

# Concern Worldwide Renewal Audit (RA) – Summary Report – REN 2022/08/11

## 1. General information

### 1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Federated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
<b>Legal registration</b>	International NGO	
<b>Head Office location</b>	Dublin, Ireland	
<b>Total number of organisation staff</b>	4,589	

### 1.2 Audit team

<b>Lead auditor</b>	Daniel Rogers
<b>Second auditor</b>	Claire Goudsmit
<b>Third auditor</b>	
<b>Observer</b>	
<b>Expert</b>	
<b>Witness / other participants</b>	

### 1.3 Scope of the audit

<b>CHS Verification Scheme</b>	Certification Scheme
<b>Audit cycle</b>	Second / Transition into new 3-year cycle
<b>Phase of the audit</b>	Certification renewal
<b>Coverage of the audit</b>	The entire organisation and its offices at Head Office and Country Offices.
<b>Extraordinary or other type of audit</b>	N/A

### 1.4 Sampling\*

<b>Total number of country programme sites</b>			24
<b>Total number of sites for onsite visit</b>			2 (1 remote site visit)
<b>Total number of sites for remote assessment</b>			3
<b>Randomly sampled country programme sites</b>	<b>Included in final sample (Y/N)</b>	<b>Rationale for sampling and selection decision</b>	<b>Onsite or remote</b>
Chad	Yes	Represents a medium-sized programme budget with a range of direct and partnership programme approaches, not included in previous audits.	Remote assessment
Lebanon	No	Lebanon was visited onsite for 2019 MTA.	

Malawi	Yes	Medium-sized programme budget and has emphasis on Concern's development work.	Remote assessment
Burkina Faso	No	Burkina Faso is a very small-scale project and insufficient for assessment.	
Sierra Leone	Yes	Represents a medium-sized humanitarian and development programme office and projects delivered directly and through NNGOs and INGOs. Not included in any previous audits.	Remote site visit
Kenya	No	Remotely assessed for 2020 MA2	
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	Yes	Represents a large-scale, established Concern programme with a high number of staff in-country, humanitarian and development projects and a significantly high budget; working predominantly directly, with 1 NNGO and 1 INGO partners.	Remote assessment
<b>Purposive sample</b>			
Turkey		Turkey was purposively selected for the onsite visit largely based on feasibility of travel (e.g., Covid travel restrictions, security) also because it represents a relatively large programme budget, with a significant number of Concern staff in-country, development and humanitarian programming – health, education, and protection.	Onsite visit
<p><b>Any other sampling performed for this audit:</b>          The sampling included selecting a programme with a L/NNGO partner, as was recommended in the MTA. The UK Concern Office and Concern USA were also involved in the HO interviews as they relate to the implementation of Concern's international programme work.</p>			
<p><b>Sampling risks identified:</b>          Due to worldwide, Covid-related travel restrictions the sampling rate was reduced from 2 onsite visits to one onsite (Turkey) and one remote site visit (Sierra Leone) to Concern's country programmes. In line with HQAI's rules for sampling and alongside normal criteria, Turkey was purposively selected for the onsite visit based on accessibility of the country, allowable travel regulations and Covid management in-country. The Sierra Leone programme was randomly selected for the remote site visit based on normal sampling criteria and projects were selected largely based on feasibility to connect (either through mobile or internet networks) with programme participants and stakeholders.</p> <p>The audit team is confident in the sample and in the findings from the available evidence generated.</p>			

*\*Please note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's activities, programmes and documentation as well as direct observation. Findings are analysed to determine an organisation's systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across different contexts and ways of working.*

## 2. Activities undertaken by the audit team

### 2.1 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
Concern Head Office, Dublin, Ireland	17-21 January 2022	Remote
Concern USA Office	21 January 2022	Remote
Concern UK Office	21 January 2022	Remote
Sanliurfa, Turkey	4-8 April 2022	Onsite
Sierra Leone	9-13 May 2022	Remote

