HAP Deployment in Numbers

39 working days

120 participants across 7 workshops
  Workshops in Addis Ababa 5
  1 workshop in Borena 1 in Dollo Ado

Sharing of good practices and efforts by 10 agencies

8 Rapid Accountability Assessments

Number of participants in the assessment 154

14.4 recommendations provided on average per participating agency

115 agency-specific recommendations

42 senior management debriefed on agency-specific findings

55 community members consulted across 4 consultations in Borena
  33 community members consulted in Dollo Ado

3 inter-agency forums attended
  14 Bilateral meetings
SUMMARY

Following a scoping mission in the last quarter of 2012, the HAP Roving team deployed to Ethiopia from 7 February to 2 April 2013. HAP worked with the Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group in Ethiopia (IAAWG-E), a collective forum of over 26 agencies as the primary avenue for engagement during the deployment. The Roving team engaged with affected communities, national NGOs, donors and UN agencies through a range of activities.

Seven inter-agency workshops took place in three locations over the duration of the deployment. Participants shared good practices from Ethiopia on the development of accountability frameworks, sharing information, improving staff competencies and deploying codes of conduct, meaningful participation, setting up and strengthening complaints systems and embedding accountability in monitoring and evaluation processes. (See section 1)

The HAP team conducted eight Rapid Accountability Assessments, a methodology designed to provide individual agencies with a quick assessment of strengths and weaknesses of their systems against the HAP benchmarks. Feedback on the assessment and advice to address gaps were provided to participating agencies, most of which used the exercise as a starting point for their annual action plan. (See section 2)

The deployment and intense interaction with the IAAWG-E served as a channel for increased interaction and learning, allowing members to recognize the good work already taking place and the potential to do more, as well as identifying some of the challenges facing accountability focal points. Support by leadership, lack of resources, insufficient awareness and understanding of accountability, and the fact it is a criteria for performance evaluation of staff are some of the critical issues that were identified. (See section 3)

Communities consulted in Borena and Dollo Ado emphatically reiterated the need for taking context, needs and social patterns of communities into account when designing and delivering programmes. Communities in Borena in particular called for organisations to seek consent and provide avenues for improving participation and emphasised the need for sustainable and life-changing programmes rather than short term “hit and run projects”. (See section 3)

A workshop to introduce the IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Population (CAAP) revealed the various challenges and barriers faced by cluster lead organisations and UN agencies. Participants called for clarity, prioritisation and realistic goals for the implementation of the CAAP. A number of notable efforts by donors, in particular the European Commission’s Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the Department for International Development (DFID), came to light with regards to prioritising accountability to affected communities. (See section 3)

Based on its observations and dialogue with a variety of stakeholders in Ethiopia, the HAP team assembled 24 recommendations directed at (I)NGOs, IASC members, donors and the IAAWG-E. (See section 4)

In the independently conducted After-Action Review undertaken by the Chair of the IAAWG-E, members of the group highlight the benefits of the deployment, in particular increased awareness and deeper understanding of the HAP benchmarks and how they can be implemented, stronger team spirit, highlighting capacities within the group and the value of working together. The review says that activities contributed to enriching the group experience and improving the quality of its interaction, supporting the capacity of focal persons and individual agencies involved in the process. The fact that the team worked with international and UN agencies, helped to generate useful information for the groups’ future engagement and links and was considered beneficial. Finally, “the rapid self-assessment, facilitated by HAP served most organisations as an ‘eye opener’ leading for most to an action plan aiming to improve their performance and quality management.” (See section 5)

The HAP Roving Team continues to provide remote support to the IAAWG-E and other interested stakeholders in Ethiopia. Furthermore, to build in-country technical expertise the 2 workshops on Training of Trainers and Complaints Response Mechanism will take place in Addis Ababa in August 2013, in addition to a follow-up mission to maintain the momentum and efforts generated through the deployment. Recommendations provided by the IAAWG-E for areas of improvement are being considered and will be reflected in the continued support to organisations in Ethiopia and for future deployment related work. These will also be reflected in learning about the implementation of the revised HAP Deployment Policy. (See section 5)
INTRODUCTION

Between 7 February and 2 April 2013, the HAP Roving team\(^1\) conducted a deployment to Ethiopia. Prior to this deployment, a scoping mission was undertaken from 26 November to 7 December 2012 to understand the context, identify key accountability challenges and support required from various stakeholders. The scoping mission included consultations with staff of HAP members, UN agencies and the Red Cross in Addis Ababa and the Dollo Ado refugee camps.\(^2\) During this initial mission, it was agreed that the Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group in Ethiopia (IAAWG-E) would be the primary avenue for engagement with the Roving Team and the best way to ensure sustainable change over time.

The deployment was also an opportunity to pilot HAP’s revised deployment Policy. The revised approach promotes shorter, more focused deployments with a more diverse engagement of stakeholders in country. Overall, HAP deployments aim to strengthen the understanding and practice of accountability & quality management within country programmes in close cooperation with local stakeholders, in particular with HAP members. In the course of the deployment to Ethiopia, six main groups were engaged (see figure below), in line with the terms of reference (TOR) designed following the scoping mission and validated in consultation with the IAAWG-E. Key activities undertaken during the deployment covered three main levels, which provide the structure for this report:

I. Collective learning and action (inter-agency level)
II. Rapid Accountability Assessment (agency level)
III. Engagement with stakeholders (including communities in Borena and Dollo Ado, discussions at agency specific and inter-agency level)

Below in this report, we present an overview of the activities undertaken and stakeholders engaged, salient findings and recommendations shared by staff and affected communities.

Acknowledgements and thanks:

The deployment has been made possible with the support and cooperation of:

IAAWG-E
For their participation, determination and efforts to increase awareness and understanding of accountability within their organisations and within the IAAWG-E. A special thanks to Ms Hanna Abate (Chair of the IAAWG-E) for her indefatigable support to the HAP Team and motivating the IAAWG-E.

