

**Minutes of the Q&A (Quality and Accountability Initiatives) meeting,
hosted by ALNAP in London, October 9th 2006**

Present : Alison Joyner (Sphere), Nicholas Stockton (HAP), Jonathan Potter (People In Aid), Domitille Cadet (Groupe URD and representing Coordination Sud), Pauline Wilson (ECB2), John Mitchell (ALNAP), Maurice Herson (ALNAP, minutes)

Apologies : François Grünewald (URD), Cécile Zieglé (Coordination Sud)

Action points are noted in *italics*.

Minutes : it was agreed that Minutes are approved by e-mail circulation after the meeting and do not need to wait for formal approval at the next meeting. Then they can be translated and posted on websites as soon as they are agreed.

Matters arising : ALNAP pointed out that the ALNAP Evaluation Pro Forma already includes consultation with beneficiaries, both within the project being evaluated and by the evaluators (relating to 'Discussion topics / collaboration, point 3', see annexed agenda).

Updates : each organisation provided a short account of recent activities and directions, including areas of mutual collaboration and external involvement.

Discussion topic (1) : arising out of several points raised in the Updates, and reflecting on the external landscape, a discussion ensued on 'regulation' of the humanitarian system. It was noted that the TEC reports, the apparent direction of the Clinton Initiative, statements by Jan Egeland and Hilary Benn, a proposal for an International Disaster Response Treaty, and several other initiatives, reports etc, all appear to be creating a political atmosphere where the question of accreditation, regulation, and certification is on the agenda again. Some of this points towards accreditation of individuals and some to accreditation of organisations.

It was agreed that this is a current issue worthy of collaborative exploration by the Q&A initiatives, as it is clearly relevant to both our purposes and constituencies. It is also a debate that we should be actively trying to drive rather than be driven by. If this opportunity was taken, it should enable us to clarify our roles within the overall effort to improve humanitarian response.

It was therefore agreed to have a meeting at the end of January specifically on this topic. *NS to start drafting Terms of Reference* for the meeting, broadly covering the following :

- What are the drivers of change in improving the quality of humanitarian work, and what changes should happen?
- What strategic view does each of us have in bringing this about?
- What role do the Q&A initiatives have collectively or separately to bring about positive change?

ALNAP to arrange a conducive venue and to contract a facilitator who can do preparatory work synthesising information from each group and also facilitate the meeting.

Discussion topic (2) : revision of the paper 'Quality and accountability initiatives : questions and answers'. It was agreed to do minimal updating of this paper, in order to include short descriptions of Groupe URD and Coordination Sud, and to make necessary changes to accommodate the fact that the paper now deals with more than the original 4 Initiatives.

'Scanning' (review of other relevant events/initiatives) : the following points of information were made :

- DFID are producing a set of environmental management principles (not guidelines, as many of these exist already), that will cover, among other things, the potential negative humanitarian effects of conservation work.
- One World Trust have been doing an accountability survey of 10 major NGOs.
- BOND, in the UK, has produced a report 'A BOND approach to Non-Governmental Organisations : putting beneficiaries first', and is following up with a conference on October 18th.
- Tufts University / Feinstein Institute have produced livestock emergency guidelines.

Next meeting : the next 6-monthly meeting will be agreed on after the January meeting (see above), when a framework for how the Q&A Initiatives group should continue to work together should be agreed.

Annex :

Agenda for Q&A meeting to be held in London on October 9th at the ODI, 11.00-17.00:

Welcome : John Mitchell, ALNAP (Chair)

Agenda Item 1: Minutes of last meeting; review and approve

Discussion points : Minutes in Spanish and French; when are minutes posted on websites?

Agenda Item 2: Matters arising from the Minutes.

Agenda Item 3: Updates from all participants. (5 minutes per organisation). (Information from participants who made information available in advance is in Meeting paper (1) attached).

Agenda Item 4: Discussion topics and opportunities for collaboration

- 1) TEC follow-up (JM)
- 2) 'Accreditation debate' - related to the TEC and Office of the Special Envoy for the tsunami studies (AJ)
- 3) Production of a statement for donors on their responsibilities towards point 15 of the GHDI. We are very focused on NGOs and should look to inform donors too. (JP)
- 4) The possibility of a conference on 'accountability' for donors (JP)

- 5) Involvement of SCHR and ICVA in our work. (JP)
- 6) How this group of Q&A initiatives can work together to scale up accountability (to local people) and impact measurement practice. (PW)

Agenda Item 5: Updating of Q&A FAQ

A version of this paper with updated text for ALNAP, Sphere, HAP and PIA is attached, with proposed text for Coordination Sud appended at the end. This is Meeting paper (2).

Agenda item 6: Scanning : other relevant things going on in the sector

- DFID development of environmental 'principles' in humanitarian response (AJ);
- Development of Livestock Emergency Guidelines, initiated by Tufts University/Feinstein Famine Center (AJ);
- Office of the Special Envoy / Clinton Initiative (MH)