

Introduction

Integral is a global alliance of Christian relief and development agencies, working together to present a more effective response to poverty worldwide. We believe that more people in need will be helped if relief and development agencies combine their resources, and put their Christian faith into action by working together. We also believe that by working together, expressing organisational humility and servanthood, we can demonstrate the character of God to a world in need. We believe that He cares deeply for people living in poverty, illness, hunger, conflict, alienation and oppression.

As an alliance we want to put people first. We are convinced that God calls us to express His love for the world through practical actions. He calls us to serve those who are the least, the forgotten, the most vulnerable, and the unfortunate to the best of our ability. We therefore want to be intentional in our mutual accountability for the quality of our work. This document serves to give further insight into Integral commitments to adhering to quality standards.

Integral is committed to maintaining high quality in our work in accordance with internationally recognised standards which respect international law and humanitarian principles. Integral's Members are committed to working towards ensuring that our work, and that of our Partners, fully upholds the standards and good practices of the global relief and development community as identified by the UN and sectoral coordinating bodies, as well as quality standards specific to the relief and development community of their own country. This includes upholding commitments to the Integral Quality Standards and working towards compliance with the key standards from which they are drawn.

1. The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (RCCC);
2. The Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), which replaces the 2010 HAP Standard, the People In Aid Code of Good Practice and the Core Standards section of the Sphere Handbook. It will also be integrated into the Quality COMPAS reference framework;
3. The SPHERE Project – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response.

Ensuring Adherence

Compliance will be observed through project monitoring, independent project evaluations and reviews of Integral responses. If a project is not fully compliant with these standards, a Member will be encouraged and supported to identify improvements that can be made in their work, and that of their Partners, and to set targets for future compliance. An action plan will be developed with the aim of improving policies and systems to strengthen adherence.

Ensuring quality in Integral's work forms part of Integral's Evaluation Framework, which is available on the Integral Disaster Response websites. A dedicated Quality Assurance Task Force, made up of staff from within the Integral Members, exists to ensure that programming of Members and Partners develops constructively towards higher levels of quality.

Integral Collaboration

Integral's goal is for all Members to become more effective and efficient in their work and to see greater impact and reach as a result of collaboration. This means making sure that Integral Members play complementary roles when a disaster happens, with the resources they have available. The Integral Secretariat plays a co-ordinating role to facilitate better communication between all Members, increasing support and avoiding duplication.

Integral is committed to working with other networks and alliances, in particular with the Micah Network and the World Evangelical Alliance to ensure that excellence is championed within our wider constituencies.

Stakeholders

Integral wishes to be accountable to stakeholders for these commitments and will make them publicly available in appropriate formats for: project participants within relief projects¹; each other as Members; local Partners; private supporters; institutional donors; staff, volunteers, consultants; the Integral Board and Executive Committee; and the wider humanitarian community.

Integral’s approach is not to impose the Quality Standards on the local Partners of Integral Members, but to share them, and to facilitate support to our Members and Partners who share a commitment to good practice. This will improve the quality of the alliance and of our partnerships.

The Commitments to Quality Standards

The purpose of these Commitments is to increase the quality, effectiveness and impact of the projects that Integral’s Members support by providing a quality framework to guide such responses. The Standards serve as a tool: for capacity development; for staff development and training; to inform the work of project designers; for periodic self-appraisal; and to contribute to project monitoring and evaluation.

Integral’s Commitments to Quality Standards are drawn from common internationally recognised quality standards, codes, guidelines and principles committed to by Integral Members. They are the minimum in standards adherence expected from all Integral Members and Partners, and will be utilized for all Integral reviews and evaluations. In addition, individual Members are encouraged to uphold their own organisation-specific values and Quality Standards. The standards are cross-cutting and are intended to guide all Integral’s programming. They are complemented by other generic good practices amongst Integral Members and their Partners such as project cycle management, people management, financial management and fraud prevention.

Integral Commitments to Quality Standards



1. Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence

(Ref: RCCC 2, 3, 4; CHS v, CHS 1.4; Sphere Humanitarian Charter 3, 6)

We are committed to impartiality. Assistance provided is intended for the most vulnerable and people are selected on the basis of need alone, regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religion, class or political opinion.

We are committed to neutrality and will not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

We are committed to independence and will remain autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regards to areas where a humanitarian action is being implemented.

(Ref: RCCC 5, 7, 9; CHS iii, CHS 4.4, 4.6, 7; Sphere Humanitarian Charter 12)

We are committed to being accountable to project participants, to Partners, to supporters, and to donors through the core principles of: participation; transparency in sharing information; listening and responding to feedback and complaints; monitoring and evaluating; continually learning from our work; and reporting on activities and managing funds efficiently.



2. Accountability

¹ The standards are firstly to be responsive to the needs and priorities of project participants.
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3. Building Resilience

(Ref: RCCC 6, 8; CHS 3; Sphere Humanitarian Charter 8)

We are committed to increasing levels of Disaster Risk Reduction/ Disaster Management and development programming sustainability, so as to contribute towards increasing local resilience to stresses and shocks brought about by disasters and climate change.

(Ref: CHS 2.3, 2.4, 8.3; Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response)

We are committed to supporting projects that are guided by relevant technical standards and good practices and that reflect the priorities of communities we seek to assist.



4. Technical Quality



5. Values

(Ref: RCCC 1, 4, 5, 10; CHS 3.6 & 3.7, 8.1, 9.5 & 9.6; Sphere Humanitarian Charter 9)

We are committed to upholding our core values including trust, dignity and integrity through the work of our Members and Partners.

- We will not tolerate any form of exploitation, abuse, fraud, bribery or any other conduct which is incompatible with these values.
- Projects involving Integral Members and Partners must not lead to increases in the vulnerability of children or women and must not increase vulnerability to violence or physical harm.

(Ref: RCCC 8; CHS 3.6.f, 9.1.fn, 9.4, 9.6.b; Sphere Humanitarian Charter 9)

We are committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment. We will:

- Assess the risk of environmental degradation;
- Work with local communities to ensure that we support the natural environment and do not harm it;
- Test the use of new methods and materials where appropriate.



6. Environment



7. Sustainability and local ownership

(Ref: CHS 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 5.1, 6)

We are committed to working alongside local organisations and communities to ensure that there is strong and real local ownership of the activities and their outcomes that lead to long-term positive changes. We will:

- Consult, collaborate and coordinate with local actors and communities;
- Invite and welcome community participation and feedback into project planning, implementation and monitoring;
- Work in a way that will enable communities to work towards long-term positive changes beyond the life of our relief response.