Hosting in Addis Ababa and facilitating Borena visit (DanChurchAid)

Hosting and facilitating Dollo Ado visit

Support for the scoping mission and providing advice and guidance during the deployment.

Our donors for providing financial support to HAP: AusAID, Irish Aid, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DANIDA, Oak Foundation, SDC, SIDA, BPRM

\(^1\) For details on HAP deployments see: [http://hapinternational.org/projects/field.aspx](http://hapinternational.org/projects/field.aspx)

SECTION 1
INTER-AGENCY LEVEL SUPPORT: COLLECTIVE LEARNING & ACTION

The Roving Team conducted a series of 7 workshops over the 8 week long deployment. These workshops complemented the Rapid Accountability Assessments (RAA) at agency level. They aimed to raise awareness and commitment about accountability issues by creating space for collective action and learning across organisations. Workshop content was designed according to priority areas identified by participants and taking into account local context and issues.

5 workshops were conducted at Addis Ababa level, 1 in Borena, and 1 in Dollo Ado. Across the total 5 workshops 120 people participated, ranging from cluster coordinators to frontline staff. A summary of the workshops during the deployment is presented below in chronological order.

The workshops conducted by the Roving team in Ethiopia were conducted with the aim to:
- Introduce the concept of accountability and demystify it.
- Expose staff to the HAP Standard, IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations and the variety of resources and good practices available.
- Highlight in-country efforts and good practices by various organisation.
- Identify the organisational, contextual and personal challenges related to being accountable to affected communities and collectively find solutions to overcome these challenges.
- Link the issues from the field and frontline staff to policy issues and bring these to the attention of colleagues at Addis Ababa level.

Methodology and pedagogical approach for the workshops:
- Tailored to the context and audience
- Provided space to discuss challenges
- Focused on problem solving and finding solutions
- Mix of theory and practice - use of real case studies and scenarios
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop Title</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 February</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group workshop, Addis Ababa</td>
<td>This workshop aimed to introduce the deployment and activities of the deployment, validate the ToRs by the group, as well as identify personal, organisational and collective key challenges and successes of the working group.</td>
<td>12 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 February</td>
<td>Accountability: challenges and solutions, part I, Addis Ababa</td>
<td>The 2 part workshop focused on introducing accountability, accountability assessments, developing a country accountability framework, continual improvement and the linkages between monitoring, evaluation and accountability. Current efforts and learning of IAAWG-E group members were presented on (1) Developing accountability frameworks, by CARE Ethiopia; (2) Revising accountability frameworks and inclusion of partners, by DCA; (3) Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning, by IMC; (4) Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning, by Oxfam GB</td>
<td>21 persons: CARE Ethiopia, Concern, DCA, DRC, IMC, Islamic Relief, LWF, NCA, Oxfam America, Oxfam GB, Plan Ethiopia, Save the Children, ZOA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 March</td>
<td>An introduction to accountability and quality – what it means for our work, Addis Ababa</td>
<td>Invited by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Roving Team presented at its Annual Partners’ Forum.</td>
<td>10 persons: CIDA partners in Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 March</td>
<td>IASC commitments on accountability to affected populations, an introduction: Understanding Challenges and Exploring Opportunities, Addis Ababa</td>
<td>HAP being a member of the IASC Taskforce on Accountability to Affected Populations, the roving team dedicated time to work with interested UN agencies to promote the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP). The resulting workshop was organised in collaboration with OCHA Ethiopia for cluster leads and covered the following issues:</td>
<td>21 persons: Oxfam, Save the Children, FAO, IOM, IRC, OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, USAID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>Accountability, challenges and solutions when working with partners, Borena</td>
<td>The issues of promoting accountability commitments and implementing these in programmes when working with partners was highlighted as a challenge. This workshop conducted in Borena and hosted by DCA included 8 INGOs and 10 local national partner organisations and focused on:</td>
<td>28 persons: Merlin, LWF, Oxfam GB, Save the Children, HelpAge, ZOA, DCA, CARE, AFD, ASE, CST/TEP, EFSI, EMWADO, GFDI, HUNDEE, IDURUSDWA – DWS, SES-DASSC, SOS Sahel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 March</td>
<td>Accountability: challenges and solutions, Dollo Ado</td>
<td>This workshop, hosted by UNHCR, introduced the concept of accountability and provided a forum to discuss context-specific constraints in the implementation of accountability practices. A specific set of recommendations were developed based on the experiences of participants. These findings and reflections were shared with UNHCR in Addis Ababa. An inter-agency accountability mapping methodology was presented. However, due to the security situation, the accountability mapping exercise which includes consultation with affected communities was deferred. It will be conducted by UNHCR at a later date.</td>
<td>10 persons: ACF, DRC, IOM, JRS, Save the Children, World Vision Ethiopia, UNHCR, WFP, ZOA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 March</td>
<td>Accountability: challenges and solutions, part II, Addis Ababa</td>
<td>In part 2 of this workshop, findings from the field visits in Borena and Dollo Ado were presented. Following on from the methodology of the first part of the workshop, field examples, learning and context-relevant resources from within Ethiopia were presented on (1) Sharing Information, by Save the Children; (2) Participation, by ZOA; (3) Handling Complaints, by IMC; (4) Working With Partners on Accountability, by CAFOD/SCIAF/Trocaire, Concern and CCRDA</td>
<td>20 persons: Agri-Service, CAFOD/Trocaire/SCIAF, CARE Ethiopia, CCRDA, Concern, DCA, DRC, HelpAge, IMC, Islamic Relief, LWF, NCA, Plan Ethiopia, Save the Children, ZOA</td>
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SECTION 2
AGENCY LEVEL SUPPORT: RAPID ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENTS

HAP, as a standard setting and quality assurance body offers organisations a variety of ways through which they can assess and review their current accountability practices and identify the priority steps needed to strengthen gaps. These approaches include the following:

a) **SELF-ASSESSMENT**, is an internal process to identify key areas of improvement against the HAP Standard and steps to take forward. This can be conducted by the organisation itself.