## 2.2 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
<b>Head Office</b>			
Management	11	4	Remote
Staff	2	2	Remote
US Office (Management)	0	1	Remote
UK Office (Management)	1	1	Remote
<b>Country Programme – Turkey</b>			
Management and Staff	11	13	Onsite
Partner staff	5	4	Onsite
Others	0	1	Onsite
<b>Country Programme – Sierra Leone</b>			
Management and Staff	8	8	Remote
<b>Total number of interviewees</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>72</b>

## 2.3 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of participants		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Parents and Children - Halilye, Sanliurfa, Turkey	4	8	Onsite
Protection project participants - Halilye, Sanliurfa, Turkey	5	6	Onsite
Community Centre Committee - Halilye, Sanliurfa, Turkey	5	3	Onsite
Parents and Children - Adiyamen, Turkey	8	5	Onsite
IPA/Case Management participants - Adiyamen, Turkey	3	3	Onsite
Community Centre Committee - Adiyamen, Turkey	3	3	Onsite
Parents and Children - Siverik, Turkey	7	6	Onsite
IPA/Case management participants - Siverik, Turkey	4	2	Onsite
Community Centre Committee - Siverik, Turkey	2	3	Onsite
Parents and Children - Gaziantep, Turkey	10	5	Onsite
IPA/Case management participants - Gaziantep, Turkey	7	9	Onsite
Community Centre Committee - Gaziantep, Turkey	4	3	Onsite
Primary school children – Kayassie, Sierra Leone	2	3	Remote
Adolescents - Kayassie, Sierra Leone	4	4	Remote
Project stakeholders (Teacher, School Management committee member, Community facilitator) – Kayassie, Sierra Leone	0	2	Remote
Primary school children - Bendugu, Sierra Leone	3	2	Remote
Out of school adolescents – Bendugu, Sierra Leone	4	4	Remote
Project stakeholders (Teacher, School Management Committee member, Community Conversation facilitator) – Bendugu, Sierra Leone	0	3	Remote
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>149</b>

## 2.4 Opening meeting

<b>Date</b>	2022/01/17
<b>Location</b>	Remote
<b>Number of participants</b>	9 (7 female, 2 male)
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	None

## 2.5 Closing meeting

<b>Date</b>	2022/05/16
<b>Location</b>	Remote
<b>Number of participants</b>	13 (9 female, 4 male)
<b>Any substantive issues arising</b>	None

## 3. Background information on the organisation

### 3.1 General information

Concern Worldwide is a non-governmental, international, aid organisation. Concern was founded in 1968 and is dedicated to the reduction of suffering and working towards the ultimate elimination of extreme poverty in the world's poorest countries. Concern has its head office in Dublin, Ireland. Concern has affiliate offices in the UK (including Northern Ireland), the United States and South Korea. The UK, US and South Korea offices do not run their own programmes which are all centrally managed by the Irish office. A single global strategic plan and advocacy strategy guide the work of all parts of the organisation.

Concern currently manages 24 country programmes delivering humanitarian and development programmes across a range of sectors organised into four areas: emergency, livelihoods, health, education. Concern's approaches include partnerships, equality, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), community resilience, HIV, protection and safeguarding, environmental sustainability, conflict sensitivity and mitigation and urban programming. Concern works increasingly in emergency and fragile, and conflict affected contexts, as well as in delivering long-term development programming in more stable contexts.

Concern's mission is to help people living in extreme poverty achieve major improvements in their lives, which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern. In 2021 Concern had a total expenditure of EUR 217 million.

### 3.2 Governance and management structure

Concern Worldwide is governed by a board of directors which meet at least six times a year. There are four standing committees: finance, programme monitoring and evaluation, audit and risk, and remuneration and succession. Concern's board is elected by Concern members at annual general meetings. Board members may serve a maximum of three terms of three years each. The board may have a maximum of 22 members.

