

Concern Worldwide

Renewal Audit – Summary Report – 2024/09/16

1. General information

1.1 Organisation			1.2 Audit team	
Type	Mandates	Verified	Lead auditor	Daniel Rogers
<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	Second auditor	Catherine Blunt
			Third auditor	
			Observer	
			Expert	
			Witness / other participants	
Legal registration		International NGO		
Head Office location		Dublin, Ireland		
Total number of organisation staff		3,940		

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS:2014 Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit cycle	Third audit cycle
Type of audit	Certification renewal
Scope of the audit	The organisation operating from its Head Office (Dublin), Country Offices that implement Concern Worldwide programmes, as well as affiliate offices in the UK, United States and South Korea.
Focus of the audit	All areas of the CHS with a focus on the Observations and Corrective Actions from the previous Renewal Audit in 2022.

1.4 Sampling*

Sampling Unit	Country Programme
Total number of Country Programme sites included in the sampling	24 ¹
Total number of sites for onsite visit	2
Total number of sites for remote assessment	3
Sampling Unit Selection	
Random Sampling – remote/onsite	Purposive Sampling – remote/onsite
Country	Country
Somalia – not selected	Liberia selected/remote

¹ Concern is active in 26 countries, Burundi & Rwanda, and Syria & Iraq are managed jointly, totalling 24 country programmes.

South Sudan – selected/remote	
Bangladesh – selected/onsite	
Kenya – selected/onsite	
Pakistan – selected/remote	

Any other sampling considerations:

Sampling recommendations from the Renewal Audit 2022 have been partially implemented. It was recommended that two full onsite country programme visits occurred at this audit due to the lack of onsite visits at the Renewal Audit and this was achieved. However, the recommendation to include in the sample at least one example of a rapid onset disaster response programme was not possible due to safety and security concerns.

Sampling risks identified:

Both programmes in the on-site sample are large, well-resourced and frequently visited by donors. For these reasons, while the programmes visited are highly representative, they do not fully represent all of Concern's programming. As a mitigation measure, auditors selected a complementary sample of country programmes for remote assessment. Given the management of the sampling risks identified, the auditors are confident in the findings and conclusions of this audit based on the sample.

**It is important to 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 Opening Meeting

Date	27 th May 2024	Number of participants	22
Location	Dublin Ireland (Remote)	Any substantive issues arising	None

2.2 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or Remote
Ireland Dublin Head Office (HO)	2024/05/27-31	Remote
Bangladesh Country Office (CO) Dhaka	2024/06/09	Onsite
Bangladesh Cox's Bazar Rohingya Camps	2024/06/10-13	Onsite
Kenya CO Nairobi	2024/06/17	Onsite
Kenya Turkana County	2024/06/18-21	Onsite
Pakistan CO Islamabad	2024/07/02	Remote
Liberia CO Monrovia	2024/07/03	Remote
South Sudan	Document Review only	

2.3 Interviews

Level / Position of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Head Office			
Management	7	5	Remote
Staff	4	3	Remote
Total	11	8	
Country-programmes			
Management	4	3	Onsite and remote
Staff	7	7	Onsite
Partner staff	2	9	Onsite
Local county stakeholders		4	Onsite
Total number of interviewees	35	39	

2.4 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
FGD#1 - Community Leaders (Mahji and Imams), Project 6/7, Bangladesh		9	Onsite
FGD#2 - Mothers, Integrated Nutrition Project 6/7, Bangladesh	7		Onsite
FGD#3 - Fathers community nutrition class, Project 6/7, Bangladesh		10	Onsite
FGD#4 - Mothers Support Group host community (partner), Project 7, Bangladesh	7		Onsite
FGD#5 - Father's Support Group host community (partner), Project 7, Bangladesh		6	Onsite
FGD#6 - Mothers Support Group (partner), Project 7, Bangladesh.	7		Onsite
FGD#7 - Female volunteers (partner) Project 7, Bangladesh	5		Onsite
FGD #8 - Male volunteers Integrated Nutrition Project 6, Bangladesh		9	Onsite
FGD #9 - Female participants Integrated Nutrition Project 6, Bangladesh	9		Onsite
FGD#10 - Complaints Response Mechanism committee members, Project 13, Kenya	2	3	Onsite
FGD#11 - (Cash for Work) conditional cash transfers recipients, Project 13, Kenya	7		Onsite
FGD12 - (CFW) conditional cash transfers recipients Project 13, Kenya		7	Onsite
FGD#13 - CSA/VSLA members, Project 13, Kenya	9		Onsite
FGD#14-CSA/VSLA members, Project 13, Kenya		6	Onsite