b) **BASELINE ANALYSIS**, is an internal in-depth review of an agency’s strengths and gaps against the HAP Standard conducted by HAP staff or a consultant. For more details see: http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/baseline.aspx

c) **CERTIFICATION**, is an external verification process that measures the compliance of an organisation against the HAP Standard. It is conducted by independent auditors and approved by the Certification Accreditation Review Board. For more details see: http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/certification.aspx

The above mentioned processes are not used in rapid onset emergency settings because of the workload involved. Acknowledging this challenge, the Roving Team has developed a Rapid Accountability Assessment (RAA), which was piloted during the deployment in Ethiopia. The RAA, based on an online platform, provides interested agencies with a better understanding of the level of awareness and use of critical accountability systems within their organisation. It also allows them to benchmark their situation against that of agencies operating in the same context and identify strengths as much as weaknesses in relation to prevailing sector practice. The RAA combines the views of members of the senior management team, field/programme staff from country wide operations, and partner organisations (only for organisations working with partners) using specific sets of questions for each one of the HAP benchmarks. As the RAA relies on quantifiable data, organisations can easily replicate the process at a later date and measure how actions taken have influenced awareness and practice across the organisation.

**Limitations:** Unlike a baseline analysis or certification, the RAA is not a comprehensive, in depth evaluation of an organisation. It is meant to provide a quick internal snapshot of the understanding and level of implementation of the six benchmarks of the HAP Standard within a specific country office. Therefore, it does not include face to face consultations with stakeholders, such as affected communities, donors and partner organisations. Moreover, as with any survey, issues of response bias have to be considered. The RAA gives the opportunity to highlight potential issues and allows participating organisations to further investigate discrepancies between staff and senior management perceptions and areas identified as particularly weak. Perspectives of other stakeholders can be further investigated by participating organisations. For example, to get the perspective of local communities, the methodology developed jointly by HAP, Christian Aid and Save the Children is especially relevant. All these factors were taken into account when discussing issues identified and proposed recommendations to each participating organisation.

### 2.1 FINDINGS OF THE RAPID ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Participation in the RAA was opened to all members of the IAAWG-E on a first come first serve basis. The Roving Team initially restricted the number of participating agencies to 5, but given the demand, it was increased to 8, with 7 organisations completing the assessment. While agency-specific results are confidential and were shared only bilaterally, some common trends can be gleaned from the overall results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAPID ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT IN ETHIOPIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 organisations undertook the RAA (DRC, LWF, NCA, IMC, Islamic Relief, DCA, Plan Ethiopia, and ZOA. (All these organisations are members of HAP.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154 individual participants were involved in the RAA</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.4 recommendations were provided to each participating agency on average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115 recommendations were provided across the 8 organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 senior managers were debriefed on agency-specific findings</td>
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</tbody>
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Senior management and policy level:
- There were frequently differences of opinion within senior management teams on the existence and implementation of systems and processes such as accountability frameworks, agreed complaints policies and monitoring & evaluation processes.
- Organisations with existing accountability frameworks had higher levels of awareness and understanding of accountability issues amongst programme staff.
- Organisations which had scaled up rapidly during the emergency response, expanding programmes and increasing staff numbers were weaker on good people management processes, particularly during the scale up period.
- By and large, established and fully functioning complaints mechanisms and procedures were perceived to be limited across all organisations, with the most distinct gap being related to emergency response programmes.

Staff awareness and understanding:
- Overall, while senior management generally considered understanding and procedures on participation and how and when to share information with affected communities and stakeholders to be satisfactory, frontline staff had a different opinion. They perceived guidance available on these issues to be limited and negatively influencing accountability to affected communities.
- With the exception of a few organisations, staff indicated that they did not feel entirely safe in highlighting egregious cases or raising concerns.
- On average, staff considered that lessons learnt were recorded but should be better documented and more effectively shared within the organisation. Recommended actions included senior management highlighting key lessons learnt before the start of new programmes, sharing reports and information more widely and interactively within the organisation.

The graph below represents the global average of ‘positive’ answers given by respondents within surveyed organisations against each of the 6 benchmarks of the HAP Standard, providing an indication of awareness and use of accountability systems. It can be observed that certified organisations achieved some of the highest results.

![Average percentage of "yes" answers](image)

**2.2 IMPROVING THE RAPID ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT**

While administering the RAA as well as the bilateral debriefs, the Roving Team actively solicited feedback on how the RAA can be improved for future use. The suggestions and feedback from the participating agencies was incorporated to revise the tool, with the aim to make an improved version available to interested agencies, which can be used independently. In addition, based on the feedback received and learning from other assessment processes, resources are being developed that can be used in rapid onset emergencies by organisations at an operational level. The final version of the RAA which can be independently used will be made available on the HAP website: [www.hapinternational.org](http://www.hapinternational.org).

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4 Higher scores indicate better perceived compliance with HAP Standard requirements.
SECTION 3
PERSPECTIVES ON ACCOUNTABILITY IN ETHIOPIA

During the deployment, the Roving Team reached out to the wider humanitarian and development community, including national networks, INGOs, UN agencies and donors. The voices of affected communities were also sought during consultations with communities in Borena and Dollo Ado, providing opportunity for accompanying staff from various INGOs to examine their on-going work through an accountability lens. This section reports on the views, perceptions and observations made by the IAAWG-E, (I)NGOs, UN agencies, local communities and donor agencies.