Concern is managed through several Directorates which are represented at senior director level including Finance; Human Resources; Corporate Services; International Programmes; Emergency; Development and Fundraising; Communications; Strategy, Advocacy and Learning. Concern has a Safeguarding and Protection Unit (with its own Director) located within the Emergency Directorate.

Concern has finalised a new Strategic Plan 2021-2025 which maintains its focus of 'reaching the furthest behind' and 'doing more and doing it better'. The plan outlines the direction of the organisation and states that Concern aims to be a 'professional, responsive organisation that is accountable and focused on what matters.' Based on broad consultation across the organisation seven strategic objectives aim at enabling Concern to be a safe organisation, delivering safe programmes and being accountable to programme participants. A person-centred approach, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and the CHS are embedded commitments, along with key areas of listening, preventing, reporting, responding and learning.

In 2021 Concern conducted a comprehensive Safeguarding Review which recommended the establishment of a new Protection and Safeguarding Unit (PSU). The PSU, led by a Director of Protection and Safeguarding, has been established and the team is further resourced with a Safeguarding Advisor and a Humanitarian Protection Advisor, with one additional team member joining in January 2022. The Protection and Safeguarding Framework was finalised in March 2021. Concern continues to build the capacity of



Safeguarding Focal Points in each Country Office, and in some cases at the field office level also.

### 3.3 Key internal quality assurance, internal control, and risk management mechanisms

Concern has an organisational risk register which is reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board every 6 months. Concern also has an organisation wide compliance strategy. Every country programme maintains a risk register, which is compiled and reviewed at HO level, and every year HO holds an organisational risk workshop to identify top risks and mitigation strategies. Concern's Internal Audit function conducts country visits on a risk basis after analysis of country risk registers among other considerations. Depending on the size and nature of their operations, some countries have compliance officers and internal auditors. The compliance strategy proposes increased field-based compliance staff, and several new posts were created in 2021.

A new risk-based partnership process, including a new due diligence procedure for partners, was established in 2021.

Since 2020, Concern has rolled out the use of an online Grants Management System (GMS) which is used by management to track grant management and processes. As part of the ongoing development of the GMS, it will be linked to Concern's finance system. GMS also allows Concern offices to share funding opportunities, and to work jointly on proposals, allowing for technical advisors to input into the conceptualisation and design of new interventions. Functions of GMS include tracking of comments, checklists for proposal development, review and approval. Information is searchable by thematic sector, donor and country and the system allows for south-to-south sharing and learning. Basic functionality has been achieved in early 2022 with the addition of more functions, data quality and further training all underway.

Several policies have been updated or created since the last audit and approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) including Conflict of Interest Policy, Anti-Fraud Policy, Crisis Management Plan, CCTV Policy, Governance Code, Vaccine Policy, Code of Conduct and Associated Policies, Revisions to Authority Levels 2021, Risk Management Policy and Investigations Manual.

The Country Annual Programme Progress Report (APPR) process has been established to systematically monitor and quality assure programming from the HO level. The APPRs cover security management and protection, safeguarding, reporting unintended consequences of Concern's interventions, Complaint Response Mechanisms (CRM) and elements of the CHS: Annex 5a on Accountability and the CHS improvement plans from country programmes and Annex 11 on Partnership Overview, ask about improvements or inputs on safeguarding and CRMs, protection, and the CHS. While the APPR has been in place for several years, the template is updated annually, and a number of revisions have been made in relation to Concern's CHS commitments.

