

Tearfund UK (TF)

Maintenance Audit – Summary Report 2021/07/08

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input 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	Teddington, London, United Kingdom		
Total number of country programmes	40	Total number of staff	1,129

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Jorge Menéndez Martínez
Second auditor	
Third auditor	
Observer	
Expert	
Witness / other	

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS Verification Scheme	Maintenance audit (MA1)
Audit cycle	Second Cycle
Phase of the audit	-
Extraordinary or other type of audit	-

1.4 Sampling*

Randomly sampled country programme sites	Included in final sample	Replaced by	Rationale for sampling and selection of sites	Onsite or remote
Tanzania	No	Nigeria	Nigeria was included instead of Tanzania to include a programme from West Africa Cluster, ensuring a better geographical coverage.	Remote
Brazil	Yes		Brazil was randomly selected. It represents a programme from the Latin American & Caribbean cluster, giving geographical coverage.	Initial plan onsite, but due to COVID-19 pandemic it was remotely assessed.
Haiti	No	Bangladesh	Bangladesh was included instead of Haiti to include a programme from Asia cluster, ensuring a better geographical coverage.	Remote

Malawi	Yes		Malawi was randomly selected. It represents a programme from the East & South African cluster, giving geographical coverage.	Remote
Yemen	Yes		Yemen was randomly selected. It represents a programme from the Middle East region and a country programme without a Tearfund office in the country.	Remote

Any other sampling performed for this audit:

The auditor could not directly verify some elements of Tearfund's plan for addressing certain CARs, mainly as the Maintenance Audit could not visit the country programme sites, as was recommended in the Recertification Audit, given the travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other means have been used, such as documental review and interviews with Tearfund and partners' staff.

Tearfund is at the first Maintenance Audit of its second 4-year audit cycle with HQAI. Since 2016, Tearfund has worked steadily through each audit and has demonstrated improving performance over time. Tearfund has internal quality assurance and control systems in place to address requirements of the CHS, and other strategic commitments. These give the auditor sufficient confidence to recommend the maintenance of certification.

Sampling risk:

**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.*

2. Activities undertaken by the audit team

2.1 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
Head Office	12 – 20 April 2021	Remote
Nigeria	28 and 29 April 2021	Remote
Brazil	20 April 2021	Remote
Malawi	27 and 28 April 2021	Remote
Yemen	26 April 2021	Remote
Bangladesh	19, 21 and 22 April 2021	Remote
West Africa Cluster	30 April 2021	Remote
Asia Cluster	15 and 20 April 2021	Remote

2.2 Interviews

Position / level of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Head Office			
Management	5	3	Remote
Staff	3	2	Remote

Country Programme Office(s)			
Management	3	3	Remote
Staff	4	6	Remote
Partner staff		5	Remote
Total number of interviewees	15	19	

2.3 Opening meeting

Date	2021/02/25
Location	Remote
Number of participants	16
Any substantive issues arising	None

2.4 Closing meeting

Date	2021/05/18
Location	Remote
Number of participants	25
Any substantive issues arising	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

Tearfund UK is a faith-based organisation created in 1968 by the Evangelical Alliance as a response to the Biafra civil war in Nigeria. Tearfund undertakes long-term development work to address the causes of poverty, disaster response activities to reduce death and suffering caused by disasters and conflict, and advocacy to address the underlying causes of poverty and influence those who can change policies and actions affecting the poor.

Tearfund UK is a member of the Tearfund family, a network of independent Tearfund organisations with a common set of values, working to reduce poverty and injustice in the world. Today, the Tearfund family brings together independent Tearfund organisations in UK, US, Canada, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland, New Zealand, Ireland and Australia. Tearfund is a member of various alliances and networks, such as Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC), BOND, Micah Network, the Integral Alliance, the Start Alliance and Joint Learning Initiative.

In 2021, Tearfund was operational in 40 countries in America, Africa and Asia, with more than 1,000 staff members. During 2020-21, Tearfund reached more than 2.4 million people through its response to disasters, 1.4 million people through community development work, and more than 17,000 local churches mobilised. In 2019-20 financial statements, the total income reached 85 million pounds, one of Tearfund's stronger year for income. The senior statutory auditor's opinion on these financial statements is that they give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs.