3.1 PERSPECTIVES FROM THE IAAWG-ETHIOPIA

The IAAWG-Ethiopia, formerly known as the HAP Accountability Group, is composed of 22 INGOs. It has been revitalised under the leadership of DCA, which is its chair, having revised its terms of reference and developed a workplan covering the period from September 2012 to September 2013. Its members include:

1. DRC*
2. DCA*
3. NCA*
4. Merlin*
5. LWF*
6. Christian Aid*
7. Tearfund *
8. Concern Worldwide*
9. Church of Sweden*
10. CAFOD*/Trocaire/SFI
11. IMC
12. Islamic Relief
13. ActionAid
14. Save the Children
15. Oxfam GB
16. Oxfam America
17. IRC
18. CARE
19. HelpAge
20. ZOA
21. CANGO (observer)

The Roving team worked with the IAAWG-E in a joint endeavour to transform the group into an active platform allowing accountability focal points of various organisations to convene and discuss accountability challenges, engage in peer learning, share resources such as guidance, good practice, and practical experiences as well as undertake collaborative capacity building activities. A strong commitment to work collectively towards this goal was evident amongst the members of the group. Presented below are the views from the members of the group, collected during the various workshops and individual interactions that took place over the course of the deployment. Most issues mentioned here are inter-related and reflective of challenges faced by staff working on accountability issues in a wider range of organisations, not just HAP members, but also other NGOs or UN agencies.

Challenges, as identified by members of the IAAWG-E

a) Accountability not an organisational priority - senior management interest limited
   - There is limited awareness and commitment from senior management, resulting in weaker buy-in at organisational level, and actions around accountability not being prioritized.
   - Senior management is unclear and uncommunicative about accountability being a priority. This also limits participation in the IAAWG-E.
   - As a consequence, there is often limited cooperation from other staff members in making accountability a priority in programming. Getting key staff involved is challenging.
   - A culture of accountability within organisations is therefore often missing or weak.

b) Lack of resources
   - When accountability is not considered a priority, limited or no funds are allocated for training and implementation of accountability activities and approaches.

c) Understanding of and capacity on accountability limited - accountability seen as an add-on
   - There is a lack of awareness, understanding and capacity at field level. Due to high staff turnover, there is also a loss of institutional knowledge within organisations and the IAAWG-E.
   - Staff in charge of accountability portfolios often do not receive proper training or support from management. With limited understanding of the HAP Standard/accountability issues, implementation within the organisation has been poor and participation in the IAAWG-E limited.
   - When accountability is not part of the organisational culture, it is often seen as an add on competing with the many other responsibilities and priorities of programme staff. This results in limited follow-up on action points.

d) Accountability is not included in the performance evaluation of staff
   - Work on accountability is not focused upon or recognised in performance appraisals for accountability focal points or for staff in general.

5 With the exception of CANGO, all the agencies below are HAP members. HAP certified organisations are marked with an asterisk (*).
3.2 PERSPECTIVES OF AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

The HAP team undertook field visits in Borena and Dollo Ado. Borena was chosen as it presented a mix of humanitarian and development work, along with a large set of partner organisations. A total of 4 focus group discussions took place in which 57 community members participated. In Dollo Ado, due to security concerns the HAP team was unable to undertake direct consultations with refugees. However WFP and ZOA staff members conducted 1 community consultation and 3 key informant interviews. The feedback below has been shared with UNHCR representatives in Addis Ababa.

Below are summary findings from Borena. The views from affected communities are presented in greater depth in the chapter: “Counting on Accountability: Voices of affected communities” of the 2013 Humanitarian Accountability Report which can be found at: http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/2013-har.pdf.

Consultations with communities in BORENA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gummi Gayo</td>
<td>11 (including village administrator)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darito Arero Wario</td>
<td>6 (including village chief and elder)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanke Dambala</td>
<td>7 (including village administrator)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yabello Women’s Saving and Credit Cooperative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultations with communities in DOLLO ADO - Kobe Refugee Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussion (consultations done by ZOA &amp; IOM)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Salient issues raised by affected communities:

- Community members highlighted their dissatisfaction with the lack of understanding or recognition of the customs and context of the pastoralist communities in aid programming. They felt that their mobility, livelihood patterns, needs, existing coping mechanisms and priorities were not fully understood, appreciated or given importance in programme design or implementation. For communities, the failure of organisations to fully understand and take into account their context and customs leads to a sense of imposition and poor identification of needs. Community members repeatedly highlighted “don’t impose – imposing is bad.”

- Organisations which visited the community regularly, worked towards building a long term relationship with communities, discussed projects and sought their consent and approval before implementing them were viewed as and rated as the best ones.

- The consultations in Borena revealed that communities lacked detailed information about organisations’ backgrounds or expected staff behaviours, and were not adequately informed about project life spans, with some expecting relief distributions to continue. Others highlighted that they were not informed about or explained their rights and entitlements: “We have little information about our rights and are not informed that NGOs are answerable to us” (Community members in Gummi Gayo). They also emphasised the need to have fuller details regarding the purpose and intended impacts of projects before they were implemented. As one community member in Arero Wario said: “They should ask, discuss before implementing and understand the pastoralist way of life” and [they need to] “share information beforehand so we can be successful together.”

- Communities repeatedly highlighted the need for informed consent, agreement, discussion and participation before and during programmes, along with the importance of recognising their context and culture. Some gaps in participatory planning and inflexible deadlines were evident, with

6 Spellings may differ
communities as well as staff highlighting project timeframes and designs being pre-established and unable to adapt to the contextual realities of the pastoralist communities.

- Mixed responses were received on possibilities to safely and effectively raise complaints. One community group stated: “**We know there is a complaints box: we don’t know how to use it so we don’t use it.**” While another group said: “**Follow-up is necessary. We give suggestions but there is no follow-up – the I/NGO did not even come back.**” Traditional methods such as community meetings or having a designated staff member with whom community members could raise concerns were the most effective.

- The projects that were appreciated the most were those that brought the community and I/NGO together and enabled them to work jointly, gave new ideas, and supplemented and improved the existing traditional systems. In reference to one such project, community members highlighted: “**The technical expertise given to the community is the legacy of the NGO and their work is unforgettable.**” Projects and programmes that built the capacity of the community and had elements of “**behaviour change**” were perceived as life-changing, sustainable and having positive impact. Such projects provided new skills to community members, giving them a sense of empowerment and confidence, and instilling a belief in their ability to change and improve their lives.