FGD#15-Unconditional cash transfer recipients and livestock vaccination, partner, Project 9, Kenya	12		Onsite
FGD#16-Unconditional cash transfer recipients and livestock vaccination, Partner, Project 9, Kenya		8	Onsite
FGD#17-CRM committee members, Project 9, Kenya	1	3	Onsite
Total number of participants	66	61	127

2.5 Closing Meeting

Date	2024/07/08	Number of participants	19
Location	Ireland Dublin (remote)	Any substantive issues arising	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

Concern Worldwide is a non-governmental, international aid organisation with its head office in Dublin, Ireland. 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 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 programmes² 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, and in a growing number of protracted crises.

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.

Concern's global strategic plan runs from 2021-2025, and the organisation will begin a new strategy development process in late 2024. This will follow a 2024 'policy review', a wide-reaching process the organisation undergoes every 10 years, which will review the organisation's theory of change, results, impact, and overall mission and vision as well as its core policy documents.

3.2 Governance and management structure

There have been no significant changes in the governance, strategic direction or financial position of the organisation since the last audit in 2022.

In 2023 Concern appointed a new CEO and during 2023 and 2024 there have been a number of personnel changes within the organisation's senior leadership positions. However there have not been any significant structural changes to the management or governance of the organisation during this period. In 2023 Concern had a total expenditure of EUR 223 million.

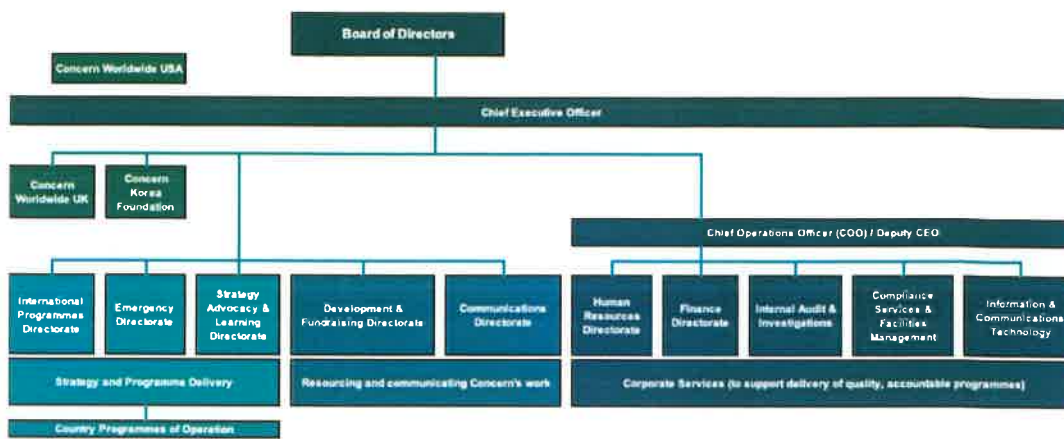
Concern is governed by a board of directors which meet at least six times a year. There are four standing committees: finance, programme monitoring and evaluation, audit and risk, and remuneration and succession. Concern's board is elected by Concern members at annual general meetings. Board members 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

² Concern is active in 26 countries, Burundi & Rwanda, and Syria & Iraq are managed jointly, totalling 24 country programmes.

Learning. Concern has a Safeguarding and Protection Unit (with its own Director) located within the Emergency Directorate.

