



## Report from the Australian-New Zealand consultation on the Sphere Handbook Revision 2009-2010

### Section 1: General Information

#### 1 Where did your consultation meeting take place?

Australian Red Cross  
155 Pelham St, Carlton Victoria

#### 2. On which date was the meeting?

Tuesday 24 November 2009

#### 3. Which agency hosted your consultation?

The Australian Red Cross

#### 4. Who was responsible for organising the consultation?

Fiona McAlister, ACFID Humanitarian Coordinator/ Policy Advisor

#### 5. Over how many hours did you hold your consultation?

6 ½ hours, 9:30AM – 4:00PM

#### 6. How many participants attended?

11 attendees, plus the facilitator and the coordinator

#### 7. Please give a brief overview of the humanitarian context in which your consultation was held:

Australian and New Zealand agencies operate within the diverse Asia Pacific region, responding to a wide range of natural disasters and conflicts in many different contexts.

## Section 2: Facilitators and Participants

Name	Position	Organisation	Contact
Tom Bamforth		Australian Red Cross	<a href="mailto:TBamforth@redcross.org.au">TBamforth@redcross.org.au</a>
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Fiona McAlister (Coordinator)	Policy Advisor/Humanitarian Coordinator	ACFID	<a href="mailto:fmcalister@acfid.asn.au">fmcalister@acfid.asn.au</a>
<b>Apologies</b>			
Andrew Jalanski	WASH specialist	World Vision Australia	

## Section 3: Updating Sphere: Challenges and Recommendations

This consultation meeting on the revision of the Sphere handbook followed the guidelines produced by the Sphere Project and this report follows the reporting format within the guidelines.

Patricia Garcia (Act for Peace), an accredited SPHERE Trainer of Trainers with extensive experience facilitating SPHERE consultations, facilitated the workshop. The ACFID Humanitarian Coordinator Fiona McAlister assisted in coordinating the workshop.

The workshop focused initially on training aspects of the SPHERE handbook, then WASH, before moving on to Common Programmatic Standards.

Section 3 also includes recommendations on new editions and improvements to the Sphere handbook. It was noted that sections 3 and 4 in the report overlap.

<b>Challenges</b> (Unachievable indicator in a specific context, lack of guidance, etc.). Please be specific and indicate which standard/indicator/guidance note you are referring to.	<b>Suggested modification, adjustment or additional guidance to existing Sphere Standards</b>	<b>Justifications</b>
<b>Training</b>		
<p><b><i>No timeline for meeting standards</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> The indicators contain no timeline as to how soon they must be reached.</p> <p>For example, this was highlighted as being problematic in the response to Cyclone Nargis in Burma where the minimum standards for individual water intake of 15 litres per person per day is required (pg 63) was not possible to meet even many months after the emergency recovery phase was over.</p>	<p>Refer to the issues relating to timelines for indicators.</p>	<p>There can be difficulties meeting the requirements of the indicators within the initial emergency phase.</p>
<p><b><i>Vulnerable groups are not included in training</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> It was raised that vulnerable groups, for example, people living with disabilities, are not clearly defined or emphasised in the SPHERE training program, the introductory training does not cover implementation on the ground for vulnerable groups. In the handbook there are very few indicators that refer to people with disabilities, and those references that do exist are in guidance notes</p>	<p>Training needs to address these groups, perhaps a module should be created specifically for vulnerable groups. Additionally, guidance notes should be developed to refer specifically to vulnerable groups such as disabled persons. Disability needs to be incorporated into all sectors, not just health. It should be addressed as programmatic issue, not an issue relating only to specific sectors.</p> <p>The handbook should contain more guidance on operationalising programs targeting vulnerable groups, as well as practical guidance for dealing with issues such as</p>	<p>These groups have unique needs and as such, training should include a module specifically designed for meeting those needs in humanitarian responses to ensure their rights are fully realised.</p>