3.2 Governance and management structure

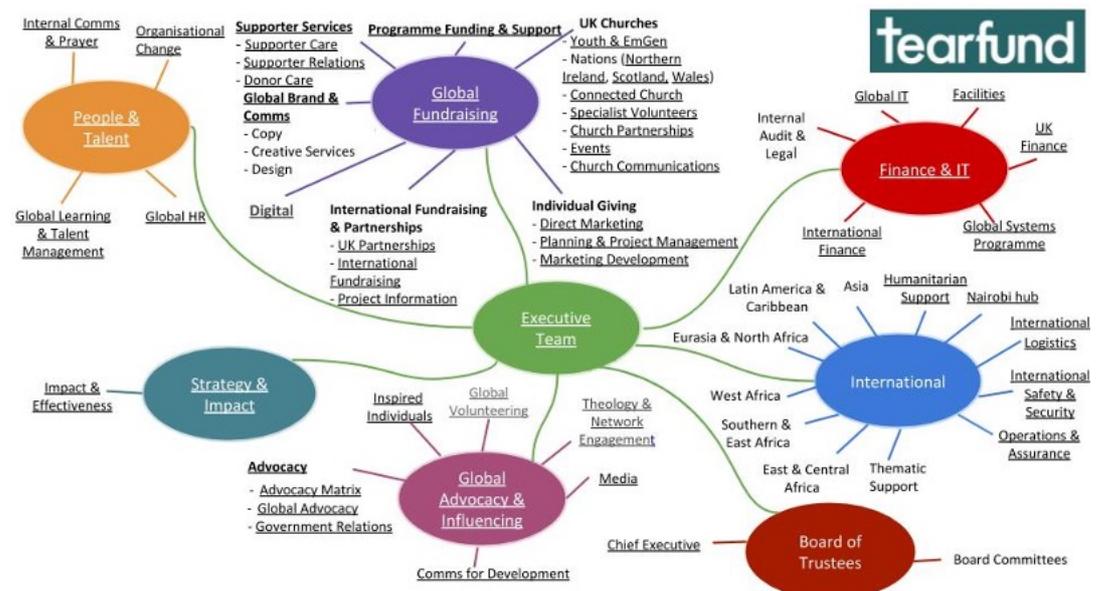
The Board of Trustees is the Tearfund highest authority; appointed by members at the Annual General Meeting, it is responsible for Tearfund's strategic direction and formally meets quarterly. The Board of Trustees is regularly updated by quarterly scorecards, which, among other things, provide information on the progress of each country programme with regard to Tearfund's eight quality standards, which embrace the CHS. Completing the quarterly scorecard is mandatory for all country programmes. The Board works in consultation with the Executive Team. During 2020-21 two new Board members have been elected, one from Africa and the other from Asia, giving greater diversity to the Board of Trustees. Tearfund has five committees to ensure the quality of its work: theology committee;

global fundraising and communications committee; international impact committee; audit, risk and finance committee; and safeguarding committee.

Tearfund in 2017-18 undertook a reorganisation of the structure from a centralised to a decentralised and regional approach based on thematic clusters. The structure has six clusters covering the six regions in which Tearfund works (East- and Central Africa, West Africa, Southern and East Africa, Eurasia and North Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean). Each cluster provides support and guides Tearfund's actions in the countries where it works.

At the global level, Tearfund's Executive Team comprises the Chief Executive and six Heads of Departments: 1. International Group (IG), 2. Advocacy & Influencing Group (AIG), 3. Global Fundraising Group (GFG), 4. Finance and Information Technology (FIT), 5. People & Talent Group (P&T), 6. Strategy & Impact Group (S&I). The International Group (IG) is organised around the six geographical clusters. Within those clusters, strategy formulation, decision-making, and delegation of authority are decentralised to Country Representatives within defined financial limits and in line with Tearfund policies and procedures. In addition, the International Group includes a Humanitarian Support Team that provides coordination, facilitation, advisory and surge support for emergency and disaster responses. The International Group is also supported by the International Safety & Security, the Operations & Assurance, and the Thematic Support teams (see organogram below).