- Interestingly, communities talked about project cycles and short-term discrete activities. Despite the fact that some organisations have been working in the Borena area for decades now, none of the community members mentioned an agreed and shared vision of how things would be changed over a period of time and how the communities and I/NGOs would work together to achieve it. There also appeared to be limited linkages between I/NGOs on how their respective activities tied together to deliver coordinated and long-term change. The influx of organisations and flurry of activities during the time of the food crisis appears to have left the communities bewildered. They cited a number of “**hit and run projects**” for which no consent was sought, no agreement with community members was negotiated nor was there any follow-up or monitoring once items were distributed. Communities talked about how organisations “**disappeared**” and “**staff never revisited to check the impact of their activities,**” or how they “**never heard from some I/NGO again.**” The linear and bifurcated approach to relief, recovery and development appears to have increasingly become counterproductive. The divisions between humanitarian and development assistance are blurred and in some cases irrelevant. The contextual realities and needs of those affected by disaster and conflict are more complex and rapidly changing and do not fit into the artificially constructed and abstract divisions between humanitarian and development assistance. A more fluid and integrated approach is needed.

### Views and recommendations from communities on how I/NGOs should work and engage with them

- Introduce yourself
- Keep appointments and time
- Work in harmony with the community
- Create awareness, explain to us what you want to do and share information through community gatherings
- Discuss, consult and share ideas – everything should be based on consent and agreement
- It is not good if you come and deliver services without explaining
- Bring communities and NGOs together, hold discussions in order to understand the context, seasonal calendar and which are the critical times for pastoralists
- Before you start anything, make sure that all members of the community are present
- Before any project, ensure all community members are present, build an understanding and then find agreement on roles and responsibilities of each party; the community should also contribute
- Imposing your view is bad – don’t impose

*The recommendations highlighted are already encapsulated as requirements for being accountable in the HAP Standard benchmarks of sharing information and participation.*
3.3 PERSPECTIVES FROM THE UN COMMUNITY

A workshop on the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP)- An Introduction, Understanding, Challenges, and Exploring Opportunities was conducted through a collaborative effort between HAP International, the IASC Task Force on Accountability to Affected Communities and UNOCHA Ethiopia.7

The aim of the half day workshop was to:
- Introduce the IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations under the Transformative Agenda
- Understand the collective and agency level responsibilities for the CAAP
- Discuss the challenges in applying these in the humanitarian and development response in Ethiopia
- Explore existing opportunities and inter-linkages for collective and agency level action.

After an introduction of the CAAP and existing guidance available, participants provided comments on the transformative agenda, the CAAP and more generally on accountability to affected populations in Ethiopia.

Key reflections from participants
- “How far is it practical to involve the community?” In Level 3 (large scale emergencies) it is very difficult to put the CAAP into practice: “Ground realities” and “traditional customs” were cited as hindrances. One participant stated that the CAAP is “overly simplistic and does not fully take into consideration the complexities on the ground.” Participants were also of the view that “the Transformative Agenda does not apply to Ethiopia- since it is not a Level 3 emergency”.
- There were mixed views on the chances of success for the CAAP - with some saying that the “push for accountability to affected populations and the CAAP is coming from above and will become ever more present in the work we do” while others stated they didn’t have any organisational documentation on the TA and CAAP and questioned “how to put this into practice?” Putting “Geneva level policies” into practice was cited as a key challenge. Disconnects between the understanding of policies and the implementation between global, regional, country and field level were also highlighted.
- Participants suggested that for organisations to meet the CAAP “institutional change is required.” A specific example of mission reports completed after field visits, stored on electronic shared drives and shared with a limited number of persons was cited, with the suggestion that to meet the CAAP the organisation would have to fundamentally change how the information is shared, accessed, appropriately communicated and consequently used. The group mentioned that they were confused or had little information in general about the Transformative Agenda and the CAAP.
- Participants felt that funds for emergency responses were not disbursed in a timely manner, resulting in an aggravation of the situation. This was seen as a challenge and resulting in weaker implementation of the TA and CAAP. A participant stated, “We need to strike a balance between accountability to donors and affected populations.” Access to communities was highlighted as a difficulty to implement the CAAP.

7 For a list of participating agencies, see page 5.
Understanding the existing challenges and finding solutions

In break out groups, participants were asked to highlight challenges and propose recommendations/solutions for addressing these for selected commitments. A summary of the comments received is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAAP</th>
<th>Challenges and solutions highlighted by break out groups</th>
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| Leadership/ Governance | - Examples of good practices like the Agricultural taskforce and traditional systems of community elders to monitor activities were cited.  
                      - A particular challenge faced at the leadership level was the availability of accurate and credible information and data for making informed decisions.  
                      - Delay in the disbursement of funding constrains timely provision of assistance.  
                      - The solutions suggested by the group largely consisted of improving transparency throughout the humanitarian system through mainstreaming and awareness raising activities. |
| Transparency    | - Ethiopia has a functioning cluster system which promotes transparency in humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, all information is documented and shared with the cluster taskforce, which feeds into OCHA.  
                      - The group viewed that, as lead agency, OCHA is responsible for sharing inter-agency information.  
                      - In a country in which there is a high level of illiteracy and access to internet was particularly poor, the innovative use of multimedia was put forward as a potential solution to achieving greater transparency. However, the group acknowledged that all projects contain (should contain) an element of interaction with affected populations. Therefore, there is scope to develop better information sharing practices in focus group discussions, key informant discussions, and questionnaires. |
| Feedback and Complaints | - There is limited awareness of the appropriateness and quality of the feedback and complaints systems in place and whether affected populations have access to them.  
                          - The challenges faced by organisations were the loss of institutional memory regarding feedback and complaints mechanisms, the sensitivity and control of information (conflict and refugee setting), the capacity of staff to collect and understand the information coming through feedback and complaints mechanisms, and the urgency of the response.  
                          - Solutions include diversifying and creating context-specific mechanisms for receiving complaints. Capacity building for staff should be provided. |
| Participation    | - The current participatory assessment for the HRF proposal was deemed to be good practice by the group, in addition to the participation of government officials down to the Kebele level in assessment.  
                          - Through greater participation of affected populations, a more concrete evidence base on the needs and operational context could be achieved, which would help organisations to lobby on behalf of affected populations. In certain circumstances participation was limited due to the restricted access to beneficiaries.  
                          - Solutions include: Effort should be made to involve different demographics of the population during community consultations. Local communities should be briefed on the outcomes of any assessments and should be provided with feedback on programmatic decisions. |
3.4 ROLE OF DONORS