that are very general.	disability.	
<p><b><i>Better support for local partners from Western NGOs and improved flexibility of training materials and approaches</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> Some agencies felt that there needs to be better support for local partners and that there need to be better incentives to make it easier for Western NGOs to train local partner organisations. For example, the Pacific is one of the lowest trained areas in the world, and capacity in the region is very low. It was also identified that in the Asia Pacific region there are languages that present translation problems. Both East Timor and the response to Nargis in Burma were identified as examples of communication problems, with difficulty of translating jargon and technical terms – even terms such as ‘feedback’ – proved problematic.</p>	<p>Training should be more flexible for local partners; some agencies lack the capacity to attend a three-day training course.</p> <p>Short courses could allow local partners to better capitalise on the training opportunities.</p> <p>The training should be flexible in areas covered and timing.</p> <p>The language of training materials and the handbook needs to be improved, with overly technical language avoided wherever possible, to ensure easy translation and communication.</p> <p>The handbook could include a DVD with 30-minute modules on specific areas so that agencies can pick and choose the modules relevant to them. These videos could also be uploaded onto the website. These DVD modules should be supported with simple fact sheets/summaries for each module.</p> <p>The handbook could include a ‘pull out’ summary version of technical standards.</p> <p>The handbook includes a separate ‘pull out’ summary to highlight the Common Programmatic Standards and their importance. There is a tendency for staff to focus mainly on the technical standards at the expense of the CPS, and their importance needs to be reiterated.</p> <p>SPHERE training should also be highlighted as a disaster preparedness tool – local partners could thus seek funding for it as</p>	<p>The training of local partners in SPHERE is vital to its effective implementation, and thus there needs to be incentives for local partners to undertake training as well as better support from Western NGOs to enable them to do so.</p>

	part of their disaster preparedness requirements.	
<b>WASH</b>		
<p><b><i>Definition of community participation</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> The current references to community participation should be emphasised. There is a need to ensure community participation requires proper emphasis and focus.</p>	Community participation needs to be properly defined in the technical standards. This would enable for more detailed guidance notes and the creation of methodological approaches – for example, making contact with organisations focused on disabilities.	Without a clear definition of participation it is difficult to create specific guidance on how to approach technical tasks.
<p><b><i>(pg 60) Promotion of public health by hygiene promoter</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> As hygiene promotion has positive impacts on other sectors it should be linked into promoting the wider public health network, including community volunteers</p>	Create a new key indicator that highlights the importance of hygiene promotion as part of public health promotion, and acknowledges the importance of community volunteers doing hygiene promotion work.	Utilising the community volunteers will allow for better impact assessment and greater sustainability in the health program.
<p><b><i>Training for water facility maintenance and participation</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> There needs to be greater emphasis on community participation in the management and maintenance of water facilities.</p>	(pg 62) the ‘where possible’ from point five should be removed and participation should become an indicator rather than part of the guidance.	Community participation, with a 50% participation rate for women, should be not just an ideal but part of practice wherever possible.
<p><b><i>Environmental impact of water source selection</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> There is no mention of the impact of water source use on downstream users in the selection of water sources.</p>	(pg 64) Include the impact of water source selection on downstream users and the possible international impacts (where water sources are common to several nations).	Understanding the impacts on downstream users allows for water source selection to be more sustainable.

<p><b><i>Need to expand water supply systems</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> There is no guidance for the need to expand water supply systems if the affected community grows.</p>	<p>(pg 66) Include a ninth point that provides guidance on the possibility of expanding the water supply system where the disaster affected community is likely to expand.</p>	<p>Including guidance for this possibility would help to ensure water supply systems are designed with the capability to be scaled up as needed.</p>
<p><b><i>(pg 70) additional storage</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> The current guidance note contains no recommendations on the level of additional storage needed if there is no regular water supply.</p>	<p>(pg 70) Include guidance for the level of additional storage required if there is no regular water supply.</p>	<p>There needs to be clear guidance on the storage levels for situations without regular water supply.</p>
<p><b><i>Access to communal bathing should be consistent</i></b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> The key indicator on communal bathing doesn't specify that all sections of the populations have access to the facilities.</p>	<p>(pg 69) The fourth indicator should specify that communal bathing facilities be designed in way that they can be used by all sections of the population including people with disabilities (similar to the indicator about toilet access on page 73).</p>	<p>It is important to ensure that all people have access to the communal bathing facilities.</p>
<p><b>Common Programmatic Standards</b></p>		

