

# Consultancy: Review of HQAI's complaint and appeal mechanisms - Terms of Reference (ToR)

## Background

HQAI's objective is to improve the Quality and Accountability of organisations working with vulnerable and at-risk population through the provision and promotion of meaningful and adapted independent quality assurance. Its services are intended to build capacity in the sector and provide consistent measurable data in the delivery of quality action, thus improving principled, accountable, efficient provision of aid to vulnerable and at-risk populations.

To all its stakeholders, HQAI is an accountable, open and trustworthy partner, which applies the internationally recognised ground rules of auditing that are impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints. Our policies, procedures and tools for independent quality assurance follow relevant ISO standards requirements. HQAI's CHS certification scheme is accredited against ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

HQAI has developed robust tools to measure efficiently where an organisation stands in relation to the [Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\) on Quality and Accountability](#). Tools related to other standards may be developed in the future.

HQAI is committed to the nine fundamental principles of the CHS and implements them as far as they are applicable to its own activities.

These are:

- delivery of services that respond to the needs of users
- timely delivery of these services
- avoidance of negative effects
- transparency and participation in decision-making
- provision of safe complaint mechanisms
- avoidance of duplication
- responsible management of staff, including non discrimination
- responsible use of resources

## Scope

HQAI implements and complies with the auditing principles of impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints. HQAI is open to and welcomes complaints. Audited organisations can also appeal audit decisions in cases of disagreement.

A **complaint** is the formal expression of dissatisfaction about HQAI or one of its audited partners. HQAI welcomes complaints regarding the performance of organisations taking part in HQAI's quality assurance programme, provided the complaint is relevant to HQAI's audit activity. We also welcome complaints regarding our own services, HQAI staff members or members of our corporate bodies. HQAI's complaint mechanism is detailed in by POL048 and PRO048.

An **appeal** is the formal contestation by an audited organisation against the audit decision made by HQAI. HQAI's appeal mechanism is detailed in POL049 and PRO049. All cited documents can be downloaded from HQAI's website [here](#).

The **Advisory and Complaints Board (ACB)** is mandated to provide guidance to HQAI on impartiality, confidentiality and avoiding conflicts of interest, and to arbitrate complaints and appeals. In these functions the ACB acts independently from the other corporate bodies and supports HQAI's accreditation against ISO17065.

The aim of this consultancy is to

**1) assess and improve the current complaints mechanism by:**

- Mapping the current complaint policy, process and responsibilities
- Identifying gaps, areas for improvement and good practice
- Proposing a solid improvement plan including policy, process and responsibilities\*, in line with HQAI's mandate, work and accreditation.

**2) assess and improve the current appeals mechanism by:**

- Mapping the current complaint policy, process and responsibilities
- Identifying gaps, areas for improvement and good practice
- Proposing a solid improvement plan including policy, process and responsibilities\*, in line with HQAI's mandate, work and accreditation.

\*including roles and responsibilities of stakeholders inside or outside the Secretariat, the ACB, and/or other relevant corporate bodies (existing or potential new positions).

The assessment of current gaps, challenges and key requirements in both mechanisms will be supported by HQAI's Secretariat and the ACB.

## Tasks & Responsibilities

Understand and map the current mechanisms (differentiate between complaints and appeals);

Understand the actual and perceived challenges in both mechanisms (differentiate between complaints and appeals) by interviewing identified stakeholders;

Develop relevant policy and process improvements based on the analysis and good practice/case studies of other entities, and provide clear narrative and visual recommendations (differentiate between complaints and appeals);

Plan at least two rounds of feedback with HQAI and representatives from the ACB and related changes/edits (complaints and appeals can be discussed in the same meetings);

Update existing documents (POL and PRO048; POL and PRO049), quality assure all documents to ensure all elements are consistent with information provided and decisions taken.

The consultancy is home-based and no travelling expected.

## Deliverables

- Mapping of current complaint mechanism and identified issues, including a breakdown of tasks and responsibilities at HQAI, ACB and partner organisation levels;
- Mapping of current appeal mechanism and identified issues, including a breakdown of tasks and responsibilities at HQAI, ACB and partner organisation-levels;

- Summary and detailed rationale for proposed improvements on complaint mechanism
- Summary and detailed rationale for proposed improvements on appeal mechanism
- Two workshops with identified contributors from HQAI and the ACB, as well as online/phone interviews with other stakeholders;
- Updated, quality-assured and published documents POL048, PRO048, POL049, PRO049.

### Timing and duration

The consultant is expected to conduct and finalise the outlined work over 15 (non-consecutive) days. The expected start date for the consultancy is February 2024, with all work completed at the latest in May 2024 for submission for approval in scheduled governance meetings.

### Qualifications

- i. Minimum five years relevant experience in developing, implementing, institutionalising, and/or auditing complaint and appeal mechanisms;
- ii. Clear understanding of HQAI's specific organisational mandate, and related scopes of HQAI's complaint and appeal mechanisms;
- iii. Independent worker with strong organisational skills and a critical eye for detail;
- iv. Good listener with demonstrated ability to understand, analyse and review technical complexities;
- v. Fluency in written and spoken English.

### Submission of proposal

Expressions of interest are requested by e-mail to [admin@hqai.org](mailto:admin@hqai.org) by February 09, 2024 and must include:

- a detailed sequencing of the proposed work
- proposed number of days and daily rate
- background of individual(s) proposed for the project.

Please mention the title of this consultancy in the subject line.

Châtelaine, January 23, 2024

HQAI Department of Support Services