### 3.4 Work with partner organisations

Concern's global Strategic Plan (2021-2025) includes partnership (with key donors, national and international NGO's, local institutions, public supporters) as a core value and commitment of the organisation to achieve its aims. Whilst Concern has significant experience of partnership with others to implement its programme work, e.g., local government, local and national non-governmental organisations (L/NNGOs), the organisation has recognised a decrease in the amount of programming it has implemented with L/NNGOs over the previous 2 strategic planning cycles (24% of programme budgets in 2012 down to 11% in 2020). An analysis of the factors that have contributed to this, e.g., working more in rural and remote areas with weaker civil society infrastructure and fragile contexts and limited or weak partner selection causing weaker programme quality and accountability to communities, as well as how Concern has learned from these experiences to increase its partnerships with L/NNGOs, are outlined in the drafted Local and National Partnerships Strategy (2021-2025).

Concern is refocusing its efforts to increase local partnerships and aims to deliver 25% of its programmes through L/NNGOs by 2025. Currently this is at 12%. A Partnership Advisor is in place and is working closely with country teams to develop local partnership strategies and build Concern's ways of working with L/NNGOs to create strong partnerships. Concern is establishing a robust framework for working in partnership with local organisations including:

- Partner Due Diligence Procedures (2021) for any organisation or entity where Concern awards funding.
- Partnership Policy and Guidelines (2020) (which include Concern's Localisation Strategy).
- Integrated Local Partner Assessment Tool (CILPAT) (including partnership mapping and review guidance and Capacity Building Plan and MOU templates).
- Associated trainings and direct support to partners.

The CHS, and specifically Code of Conduct (CoC), Protection and Safeguarding elements are all included.

## 4. Overall performance of the organisation

### 4.1 Effectiveness of the governance, internal quality assurance and risk management of the organisation

Concern has strong governance, internal quality assurance and risk management systems in place and these remain largely unchanged at the time of this audit. The establishment of a Protection and Safeguarding Unit (PSU) is, however, a key change in this area which will provide greater overall assurance that risks related to protection and safeguarding are addressed and managed. The PSU is providing technical support and capacity development to country programmes as well as further strengthening organisational systems for protection and safeguarding. Concern has created a position in its Head Office responsible for the CHS (along with other responsibilities) to ensure that the CHS commitments are mainstreamed through the organisation's work and to track and follow up on Concern's actions in relation to previous audit reports.

### 4.2 How the organisation applies the CHS across its work

Concern continues to show high commitment to and overall high compliance with the CHS. The organisation takes CHS certification seriously and has systems in place through which it addresses Observations and Corrective Actions. Concern performs well across all 9 Commitments of the CHS. The organisation has a strong culture of consultation with the communities with which it works, of taking complaints seriously, and of embedding its CoC throughout all areas of its operations. While Concern has been engaged in and compliant with CHS for a number of years, in some areas its policy and guidance documents are in need of updating (such as CRM guidance) and much of this work is under way (Protection and Safeguarding Strategic Framework (PSSF) action plan, Environment Strategy, etc). Concern has increased its commitment to the environment through the development of policy, strategy and action plans, although these are still not being fully implemented across all country programmes.

### 4.3 PSEA

Over the course of the previous audit cycle, Concern has strengthened its systems for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse through a range of actions. The establishment of a Protection and Safeguarding Unit (PSU) with dedicated staff, led by a Director of Safeguarding is a clear indication that the organisation has taken seriously the CARs and observations from previous audits. Concern has taken a number of important actions to address weaknesses identified in earlier audits in relation to protection and safeguarding. There are several actions which will require monitoring throughout the next audit cycle to ensure they are embedded into Concern's practice at country programme level.

Concern designs and implements its programmes taking the risks and vulnerabilities of communities into account to ensure activities are safe. Concern's CRM system for managing complaints is functioning in every country programme, although there are actions underway to update and strengthen existing guidance, and to improve the consistency of these systems to allow better oversight and analysis of its functioning. Concern's protection focussed programmes perform particularly well in relation to managing SEA risks, it is equally important that PSEA principles are embedded across all of Concern's programme areas.