<p><b>Participation</b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> There needs to be clearer guidance on how to best engage vulnerable groups in the disaster preparedness and disaster response.</p>	<p>Common Standard 1 on participation should provide more detail on how to engage with people with disabilities (and other marginalized groups). For example, include guidance on networking with Disabled People’s Organisations, self-help groups, other civil-society groups and disability service providers, to identify people with disabilities and their representatives who participate in the decision making processes of the disaster management cycle.</p> <p>This should include an indicator to help ensure that people with a disability have access to their aids, devices and medications in any population resettlement (eg. evacuation) and that they will have any aids etc. lost during a disaster situation replaced. This will optimise their independence and access to disaster response services.</p>	<p>To ensure participation certain vulnerable groups need to be actively engaged and the handbook should provide guidance on how best to do this.</p>
<p><b>Terminology and visibility</b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> The terminology of the Common Programmatic Standards (CPS) needs to be improved to facilitate their use and visibility.</p>	<p>The CPS should be phrased in the language of ‘common standards’. It was suggested that they be renamed ‘Enabling Standards’ and their importance should be emphasised during training.</p>	<p>The Common Programmatic Standards are important and need to be highlighted</p>
<p><b>Stress Management</b></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> Emergency workers are faced with very stressful situations, but standard eight makes no reference to coping with stress</p>	<p>(pg 42) guidance on coping with stress should be included in the guidance note on page 42. Reference could be made to the People in Aid code.</p>	<p>Stress management is an important HR issue and should be addressed in the SPHERE handbook.</p>

## Section 4: New additions to Sphere

Please record here the suggestions made by the group during activity 5, on what they suggest to be included in the Handbook. Please give reasons and justifications and as much details as possible. Add rows to this table as required (starting with the most popular suggestion and ending with the least popular.) Please also record the number of votes that each activity received.

<p align="center"><b>New additions to the Sphere Handbook</b></p> <p align="center">It can be a new topic, standard, indicator, guidance note, new reference, tool, etc.</p>	<p align="center"><b>Number of votes received: 'score'</b> (% of YES)</p>	<p align="center"><b>Rank</b></p>
<p>In the Humanitarian Charter (pg 20) add to the instruments reference to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies and Article 32: International Cooperation make specific reference to ensuring that people with disabilities are included fully and equally in humanitarian responses and international development.</p> <p>These should be incorporated into the SPHERE handbook to ensure that it keeps up with best practice standards around working with people with disabilities.</p>		N/A
<p>The following reference could be included in the guidance to ensuring that water and sanitation services are available to vulnerable groups:</p> <p>Jones, H. and Reed, B. (2005) Water and Sanitation for Disabled People and Other Vulnerable Groups – Designing Services to Improve Accessibility. Water, Engineering and Development Centre, Loughborough University, UK</p> <p><a href="http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/knowledge/details.php?book=978-1-84380-079-8">http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/knowledge/details.php?book=978-1-84380-079-8</a></p>		N/A
<p>Security could be included as a separate (9<sup>th</sup>) Common Standard, rather than being included in Standard 7.</p> <p>Security is an important issue facing agencies, and the SPHERE handbook needs to provide guidance on best practice standards to ensure proper security for both local and</p>		N/A

<p>international staff. There is a broader trend of increasing numbers of militia and a growing presence of small arms in conflicts. Organisations must have clear policy guidelines for international and local staff that are remain relevant despite shifting trends in conflict</p> <p>Indicators could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased training for staff about security.</li> <li>- Clear security policy guidelines that include essential elements of best practice in security.</li> <li>- Well-established communications support including a designated focal point for security and personnel providing security briefings.</li> <li>- Personal security support including support for stress management and provision of information about coping mechanisms.</li> <li>- Guidance on ensuring an adequate budget for security (a formula for unit costs or proportion of the budget).</li> <li>- Guidance ensuring that security is separate from administration and disaggregated for local and international staff. As local staff are usually the predominant staff in high-risk environments, it is critical that they are not overlooked in security planning and that their safety is recognised and appropriate policies in place.</li> <li>- Guidance should include information on strengthening local capacity and partnership.</li> </ul>		
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## **Section 5: Other Information**

### How the handbook has been used within the sector/their agency.

Agencies reported that due to its legal underpinnings they found it to be a powerful advocacy tool. For example, in response to the earthquake in Pakistan it was noted that agencies used SPHERE to lobby the military on behalf of the entire shelter cluster.

Agencies noted that whilst in theory common standards of practice (like SPHERE) and sector and internal standards complement each other, in practice sectoral standards are prioritised in operations. As such, there needs to be greater efforts to explain how and why these common standards have been set, and the importance of meeting them.

### The general structure of the handbook and any suggestions to modify it.

Overall agencies reported that the handbook was user-friendly and well designed. There was a desire to have a fold out chart with all the qualitative and quantitative standards; this would be especially useful for training if there were language barriers with local staff. A DVD to accompany the handbook with module on each of the sections would also be very useful.

## **Section 6: Feedback on the Process**

No comments