Setting policy priorities, placing focus on thematic issues and providing resources are amongst the many prerogatives of both institutional and sovereign donors. Donors play a powerful role in accountability becoming a reality in on-going humanitarian and development responses. The role of donors shaping the accountability agenda globally and nationally in Ethiopia cannot be underemphasised.

During the HAP workshops, staff highlighted the challenge of aligning real needs to the funds available. They expressed frustration about how projects can be pre-designed and pre-decided according to donor priorities and government regulations, and mentioned their lack of power and flexibility to adapt these according to the needs and context. Many of them highlighted their own sense of disillusionment and questioned why donor priorities, deadlines and the need to spend available funds in sometimes inappropriate ways take priority over the contextual issues and needs. They believe that if improved impact and change is desired, then the humanitarian and development financing processes must more systematically and effectively take into account contextual variations and needs.

During the deployment, the HAP team advocated with donors such as ECHO, DFID, USAID and CIDA for greater attention and support for accountability and quality issues. Some of the activities included:

- CIDA invited the HAP team to present an “Introduction to Accountability and why it matters in our work” at its Partner’s Forum.
- USAID representatives participated in the IASC - CAAP workshop held by HAP.
- DFID invited the HAP team to participate in the workshop on “Revision of the Humanitarian Response Fund”. During the workshop, discussion took place on how to embed components and indicators of accountability to affected population can be included in the revised HRF processes.
- ECHO in Ethiopia is reviewing its humanitarian programme cycle to establish an improved linkage between humanitarian phase, early recovery, resilience and transition to development work. During the meeting with ECHO, the possibility of HAP members to advocate for and lead on improved accountability in upcoming consortia projects was agreed.
- During a debrief with UNHCR senior management, UNHCR requested that HAP members and other organisations with strong accountability processes should lead by example and guide other organisations (UNHCR partners and UN agencies) to attain improved accountability in refugee operations in Ethiopia.
SECTION 4
RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY

Significant efforts are underway in Ethiopia to reinforce accountability to populations humanitarian and development organisations work with, resulting in valuable good practice on defining and using accountability frameworks, sharing information, seeking active participation of community members, handling complaints and including communities in monitoring processes. It is also worth noting the ECHO-led initiative to improve linkages between humanitarian and development projects; the revision of the Humanitarian Response Fund by DFID and the promotion of the Transformative Agenda and the CAAP by OCHA. In the course of the deployment, as challenges and gaps were identified, staff, affected communities and other stakeholders were requested to suggest solutions and provide recommendations to address the existing gaps and help strengthen accountability at organisational and sector levels. This section presents recommendations made to (I)NGOs, IASC members, donors and the IAAWG-E.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO (I)NGOs

Recommendations from accountability focal points in the IAAWG-E:

1. Accountability should be identified as an organisational priority. This implies that senior management needs to share and emphasise an organisation’s commitments within the organisation. In addition, progress on accountability issues should be reported on in management meetings.

2. Capacity building and training on accountability should be prioritised. All senior managers should go through orientations on accountability.

3. Accountability should be included in job descriptions, work plans and performance appraisals of accountability focal persons as well as all field staff. Work on accountability issues should be recognised and highlighted internally within an organisation.

4. Compliance and monitoring of accountability commitments and goals should be tracked at national and field level.

Recommendations provided by communities:

5. “Consider season, situation and time before starting programmes.” A deeper understanding and appreciation of the context and culture needs to be incorporated in the designs of programmes. This will not only increase level of participation but also result in greater impact and success.

6. “Programmes should be participative and based on consent of people”. The principle of informed consent should be upheld by providing the communities with full details of the purpose, outcomes and implementation challenges of the projects and programmes.

7. “We should have community participation”. Organisations should ensure that programme processes enable and encourage the communities to meaningfully participate in all project activities.

8. “Keep and use our recommendations”. Feedback and inputs should be actively sought from the communities and projects and programmes should be adapted accordingly.

Recommendations provided by field staff:

9. Organisations should make a concerted effort to provide accessible, timely and relevant information in a culturally and context appropriate manner to affected community members throughout the programme cycle as well as monitoring and evaluation processes.

10. Organisations should “build awareness about accountability commitments and the rights of communities”. They should “empower the community, create awareness and build trust by giving feedback and taking action,” on concerns and complaints from communities.

11. Complaints systems put in place should be context-appropriate, designed according to the preferences of the community, and be accessible to all groups within the community.8 Organisations should ensure that there are set procedures in place for dealing with and addressing the complaints, and that they provide multiple avenues through which concerns and complaints can be brought to its attention in a safe and timely manner. These should be “included and harmonised in the on-going programme activities.”

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8 The HAP Standard does not prescribe using a complaints box.
4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO IASC MEMBERS

Recommendations from participants of the workshop on IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations:

12. The commitment to deliver on the Transformative Agenda and the CAAP should be emphasised and implementation plans made widely available by senior management.

13. In order to prevent the CAAP being seen as a “Geneva/ headquarter level driven agenda” the gap between policy and practice needs to be bridged by encouraging learning and building bridges between global, regional, country and field levels at organisation and global cluster level.