### 4.4 Localisation

Concern has stated commitments to localisation and its ambition to increase the amount of funding to L/NNGOs. Concern works in a collaborative way with local partners by conducting detailed capacity assessments and strengthening capacity through accompaniment, training and dialogue. Despite work with local partners progressing well, and even though many country programmes are implemented in partnership with L/NNGOs and other local actors, Concern does not currently channel a high percentage (currently 12%) of its overall programme expenditure (particularly for emergency response) through local partners. Concern works in many difficult and challenging country contexts, including several protracted crises and fragile states with weak governance systems, where exiting or reducing

direct implementation is not considered viable in the short-term, however, a strategic approach to transitioning programmes to local ownership over time is not in place.

Concern provides significant support to the development of its staff and has organisation-wide programmes to increase leadership and management skills, and to support mobility and career progression within Concern. Despite this, there currently remains a high proportion of international staff in country management positions and there are some issues to resolve in terms of retaining national staff (e.g. competitive salaries, career progression in-country or region).

#### 4.5 Gender and diversity

Concern is highly committed to diversity, gender equality and inclusion. It is currently investing resources into researching what it can do to ensure it has a progressive, diverse and inclusive workforce across the organisation globally. In line with its rights-based approach and focus on women's empowerment, Concern designs its programmes considering the vulnerabilities of different groups and has a particularly strong focus on gender equality across its work. Concern has made a significant organisational commitment to invest in a long-term programme of work to transform gender norms and attitudes across all of its country offices and programmes. Concern has taken steps to improve diversity policies including disability inclusive workplace policies, however, whilst guidance is in place, it is yet to consistently gather disaggregated data beyond age and gender, to include disability and other factors.

### 4.6 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Commitment	Strong points and areas for improvement	Feedback from communities	Average score*
<b>Commitment 1:</b> Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	<p>Concern is committed to the humanitarian principles of impartiality, humanity, independence and neutrality. Concern is committed to provide assistance based on the needs and capacities of people and communities affected by crises. Concern's global policies and strategies include the commitment to focus programming on the most disadvantaged and marginalised people. Concern's Programme Quality Guide (PQ Guide) and other guidance documents and resources are made available to country offices to support the implementation of these principles into programmes.</p> <p>An area for improvement which will allow Concern to ensure its programmes target the most vulnerable, is for data disaggregation to consistently include disability as an indicator, along with gender and age, at a minimum.</p>	Communities and stakeholders consulted overwhelmingly reported that Concern's and partners' programmes are appropriate and highly relevant. Communities reported programmes taking their needs, risks and capacities into account, as well as programmes adapting over time as contextual factors change.	2.7
<b>Commitment 2:</b> Humanitarian response is effective and timely	<p>Concern's responses are generally considered to be effective and timely. Efforts have been made to address some of the areas of weakness in relation to organisational capacity.</p> <p>Every country programme reviews their Preparing for Effective Emergency Response (PEER) plan annually, which aims to enable timely emergency response in existing countries of operation. Concern has effective decision-making processes enabling appropriate and timely responses.</p> <p>Concern's PQ Guide and programme toolkit, among other guidance and technical support</p>	Communities were very positive in their view that Concern's work is effective and delivered in a timely manner. Referral systems are working well, although some community members interviewed reported unmet needs not being referred or otherwise addressed. A small minority of communities consulted reported unexplained delays in assessment processes, which may have been addressed through clearer communication from Concern staff.	2.7



