syria/Lebanon)

implemented by partners under remote management from Mission East HQ. Operations in DPRK have been put on hold due to country closure in response to Covid-19.



* Organisational Focal Point on Safeguarding
 Contact: Personnel@missioneast.org
 Responsible areas of Safeguarding:
 • Raise awareness of safeguarding
 • Child safeguarding policy promotion
 • Promoting good practice, understanding of local legal requirements, signposting to child safeguarding-related services available
 Local Focal Points are posted in Mission East's field office locations.

Board Management Team Managers Officers Assistants Advisors/Consultants Based in Denmark Based in Belgium Based in Germany

Mission East is in a process of new strategy development that includes inputs from all levels of the organisation as well as from the communities, sought via online meetings with the Managing Director.

2.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

Mission East has well established internal quality assurance systems. Internal governance, internal procedures, and internal quality assurance mechanisms have not changed significantly in the past period – except for the impossibility to conduct in-country visits due to the Covid travel restrictions. Mission East continues to conduct annual reporting against its Quality Commitments Framework, semi-annual reporting on complaints mechanisms, monthly or bimonthly review of project workbooks, refresher trainings, workshops, and coaching to field staff to ensure that staff are aware of and can apply quality standards. The CHS reference group reviews and approves the organisation wide and country specific CHS improvement plans that are reviewed regularly and jointly by the country teams and HQ.

The functions of the Quality and Learning Department have been delegated to the HQ MEAL Manager who provides support to the country programmes to strengthen MEAL awareness and practice combined with the responsibility for managing the CHS certification processes. This includes conducting CHS and organisational policy refresher trainings, supporting the country teams in developing their CHS Improvement Plans, and organizing targeted coaching for system and process adherence to ensure all staff are aware and apply the principles and minimum standards. Country-specific CHS improvement plans are used for embedding good practice and for addressing Corrective Actions and Observations arising from CHS audits. Risks are monitored and reported both in workbooks and in separate country risk analysis. ME maintains an organizational Risk Register which identifies the top risks faced by the organization and mitigating actions, the risk register is regularly reviewed at senior management meetings and at every board meeting.

2.4 Work with partner organisations

Mission East works with partner organisations in programming under specific agreements. Mission East strives to ensure long-term relationships with partner organisations which enable capacity building and transparent partnership in pursuit of shared goals.

Mission East works with and through 30 partner organisations and these represent a wide range of civil society organisations in the countries in which it has programming. Mission East sometimes chooses to directly implement some of its humanitarian responses and this decision is usually based on whether it can find local partners that can respond quickly and to the standards required. Similarly, Mission East directly implements some non-humanitarian programming where, according to its assessment, there are no local partners with the required capacity to implement the project to the levels required. Partnership arrangements are governed by Partner Grant Agreements, Terms and Conditions, and Strategic Partnership Commitments. Mission East has standard templates for these documents to ensure consistency.

Mission East strives to build the capacity of the local organisations with which it works. Partner capacity building is based on gaps identified through detailed partner assessments and ongoing monitoring. Mission East has developed specific induction material to introduce partners to the Mission East Code of Conduct and Accountability, Safeguarding and PSEAH policy.

There have been no major changes in how ME works with its partners since the MTA.

3. Summary of non-conformities on Organisational Responsibilities

Note: this summary is based on the Stage 1 assessment results only and forms the basis for the Stage 2 assessment. The conclusions can potentially change after onsite visits are conducted, as a result of new evidence identified.

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)*	Type	Resolution due date	Date closed out
2019 – 2.3 The organisation does not ensure that all unmet needs identified during the project cycle are referred in a systematic and accountable way.	Minor	2021/07/25	

* Note: The CARs are completed by the audit team based on the findings.

4. Stage 2 recommendation

Stage 2 is recommended	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Explanation / pre-conditions	Mission East has addressed the Minor CAR 2019 – 2.3 at organisational level, but indicator 2.3 is a key action that has to be assessed at country/project level. Therefore, stage 2 will focus on implementation of the organisational measures that Mission East has put in place to address this non-conformity at field level.
Recommended timeframe for Stage 2	22-6 August 2021: Afghanistan 9-13 August 2021: Syria/Lebanon and Armenia September 2021: Final Report

4.1 Sampling* recommendation for Stage 2

Randomly sampled country programme sites	Included in final sample	Replaced by	Rationale for sampling and selection of sites	Onsite or remote
Armenia	Yes		Covers Mission East work through partners.	Remote
North Korea	No	Syria/Lebanon	North Korea programme is on hold due to country closure as response to Covid. Mission East in Syria/Lebanon is working through partners only and geographical location Middle East gives variety to the country sample selection.	Remote
Iraq	Yes		Mission East Iraq is their second largest programme and is using a self-implementing modality.	Remote visit
Any other sampling performed for this audit:				
Sampling risk: Visits at stage 2 of the audit may not be possible due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Remote techniques will be applied and potential gaps in the assessment will be highlighted in the final report.				

**It is important to note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's country programmes, its documentation and observation. Findings are analysed to determine an organisation's systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across different contexts and ways of working.*

5. Lead auditor recommendation

Based on the evidence obtained at this Stage 1, we confirm that we have received reasonable assurance that Mission East has demonstrated that it meets the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.	
Name and signature of lead auditor:  Daniel Rogers	Date and place: 25 June 2021 Brighton, UK

6. HQAI approval of report and validation for Stage 2

Report approved	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Stage 2 approved	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Sampling recommendation approved	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director: 	Date and place: 2021-07-08 Geneva, Switzerland	Pierre Hauselmann

7. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation	
Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team: <i>If yes, please give details:</i> Mission East has shared reservations on some of the detailed findings in the Annex to this report. We request that these be discussed together with findings from stage 2 of the audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings: I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit I accept the findings of the audit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative: Peter Drummond Smith 	Date and place: Brussels, Belgium 06 August 2021

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 days after being informed of the decision. HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 10 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform HQAI in writing within 30 days after being informed of the proposed solution, of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will constitute a panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. These will strive to come to a decision within 30 days.

The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeal Procedure.

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p>Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: major weakness; • Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: minor weakness • Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020