14. Within Ethiopia, greater inclusion of the voice of affected communities in proposals’ development should be undertaken. More active and accurate information sharing at a cluster level should take place. Individual organisations should retrieve and feedback information on needs, concerns and views of affected communities - even if it is anecdotal, and actively share it at an inter-cluster level.

15. Avenues to embed accountability within existing coordination systems and processes should be explored for example in the terms of reference for cluster coordinators, in country strategies and in workplans for Humanitarian Country Teams.

16. In order to have wider application and ownership amongst development actors, IASC principals should clarify how the CAAP are to be operationalised in non-level 3 emergencies.

17. In addition, a more seamless transition between, and integration of, the stages between relief, recovery, resilience and development is needed. This transition must be underscored and tied together by the fundamental principle of being accountable and putting the well-being of affected communities at the centre of all actions and decisions, whether they are affected by disaster, conflict or poverty.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO DONORS

The donor community should continue to make efforts to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development work and push for smoother and integrated transition between the two phases.

18. Funding structures and processes should prioritise accountability to affected communities and should include accountability indicators for implementation and subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

19. Funding processes should allow for more responsiveness and a capacity to adapt to the realities and needs of affected communities.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE IAAWG-E

20. The IAAWG-E has great potential to drive change and strengthen accountability within member organisations and other interested agencies in a cost-effective and collegial manner. Senior management support for this group should continue and all Country Directors should meet periodically within the IAAWG-E forum, with staff time to be allocated towards participating in the IAAWG-E meetings.

21. Roles and responsibilities for the management and coordination of the group should be equitably divided amongst the members. This may include appointing a vice-chair, rapporteur and considering rotating hosting arrangements.

22. Links and collaboration with other networks and groups, in particular with the Humanitarian I/NGO group (HINGO) which is also represented in the Humanitarian Country Team should be developed. Linkages can include holding periodic joint meetings, providing minutes from the IAAWG-E and recommendations for advocacy and action to HINGO.

23. Staff at field level have existing coordination and sectoral meetings which can be utilised to enhance implementation and learning on accountability issues such as improved information sharing, participatory programming and instituting complaints handling systems. These accountability issues should be added as fixed agenda points for existing inter-agency meetings. Initial locations to include these issues at inter-agency meetings could be Dollo Ado and Borena, where initial awareness raising at inter-agency level has already been undertaken by the HAP team.

24. As appropriate, the IAAWG-E should actively undertake inter-agency initiatives and actively include relevant national NGOs and UN agencies, both at Addis Ababa and field level, in these. This will help to widen awareness and understanding of accountability issues.
AFTER ACTION REVIEW OF THE HAP DEPLOYMENT

After completion of the deployment, an after-action review was undertaken to assess the outcomes and impact of the deployment and identify areas of improvement for future HAP deployments. Below is a summary of the After Action Review Report authored by Hanna Abate (DCA). The full report can be found at: http://hapinternational.org/projects/field/hap-in-ethiopia.aspx

Following the completion of the deployment mission, IAAWG-E members undertook an After-Action Review (AAR) of the mission on the request of the HAP team. The aim of the AAR was to examine the main outcomes and achievements of the deployment and identify ways in which future HAP deployments can be improved.

The findings will be an input into HAP’s continual learning process to further improve its work and its deployments. The AAR was led by selected focal persons of the IAAWG-E and the report was compiled by Dan Church Aid, who is the current host and Chair of the working group. A check list with a set of guiding questions was developed to guide the discussion. The key focus areas included the strengths of the deployment, lessons learnt, the way forward in implementing lessons learnt and suggested areas of improvement for future deployments. A total of 11 organisations represented in the IAAWG-E participated in the AAR.

5.1 METHODOLOGY:

- A two hour workshop was held with IAAWG member agencies on 2 April at DCA office in Addis Ababa
- Bilateral written feedback was given by four agencies via email

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM THE AAR

Overall, the working group members agreed that the HAP team had performed all the tasks planned with the IAAWG-E for its deployment period, although within a tight time frame. The activities have greatly contributed to enriching the group experience and improving the quality of its interaction, supporting the capacity of focal persons and individual agencies involved in the process. In addition, the team worked with international and UN agencies, which helped to generate useful information for the groups’ future engagement and links with these groups.

The IAAWG-E has benefitted in a number of ways from the whole deployment exercise among which the following are the major ones:

- The presence of the team enhanced the individual and collective understanding, as well as clarity among the working group members around the HAP benchmarks. The different exercises facilitated by the team enabled to link the theoretical basis for HAP with the practical implementation. One of the group members noted, ‘I found the clarifications on the HAP benchmarks interesting and the sharing of some experiences from other countries was also helpful’.

- The series of workshops organised by the team have promoted cross learning and encouraged members to contribute to the peer learning process by facilitating presentation of organisational experiences by several agencies. The group became aware of existing expertise and resources within its members and the opportunity for further experience sharing and adoption of good practices under the different benchmarks. A member of the IAAWG indicated, ‘I learnt a lot and felt the support from the others that also participated in the workshops. It showed us the resources that we have in the group and reinforced the need for better communication and sharing’.

- From the different bilateral discussions, workshops, field work and organisational self-assessments, the HAP team was able to locate good practices and tools within organisations that could be shared among group members for possible adoption. In this regard, the experience of organisations on designing and implementing Accountability Frameworks, complaints mechanisms, information sharing (currently mainly focusing on community level information boards), and integrating accountability in the monitoring and evaluation processes are some of the areas where practical experience was exchanged.