	<p>available to country offices, ensure programmes are well designed and that appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and used to adapt programmes where necessary; to promote good practice through advocacy at different levels; and to report progress. Concern has made progress in developing processes to support the systematic identification of unintended negative consequences and to take appropriate action. However, these tools and processes are not systematically applied throughout Concern's programmatic work.</p> <p>Concern has effective systems for the referral of unmet needs to appropriate organisations. When there is no available service provider or needs are beyond their means, Concern advocates for provision of appropriate services. However, Concern's International Advocacy Strategy is not systematically informing advocacy approaches in all the protracted crises in which Concern works.</p>		
<p><b>Commitment 3:</b> Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects</p>	<p>Concern continues to comply with the requirements of this commitment. Strengthening local capacities is part of Concern's stated ambition to promote partnership and the localisation agenda and increase its partnerships with L/NGOs.</p> <p>Concern works collaboratively with local partners, conducting detailed partner capacity assessments to mutually identify areas for support and improvement. Concern's partnership approach is appreciated by local partners who report a feeling of true partnership. 18 out of 24 country programmes work with local partners, although the percentage of programme expenditure is relatively low overall at 12%, and that figure is lower for emergency programming. An area for improvement is the forward planning for exiting and transitioning Concern's responses.</p>	<p>Communities, stakeholders and partners report satisfaction with the support they receive from Concern to strengthen their existing capacities, as well as avoiding negative effects. Concern's partners are appreciative of the supportive technical inputs, supervision, accompaniment and coaching they receive, as well as opportunities to engage in formal training and learning activities and events.</p>	2.5
<p><b>Commitment 4:</b> Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback</p>	<p>Transparency, participation and accountability are key principles which stem from Concern's strategic goals, into programme policies and guidelines. Programme quality assurance systems are in place to ensure that Concern staff and partners plan, design, implement and share information in a participatory way. When working in partnership and consortiums with L/NGOs and INGOs effective joint working relationships are established.</p> <p>Concern makes a wide range of its information public on its website and Knowledge Hub. Systems and routines are implemented at the programme level to ensure that all stakeholders are sufficiently informed. Information provided to stakeholders, including to communities is clear, appropriate and uses a variety of tools and methods to ensure information is</p>	<p>Communities and stakeholders are engaged in project activities, at all stages of the work. Opportunities to give feedback to Concern and partner staff are frequent and informative, through published materials, feedback mechanisms, face-to-face visits, community committees and village leadership groups, etc. Communities appreciate that staff take time to listen and hear what they want to say. In some instances, where Concern do not have direct answers, feedback to questions raised are not responded to sufficiently.</p>	2.7



	<p>communicated effectively, including on expected behaviours of staff and PSEAH.</p> <p>One weak area is that diversity factors are not systematically included in complaint and feedback mechanisms, and feedback given to Concern staff informally is not always adequately responded to.</p>		
<p><b>Commitment 5:</b> Complaints are welcomed and addressed</p>	<p>Concern has taken several actions to effectively address the CARs raised in previous audits, and all CARs are now closed as a result. The creation of a new Protection and Safeguarding Unit (PSU) and appointment of a Director of Safeguarding signal the intent, at the highest levels within Concern, to ensure that systems are in place to welcome and address complaints including those related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.</p> <p>Every country has a functioning complaint reporting mechanism (except for DPRK where this is not possible), and guidance and support is being provided from Head Office to ensure CRMs are consistently further developed, maintained and appropriately managed. A few key recommendations and actions within the Protection and Safeguarding Strategic Framework (PSSF) are yet to be fully implemented and will be important to ensure Concern has robust systems and processes to meet its commitments in this area. The key PSSF actions include developing updated CRM guidelines, completing the development of new tools including investigations manuals, escalation processes for serious complaints, and standardisation of in-country tools for complaint recording and analysis.</p>	<p>Communities are consistently aware of and satisfied with the appropriateness and suitability of the range of ways available to them to raise a complaint, on which they are regularly consulted. Communities consulted as part of this audit were all aware of the scope of issues which CRMs can address, although Concern does not consistently check this yet.</p>	2.3
<p><b>Commitment 6:</b> Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary</p>	<p>Coordination, collaboration and enabling are key strategic and programme performance indicators for Concern. Concern is committed to working with others to ensure its work and activities are coordinated and do not duplicate effort. This can be seen through its ambition to engage with and lead Cluster mechanisms and be part of national, district and local NGO and technical working groups and forums, in-country coalitions and advocacy groups, as well as working in consortiums for greater coverage and leverage, and to complement expertise.</p> <p>Concern works closely with national and local authorities to influence policy and to deliver projects for communities. Concern has established accountable and supportive methods to work with and alongside L/NGOs. Partner organisations report rewarding partnerships with Concern staff in-country and have respect for their ways of working and how the work is managed. Increasing the amount of expenditure to partners to deliver programmes is an area for improvement.</p>	<p>Communities comment that activities implemented in their society have been coordinated well with local authorities and relevant ministries e.g. ministries of health, social welfare. Communities also comment that Concern and partner organisations work with their best interests in mind and that activities are coordinated well.</p>	3.2