Concern's HQ organisational chart:



3.3 Work with partner organisations

Concern works in coordination with other organisations, including local government entities and is aiming to increase its partnership work. To this end they have hired new HO localisation and partnership staff, developed a new Position Paper on Localisation (2023), are developing a localisation process map and building on the current local partnership strategy. Concern is likely to develop a reviewed localisation and partnership strategy in 2025. 60% of Country Offices (COs) have partnership strategies and targets for partnerships and localisation.

Concern aims to grant 25% of its income to local and national NGOs by 2027, the approach to achieve this overall target will vary by country depending on contexts. All but one CO work with local partners but the level of engagement varies greatly. In 2023 Concern granted €25.4 million to local partners, which was 10.8% of total turnover (13% of programme spend). In 2022 it was €23.5m or 9.3% of turnover.

Concern's approach to working with local partners entails a comprehensive partner capacity assessment which is conducted as a joint assessment exercise between Concern and the partner which then leads to the development of a capacity development plan. Concern has a robust framework for identifying, assessing and supporting local partners.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Internal quality assurance and risk management mechanisms

Concern has strong internal quality assurance and risk management systems in place and these remain largely unchanged at the time of this audit. Concern's Strategy, Advocacy and Learning Unit (SAL), responsible for providing technical advice is one of Concern's key quality assurance mechanisms. It spans both development and humanitarian programmes and provides in-country support for program proposal development, design, evaluation and learning. The Country Annual Programme Progress Report (APPR) is a self-reporting process undertaken by COs on an annual basis and continues to systematically monitor key elements of the CHS. A two-way dialogue and reflective learning session is now conducted on the Report which includes Regional Directors, advisors, desk officers and the COs.

Organisational risk registers operate at both HO and CO level. The organisational risk register at HO level is reviewed by the Board every six months and now includes climate change. The organisation is addressing the risk of high staff turnover by implementing an Equality Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy. Concern is also in the process of introducing a Global Banding Framework which seeks to align jobs and salaries across the organisation and to better address salary benchmarking within the sector. The organisation's internal auditors are regionally based and continue to provide risk-based audits of CO programmes at a minimum of once every 3 years and annually for higher risk countries. Recommendations are tracked and followed up on a quarterly basis.

The establishment of the Protection and Safeguarding Unit (PSU) noted at the last audit provides assurance that risks related to protection and safeguarding are addressed and managed. The Unit has recently updated the PSSF (Protection and Safeguarding Strategic Framework) and this is monitored by the Board on a six-monthly basis. The Unit provides support to COs for the establishment and operation of effective Feedback and Complaints Response Mechanisms (FCRMs).

Issues which deserve attention and effect the functioning of Concern's quality management systems include difficulties for CO staff in accessing previous learning reports. Weaknesses exist in updating the HO FCRM Policy and CO Staff Handbook to reflect Safeguarding and other policy changes.

4.2 Level of application of the CHS

Concern's board, management and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to the CHS. Concern maintains good performance in its application of the standard and takes action to address observations and non-conformities and monitors its own progress.

Concern continues to perform well in terms of gender and diversity, and localisation. Concern's performance on do no harm has increased, with a significant increase in the area of PSEAH in particular. A number of the changes and improvements made to PSEAH systems and processes which were noted during the previous audit have been seen to take effect leading to this improved performance.

Concern's Position Paper on Disability (2024) affirms the organisation's commitment to disability inclusion. This commitment is clearly articulated at head office level but is not yet fully operationalised at Country Office level in terms of collection of disability disaggregated data or programme design. Staff and partners demonstrate a shared commitment to women's participation and have the technical skills and capacities to deliver gender sensitive programming.

Concern has taken actions across the organisation to address open CARs including revising its Environmental Strategy, employing staff to support CO implementation and monitoring of the Environment Strategy, review of supply chains and mandatory carbon audits, and revitalisation of an Environmental Working Group at HO. However, shortcomings remain in terms of a systematic process for monitoring environmental impact of programmes. Tools and training have not been developed for staff and partners, and wide disparities exist between COs performance in this area. Concern addressed the minor CAR on 3.4 by producing a policy on exit and transition which brings clarity to the organisation's position, as well as a number of concrete actions to address the specific gaps observed in the previous audit. Concern addressed the minor CAR on 9.4 through enhanced support to COs and increased monitoring of CO practice in the area of environmental impact.