- The facilitation of the HAP team contributed to increased interaction and bond among group members. The overall process enabled to build a spirit of collaboration and common purpose, enhancing clarity to group members about what can be done collectively and where the group can go from here. It created interest among group members to contribute and suggest ways to increase the quality of the group’s interaction. The experience from other countries in relation to how similar groups function brought...
What resulted from working with the HAP team and how it will be taken forward:

- The rapid self-assessment, facilitated by HAP, served most organisations as an “eye opener” leading for most to an action plan aiming to improve their performance and quality management. As noted by one of the participants, ‘The HAP team assisted us in better understanding where we stand against the HAP Standard. From this, we organised an internal Accountability Working Group, used the report to identify our priorities, and determined the HAP benchmarks that we would focus on in 2013’. Some of the participating organisations have developed or are in the process of developing action plans based on the findings in order to further improve organisational efforts towards accountability. Following the assessment, some have started to adopt an accountability framework and planned training on the benchmarks for HQ and field office staff. The country director of one of the organisations said, ‘This deployment presented us with an opportunity to jump-start our quest to embody the highest standards of accountability and quality management. The staff members gained a better understanding of the HAP principles and benchmarks, and are truly focused on integrating a “HAP way of thinking” into our organisation’.

- The team helped to identify practical challenges faced by accountability focal persons and brought these to the attention of senior management. Through different meetings and bilateral discussions, the HAP team highlighted the value of accountability focal persons and their work. Better appreciation of their work by senior management increased the level of support to the work of focal points. Furthermore, the team pushed senior management to participate in the activities of the group and also strengthen their commitment to the objectives of the group.

- The recommendations suggested by the HAP team at the end of its deployment are important contributions to strengthening the IAAWG-E.

**Key lessons learnt during the engagement with the HAP team:**

- Accountability already exists in the processes of organisations. Organisations often feel that they have not done well on the requirements of the standard while they are already doing different things within the community they work with even though they may not refer to it as “accountability”. Often, work has to be done in simple but incremental ways, acknowledging one can’t become perfect instantly.

- Working with the team enabled to understand the “The power of coming together” and the strengths of collaboration. This was best demonstrated by the ‘stone soup’ story shared by the HAP team members during one of the workshop sessions. There are unacknowledged resources which, with proper facilitation, can be uncovered. One member of the IAAWG-E noted, “The biggest lesson for me is seeing the need to coordinate. We are all working on separate efforts which, if put together could cover the whole requirements of the HAP Standard”.

- Complaints handling mechanisms are wrongly defined in terms of ‘complaints boxes’ that are in most cases irrelevant in traditional and often illiterate communities. Complaints handling mechanisms need to be contextually appropriate.

- Periodic self-assessments are needed for continual self-reflection and improvement.

- Community consultation is a basic tool to identify levels of fulfilment of accountability commitments.

- The value of working with partners and field staff. Often, information stays with staff working at Addis level and does not trickle down to field staff and partners who are on the front line, directly working with affected communities and stakeholders. Field staff often have critical insight, know-how and better ways of working with communities but these are often compromised by requirements imposed from headquarters. In this regard, results of the field work by the HAP team provided an opportunity to assess the level of collaboration with partners.

What resulted from working with the HAP team and how it will be taken forward:

- Prioritisation of humanitarian accountability as an agenda item within respective organisations, which is an indication of increasing attention.

- IAAWG-E member agencies are now interested and willing to contextualise their Accountability Frameworks, most of which have been formulated at their respective head offices. They also see the need to organise trainings/orientations for their staff and partners and create awareness about their accountability commitments.

- The rapid accountability assessment provided participating agencies with a chance to identify gaps within their compliance structures and helped with the formulation of action plans. The member agencies that participated in the organisational self-assessment will organise a peer learning process to share
their progress and challenges in implementing their action plans.

- Humanitarian accountability standards will be mainstreamed in different partnership processes (e.g., in partnership agreements, as well as in reporting requirements).
- The presence of the team has demonstrated ways and encouraged the working group members to come together and share tools and information, and not just show up at meetings. This has increased commitment of the group members. The group will structure meetings in a way to encourage regular presentations by individual agencies and share different responsibilities to further enhance participation and contribution.
- The lessons from the field and discussions in the workshops resulted in members of the group recognising the need and value of working jointly. This has also motivated members of the group to make an effort towards creating a collegial environment and working with a consolidated approach at grassroots level.
- The engagement of the team with different international agencies enabled to gather important information and paved the way to create links with other networks, both within NGOs and UN agencies. This will be further followed up and concretised by the group.
- The team created an opportunity to access valuable HAP resources online (HAP website, the sharing of updates, etc) which will be constantly referred to in the process of working to strengthen accountability.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE HAP DEPLOYMENTS

- Either increase deployment duration or its frequency to have good insight and provide better support – or alternatively, focus deployment on only one benchmark or outstanding issue.
- Allocate more time for community consultations.
- RAA should be supported by community consultations instead of only focusing on organisations.
- More visit to more places should be planned to understand diverse contexts in Ethiopia (e.g., DRR contexts).
- Trainings of Trainers should be scheduled by HAP deployment to ensure ‘filtering’ (trickle down of skills).
- Workshops could be longer/series of engagements to ensure all issues are covered.
- Online workshops/webinars and other ‘modern’ means may allow further engagement.
- Facilitate cross learning between different working groups and compile lessons learnt and best practices.
- Aim to have a plan for follow-up - next support/experience exchange (attempt to create regular link if it is possible).
- Another visit at the working group and more workshops on specific issues of interpreting the Standard in practice or developing working documents for each organisation, as it is important to make it part of the overall organisation and not a standalone issue.

5.4 NEXT STEPS

The HAP Roving Team continues to provide remote support to the IAAWG-E and other interested stakeholders in Ethiopia. Wider learning and sharing of findings and recommendations will be therefore undertaken on a regular basis. Furthermore, to build in-country technical expertise, two workshop on Training of Trainers and Complaints Response Mechanism will take place in Addis Ababa in August 2013. In addition, a follow-up mission to maintain the momentum and efforts generated through the deployment will be organised as well. Some organisations have already started to make progress in strengthening the accountability processes within their organisations with support from other members of the IAAWG-E, the HAP team or global accountability focal points.

Recommendations provided by the IAAWG-E for areas of improvement are being considered and will be reflected in the continued support to organisations in Ethiopia and for future deployment related work. These will also be included in learning about the implementation of the revised HAP Deployment Policy.