Tearfund Organogram



3.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

Tearfund's Quality Standards (QS) are aligned with the CHS. Tearfund has several mechanisms in place to monitor how the quality standards are being implemented. The Country Office Scorecard system reports quarterly on the level of implementation of quality standards in country office work. Tearfund has an online project cycle management system in place, termed Tearfund TRACK, which provides a consistent approach to capturing and assessing data across its programmes. Tearfund is going to include the CARs in the TRACK system to ensure all the country programmes address the CARs. In addition, to ensure that all country offices implement QS, they have to carry out the QS self-assessment every year, which shows the level of implementation of each QS and the main weaknesses.

The Design, Monitoring & Evaluation (DME) procedure is structured around the project cycle and includes all relevant tools and guidelines. Assigned 'approvers' ensure that the information entered into the Tearfund TRACK system is of the required quality. Tearfund has increased its internal audit capacity, and it is now planned that each country will be audited

every three years. Tearfund's Operation Assurance Team and its compliance officers in the regions are meant to ensure that the defined corporate organisational processes and policies are followed.

Since 2019, Tearfund performs the Annual Staff Engagement Survey that measures the best practices for understanding staff engagement, its features, and broader organisational health indicators.

Since the last audit, Tearfund has begun implementing country office accreditation. This accreditation will allow offices to have more or less autonomy depending on their own development.

3.4 Work with partner organisations

Tearfund normally works with local partners, who must adhere to Tearfund's values and principles. Tearfund, as a faith-based agency, gives priority to local faith-based agency or local churches. Tearfund's Country Representatives (or Country Directors) are primarily responsible for relations with partner organisations and capacity building among partners. Various processes, policies and tools facilitate capacity assessment and preparation of capacity building plans for Tearfund's partners. In addition, Tearfund identifies potential partner organisations through assessments. Partners' capacities and risks are also assessed annually through the Partner Organisation Capacity Assessment (POCA) tool. Based on these results, annual capacity building plans are implemented to increase the partners' capacities and mitigate their main risks. As part of the capacity building, Tearfund invites partner staff to attend Tearfund internal training sessions or online trainings, where appropriate, as part of its capacity building. Since the last audit, Tearfund has started assessing the level of the community involvement in complaints handling mechanisms design through the POCA.

Tearfund requires its partners to fulfil Tearfund quality standards and accountability requirements (including community involvement in the design of feedback mechanisms). This requirement is embedded in the partnership agreements and in the newly introduced on-line project cycle management system, Tearfund TRACK. Tearfund staff, as well as staff from partner organisations, have access to Tearfund TRACK. In addition to Tearfund TRACK, Tearfund monitors partner performance through the quarterly Country Office Scorecards, and partners also have to perform the Quality Standards assessments. More than 93 % of partners have completed Quality Standards assessments at the time of this audit, enabling Tearfund to identify the areas for further improvement or critical concern.

When Tearfund works with an international partner, it is generally with a member of the Tearfund family or an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) within one of Tearfund's networks (see also 3.1), primarily the Integral Alliance, within which Tearfund has pre-agreements with other INGOs.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Effectiveness of the governance, internal quality assurance and risk management of the organisation

Tearfund has good management and quality assurance systems in place. Tearfund continues focusing on strengthening its approach to quality assurance. The Quality Accountability and Learning unit is in charge of oversight of the application of the Quality Standards across the organisation. Also, this unit supports country offices and partners to perform Quality Standards assessments and to develop capacity building plans. Country Directors are responsible for quarterly reports progress on Quality Standards implementation through Country Office Scorecards; all reports are sent to the Senior Management Team.

Since the Recertification Audit, Tearfund has begun implementing actions to improve management and quality assurance systems, which are:

- The Corrective Action Requests (CARs) will be included in the Country Office

Scorecard and the risk assessment;

- Rolling out the Country Office Accreditation (see also 3.2);
- The Program Cycle Management (PCM) and the Quality Standards Checklist have been updated to ensure the country programmes address the open CARs.

Regarding the CARs, Tearfund shows a high level of commitment to address the issues raised at the Recertification Audit. Tearfund is developing an on-going action plan after receiving the audit report; the action plan is a live document that is updated by action owners who report to the International Group Ops Meeting that convenes monthly. Also, Tearfund has created a working group comprising representatives from Thematic Support, Humanitarian Support and Operations & Assurance; they meet on a weekly basis. This group provides visibility over the progress made and supports Tearfund staff with any arising issues or concerns.