<p><b>Commitment 7:</b> Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve</p>	<p>Concern is committed to being a learning organisation, and to base its work on credible international research, innovation and lessons learned. Concern captures and responds to lessons learned and recommendations coming through routine monitoring and evaluation activities of its work. Establishing CRMs in all country programmes and reporting on these systematically enables teams to learn from complaints, address issues arising and adapt their work accordingly.</p> <p>Strategies are developed based on a thorough understanding of prior successes and weaknesses, and by integrating current sectoral, technical and academic thinking. Concern is involved in leading research into new ways of working and ideas for system change e.g. Food Systems Summit, Building a Better Response, Dóchas, SAFER Learning Model, Sonke Gender Justice.</p>	<p>Communities are engaged in project reviews, consultations, monitoring progress of actions, and in committees where community issues are regularly raised with Concern and partners. Stakeholder review meetings at the end of projects are used to share information and learning with community groups. Communities provided examples of where changes were made over time, based on learning and feedback they had given.</p>	3
<p><b>Commitment 8:</b> Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably</p>	<p>Concern has updated its Code of Conduct and associated policies and rolled-out an organisation-wide, mandatory training programme. A robust and comprehensive Safeguarding framework and approach is being implemented with at least one Safeguarding Focal Point positioned in each country programme supported by the global Safeguarding Unit. Resources to ensure safe recruitment are in place and being rolled-out to all teams, which will ensure that recruitment processes follow the most up to date due diligence procedures for all new hires and in performance management.</p> <p>HR Advisors and the Learning and Organisational Development Unit support country teams, and whilst there is a lot of work being done to upscale and improve access to Concern resources through SharePoint, Learning365, Digital Workplace, online learning and GMS, there is currently no centralised HR framework or resource. National staff handbooks and manuals are in place, but an area to improve on is to ensure these are all reviewed and are in-line with Concern's global policy updates.</p> <p>Partner agreements, assessment and programme design processes include safeguarding, codes of conduct and CRMs. Partners are fully aware of their requirements under the Code of Conduct (be it their own or Concern's) and safeguarding obligations and standards. CRMs are in place and protection integrated into programme work and partnership ways of working.</p>	<p>Communities describe Concern and partner staff as professional, welcoming, open, responsive and kind. Staff are respected and trusted by communities. Young people and parents gave extremely positive feedback on how activities had significantly impacted their lives, well-being, prospects and attitudes within their societies.</p>	2.7
<p><b>Commitment 9:</b> Resources are managed and used responsibly for</p>	<p>Concern continues to have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure a responsible use of resources. These policies include anti-fraud and corruption policies which are known and followed by staff. Concern's finance systems and procedures</p>	<p>Communities, stakeholders and partners report no waste in Concern programmes and that Concern has appropriate systems to ensure responsible use of resources as well as systems for</p>	2.3

their intended purpose	allow for appropriate allocation of resources and accurate monitoring of the use of funds.  Concern has an Environment Policy and Strategy, but the use of this policy is not monitored, and it is yet to be rolled out to all country programmes. Apart from livelihoods and agriculture projects, Concern's programmes and operations lack a consideration of potential environmental impact.	monitoring resources.	partners' use of	
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\* *Note: Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each Commitment, except when one of the indicators of a commitment scores 0 or if several scores 1 on the indicators of a Commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-conformity/ weakness at the level of the Commitment. In these two cases the overall score for the Commitment is 0.*

## 5. Summary of non-conformities


Corrective Action Request (CAR)	Type	Resolution due date	Date closed out	Status
2019-4.1: Concern and partners do not systematically share information about the principles they adhere to and about expected behaviour of staff.	Minor	2021-11-20	2022-07-05	Closed
2019-5.2: Concern does not ensure that the full scope of complaint response mechanisms is communicated to communities.	Minor	2021-11-20	2022-07-05	Closed
2019-5.3: Concern's complaint response mechanisms do not provide for timely and appropriate complaints handling that prioritises the safety of the complainant and those affected at all stages.	Minor	2021-11-20	2022-07-05	Closed
2019-5.6: Concern does not assure that communities are made fully aware of the expected behaviour of staff and partner staff, including commitments on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.	Minor	2021-11-20	2022-07-05	Closed
2022-3.4 Country and programme strategies and plans do not currently include how Concern plans to exit or transition from a country or project area.	Minor	2025-04-01		New
2022-9.4 Concern does not systematically consider its impact on the environment when using local and natural resources across its offices and programmes.	Minor	2025-04-01		New
<b>Total number of open CARs</b>	<b>2</b>			

## 6. Sampling recommendation for next audit

<b>Sampling rate</b>	The standard sampling rate should be applied based on the number of country programmes operational at the time of the renewal audit.
<b>Specific recommendation for sampling or selection of sites</b>	To address the reduced number of onsite visits for this renewal audit it is recommended that the next audit includes a minimum of two full onsite country programme visits.  It is recommended that the sample includes at least one example of a rapid onset disaster response programme.



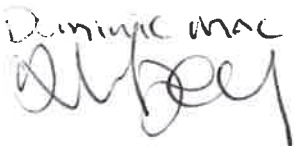
## 7. Lead auditor recommendation

<p>In our opinion, Concern Worldwide has demonstrated that it continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.</p> <p>We recommend certification is maintained.</p>	
<p><b>Name and signature of lead auditor:</b></p>  <p>Daniel Rogers</p>	<p><b>Date and place:</b></p> <p>5 July 2022 Brighton, UK</p>

## 8. HQAI decision

<p><b>Certificate:</b></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Re-Issued <input type="checkbox"/> Preconditioned (Major CARs)
<p>Start date of the certification cycle: 2021/10/11</p>	
<p><b>Next audit:</b> Surveillance audit before 2023/10/11</p>	
<p><b>Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:</b></p>  <p>Joost Mönks</p>	<p><b>Date and place:</b></p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> August 2022 Geneva, Switzerland</p>

## 9. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

<p><b>Space reserved for the organisation</b></p>	
<p>Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team:</p> <p><i>If yes, please give details:</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:</b></p> <p>I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit</p> <p>I accept the findings of the audit</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Name and signature of the organisation's representative:</b></p>  <p>CEO Concern Worldwide</p>	<p><b>Date and place:</b></p> <p>16 August 2022 Dublin</p>

## Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale\*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p><b>Score 0:</b> indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Independent verification:</b> major weakness.</li> <li>• <b>Certification:</b> major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issue or immediate suspension of certificate.</li> </ul>
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p><b>Score 1:</b> indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Independent verification:</b> minor weakness</li> <li>• <b>Certification:</b> minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).</li> </ul>
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p><b>Score 2:</b> indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Independent verification and certification:</b> observation.</li> </ul>
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p><b>Score 3:</b> indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Independent verification and certification:</b> conformity.</li> </ul>
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p><b>Score 4:</b> indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

\* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020

## Appeal

In case of disagreement with the decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 days after being informed of the decision. HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 10 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform HQAI in writing within 30 days after being informed of the proposed solution, of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will constitute a panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. These will strive to come to a decision within 30 days.

*The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeal Procedure.*