4.2 How the organisation applies the CHS across its work

Tearfund worked steadily through the previous audits to closely address the requirements of the CHS identified in each audit. At the first MA of the second cycle, the organisation has implemented the following actions to apply the CHS across its work.

- Tearfund has updated the Safeguarding policy, rolled out the protocol to ensure survivors' safety, and provided training to all the Tearfund safeguarding focal point and several partners' safeguarding focal points. Also, Tearfund's safeguarding focal points have created a network where they share knowledge and experiences.
- All Tearfund staff, volunteers and contractors have to sign the online Safeguarding Declaration.
- The country offices have to prepare Country Specific Safeguarding Context mapping, and for each project, the project safeguarding risk assessment; as part of the assessment, the staff has to define mitigation activities to minimise the risks.
- Tearfund has developed training on sensitive complaints investigation to increase its staff and partners' capacity.
- Tearfund has posted on its website information on how to make complaints via a local phone call (Safe call) in most of the countries where it operates.
- Through Quality Standards Assessments, Tearfund continues assessing and monitoring the level of QS implementation at the country office and partner levels. At this moment, all the country offices perform the Quality Standards Assessment regularly, and 90 % of the partners have at least completed one assessment.
- Tearfund has updated the project cycle management (PCM) and the Quality Standards Checklist to ensure the country programmes address the open CARs.

In addition, the organisation plans to:

- Roll out the e-learning course on beneficiary accountability in 2021-2022.

The progress made since the Recertification Audit is significant; therefore, we recommend the maintenance of the certification. Nevertheless, the effect of these actions at field level have yet to be measured, to get evidence-based practices that allow for a full closure of the two 2020 CARs.

As the original deadlines for resolution of the two CARs were set for July 2022, this timeframe will allow gathering enough evidence at the community level during the Mid-Term Audit.

4.3 Average score per CHS commitment

Commitment	Average Score*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	2.7
Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	2.7
Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects	2.9
Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback	2.7
Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and accepted	2
Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary	2.8
Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve	3
Commitment 8: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	2.8
Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	3.2

* *Note:* Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each Commitment, except when one of the indicators of a commitment scores 0 or if several scores 1 on the indicators of a Commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-conformity/ weakness at the level of the Commitment. In these two cases the overall score for the Commitment is 0.

5. Summary of non-conformities

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)*	Type	Resolution due date	Date closed out
2020 - 5.1 Communities and people affected by crisis are not systematically consulted on the design of complaints handling processes.	Minor	2022-07-24	
2020 - 5.6: Communities are not consistently aware of the expected behaviour of Tearfund staff, and that of its partners	Minor	2022-07-24	
Total Number	2		

* *Note:* The CARs are completed by the audit team based on the findings. The audited partner is expected to respond with a Management Response for each CAR to HQAI before a certificate is issued (reference: HQAI Procedure 114).

6. Sampling recommendation for next audit

Sampling rate	Based on the standard sampling rate, it is recommended that 2 country programmes for onsite visit and 3 country programmes for remote assessment are included in the Mid-Term Audit (MA) of the second cycle.
Specific recommendation for selection of sites	None

7. Lead auditor recommendation

In our opinion, Tearfund has demonstrated that it continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

Based on the evidence obtained, we confirm that we have received reasonable assurance that the organisation is implementing the necessary actions to close the minor CARs identified in the previous audit and continues to meet the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

We recommend maintenance of certification.

Name and signature of lead auditor:



Jorge Menéndez Martínez

Date and place:

14 June 2021, Buenos Aires

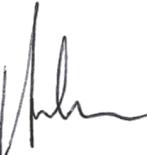
8. HQAI decision

Certification maintained
 Certificate suspended

Certificate reinstated
 Certificate withdrawn

Next audit: Surveillance audit before YYYY/MM/DD

Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:



Pierre Hauselmann

Date and place:

8th of July 2021, Geneva

9. 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:

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:

I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit

Yes No

I accept the findings of the audit

Yes No

Name and signature of the organisation's representative:

Date and place:

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 issue 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