This audit:

- closes two Minor CARs (2022-3.4 and 2022-9.4)
- raises two Minor CARs (2024-5.4 and 2024-8.5)
- clears 12 observations
- maintains 6 observations
- notes 7 new observations

4.3 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Strong points and areas for improvement	Average score*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant Concern remains strongly committed to the humanitarian principles of impartiality, humanity, independence and neutrality. Concern continues to have processes in place to ensure that it conducts ongoing risk and context analysis. Assistance is provided based on the needs and capacities of people affected by crisis, and this is systematically assessed and used to inform programme and project design. Concern has policies in place to ensure that programmes are based on an impartial and ongoing assessment of needs and contexts, including a focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Concern adapts its programmes to changing needs, capacities and contexts.	2.8

Concern disaggregates data by sex and age, and sometimes but not always by disability. Concern has recently developed a new disability position paper (2024). However, Concern does not systematically collect or use disability disaggregated data to inform programme design and implementation.

Feedback from communities:

Communities indicate that support from Concern is highly relevant to their most important and urgent needs, often providing life-saving interventions. Communities also indicate that Concern considers their needs and priorities when designing programmes and adjusts programmes to communities changing priorities. Communities report that Concern targets the most vulnerable and that its processes for doing so are well communicated, fair and transparent.

Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely

2.4

Concern's programmes are generally considered to be effective and timely. Concern has an effective system for rapidly deploying staff and expertise in response to emergencies.

Concern's organisational capacity is sufficient to meet its programme commitments, with an effective system able to provide technical support to COs when it is needed. Concern staff are able to access a wealth of programme and technical guidance. Concern's programmes are guided by policies, tools and expertise to ensure programmes are well designed and implemented. Concern's online library of technical guidance is not always kept fully updated.

While Concern's programmes are generally thoroughly and systematically monitored, in some instances project monitoring is not always conducted as frequently as required. Where needed Concern adapts and adjusts programmes based on changing needs and context. Concern makes use of a 'crisis modifier' approach, an example of good practice which allows for rapid response and adaptation of programmes when needed.

Concern has effective systems in place for the referral of unmet needs, although feedback is not always given to communities in relation to the requests received.

Feedback from communities:

Communities indicate that Concern delivers highly effective programmes which are producing positive impacts on their lives and livelihoods. Communities also report that Concern adapts its programmes based on feedback and suggestions, and that overall they are an organisation which makes timely decisions and responds to their needs in a timely manner. However, some project participants report delays in accessing certain services.

Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects

2.8

Concern ensures that programmes are designed and implemented in a way which prevents negative effects. Needs, and risk assessments are used, and Concern works well with others to identify capacities and understand local contexts and design and adapt responses accordingly.

Concern's programmes support capacities of communities to withstand future shocks. Concern is effective in strengthening capacities of individuals and communities, volunteers and project participants, and of local and national governments. Concern systematically identifies and acts upon unintended negative effects of its programmes and ensures that programmes are designed and implemented to keep project participants safe.

Concern has established a joint system for assessing the capacity of local partners and for developing plans to address gaps and weaknesses. Concern is increasingly deliberate in its approach to partnership and works with skilled and capable partners in many instances. Where this is the case, Concern is making efforts to increase partners' role in their programmes. However, while Concern often has capable partners, they are not always being fully utilised to achieve Concern's stated partnership ambitions. Concern's organisational approach to partnership and localisation is evolving, but is not yet consistently applied, with considerable variance seen in their approach to partnership between COs.

Feedback from communities:

Communities report increased resilience and that their capacities have been strengthened due to support from Concern. They also often report that they are not reliant on Concern and will continue to support themselves without

continued support from Concern. Communities are not always aware of when Concern's projects and programmes will end.

Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback	2.7
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Concern communicates with stakeholders and communities initially at programme commencement and thereafter via regular cluster, local authority and traditional community gatherings. Trained volunteers who are from the communities and speak the local language are the main conduit through which Concern informs, educates and interacts with programme participants. However, field staff make regular visits to gather informal feedback, support local volunteers and ensure that communities are engaged and actively participating in the programme.

The organisation mainly communicates with programme participants verbally. Additionally, culturally appropriate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials are used to supplement messaging and are in evidence in the field.

Concern and its partners provide information about the organisation, its programmes and the behaviours expected of staff at programme kick off, through regular accountability information sessions by staff, posters at field level and in checklists for volunteers.

Issues which require addressing are that while Concern implements regular satisfaction feedback mechanisms, these not always disaggregated by disability. In addition, most but not all communities are informed of the expected behaviours of staff.

Feedback from communities:

Communities say that Concern and its partners communicate with them mainly through volunteers, either door to door or in small educational gatherings. They state that staff and partners attend larger traditional gatherings and regularly ask for their feedback on the services provided and that Concern generally gets back to them quickly on issues raised. Communities say that they are informed on what the organisation and its partners offer and mainly receive information verbally and sometimes through printed visual material. Most but not all communities said that they are told that staff and volunteers should behave respectfully and that services are free.

Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed	2.3
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Concern monitors all COs FCRMs via annual self-reporting, in which countries assess themselves against all indicators in this Commitment. The data is then compiled into an annual report and action plan. Concern has a comprehensive PSSF (Protection and Safeguarding Strategic Framework) plan which has been recently updated and is monitored by the Board on a six-monthly basis. HO has developed IEC materials for promoting the organisation's commitments to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) and these are observed in the field.

The organisation has cleared observations from the previous audit including lack of complaint referral processes, development of an Investigations Manual, and standardisation of country tools for in-country complaint recording and analysis.

Concern has dedicated resources to complaints handling and has made significant progress in this area. However, issues that require addressing include finalising and releasing tools and resources to support partners, the lack of community involvement in the design and implementation of CO FCRMs and ensuring that staff and volunteers verbally convey Concern's organisational commitments on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. A weakness is that Concern's FCRM policy guidance is out of date and does not include reference to recent organisational safeguarding updates.

Feedback from communities:

Communities all have access to a functioning complaints system and are aware of how to make a complaint. Some but not all CRMs involve them in implementation of the Mechanism by having a local complaints committee that informs Concern about a complaint. Communities express appreciation of the rapid response on issues raised and demonstrate understanding of the scope and different means to make a complaint. They say that they are aware that if staff behave badly, they must tell Concern. They have clearly been told that staff must not ask for money for the programme but have not been uniformly informed that this applies to sexual favours.

Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary	3.2
<p>Concern remains strongly committed to working with others and to ensuring that its interventions are effective, coordinated and complimentary with the efforts of other actors. Concern makes efforts to actively engage in cluster and other sectoral coordination bodies and systems, technical working groups, and forums in the countries in which it works both locally and nationally. Concern makes similar efforts at regional and global levels. These efforts are deliberate in order to not only coordinate but also amplify Concern's efforts, and these efforts are seen to be generally effective.</p> <p>Concern works in coordination with other INGOs, national and local NGOs, local and national authorities and UN agencies, all of whom report that they value Concern's professionalism and technical expertise. Concern often engages in joint assessments and context analysis exercises, and shares and utilises joint assessments. Partners and external stakeholders report that Concern is considered a valued partner in joint responses and works well in consortium and partnership roles.</p> <p>Detailed context analysis enables Concern to clearly identify and understand the roles, mandates and obligations of different actors. Concern often works closely with local government authorities, while maintaining its independence and respecting humanitarian principles.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities:</p> <p>Communities report that Concern is seen to coordinate and work well with partners and other organisations and they do not report any duplication of efforts.</p>	
Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve	2.7
<p>Concern has a prominent role globally, Concern shares learning globally and at country and local government levels, leading innovation in Concern's technical areas of expertise e.g. Health and Nutrition. Concern has a knowledge hub on its website which makes available Concern evaluations and research conducted, for the broader community as well as the sector. Programmes are designed using lessons learnt and prior experience, from both programmes implemented locally and globally via the HO based technical team, and Concern Communities of Practice. Learning from complaints and feedback is generally incorporated into programme changes.</p> <p>Issues that require addressing include that staff state that mechanisms for recording knowledge and experience at the CO level are not readily accessible when required. Monitoring and learning from mitigation measures to address environmental issues raised in initial programme analyses does not systematically occur across all Concern programmes.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities:</p> <p>Some communities say that feedback they provide to Concern is incorporated into the programme and changes made, however others who have been in Concern and its partners programmes for many years said that few changes had been made over that time. Stakeholders evidenced examples of learning and innovation shared by Concern which fed into programme design and implementation.</p>	
Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably	2.7
<p>Concern has highly systematised induction and feedback processes which are implemented at all levels of the organisation. The availability of learning opportunities for staff to improve their skills and competencies is a strategic priority of Concern. Staff have access to dedicated on-line courses, including mandatory training on areas such as Safeguarding and the Code of Conduct and other optional courses to develop management and communication skills. National and HO staff are fully aware of career retention, career progression and mobility opportunities within Concern. The newly devised Global Banding Framework will create job parity across the organisation and brings with it the prospect of increased wages to most employees. Concern is implementing an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework to progress workplace equality and this is being implemented at CO level.</p> <p>An issue which requires addressing is that not all staff at the field level are aware of the confidential wellbeing services available to them. A weakness is that not all the CO Staff Handbooks are up to date.</p>	
<p>Feedback from communities:</p>	

Programme participants find staff and volunteers helpful, respectful and skilful. Community volunteers in some programmes express dissatisfaction with their volunteering conditions and pay.

Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose	2.8
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Concern regularly updates its financial policies and conducts webinars to ensure financial controllers at COs are on board with new developments. The organisation has a well-resourced and systematic logistics capacity building programme for COs, which partners can attend.

The organisation has a regionally based internal audit team which conducts risk based internal audits on a regular basis, devising detailed reports with recommendations which are monitored.

The organisation has made significant progress in the last year on the revitalisation and implementation of its Environmental Strategy which is now monitored at Board level on a six-monthly basis. Progress is most evident across Concern offices, where carbon audits are mandatory at CO level. The organisation has developed some guidance and tools for COs to assist them to consider the impact of programmes on the environment.

An issue requiring attention is that Concern does not always monitor if Environmental Impact Assessments are occurring on larger WASH and construction and engineering programmes.

Feedback from communities:

Communities say that Concern uses resources wisely and is not wasteful.

** 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	Status	Resolution timeframe
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	Closed	
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	Closed	
2024-5.4 The HO documented complaints handling process for communities is not up to date with Concern's Safeguarding policies.	Minor	New	2027 RA
2024-8.5 Not all Staff Handbooks at CO level are up to date with relevant HO policies and procedures.	Minor	New	2027 RA
Total Number of open CARs			2


6. Lead auditor recommendation

CERTIFICATION

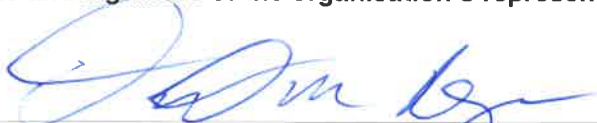
In our opinion, Concern has demonstrated that it is taking necessary steps to address the CARs identified in the previous audit and continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

We recommend renewal of certification.	
Name and signature of lead auditor:  Daniel Rogers	Date and place: 28 July 2024, Brighton, UK

7. HQAI decision

Certificate renewed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issued <input type="checkbox"/> Preconditioned (Major CARs)
Start date of the current certification cycle: 2024/10/11 Next audit before 2025/10/11	
Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director: Désirée Walter 	Date and place: Geneva, 16 September 2024

8. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation	
Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team: <i>If yes, please give details:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings: I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit I accept the findings of the audit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Name and signature of the organisation's representative: 	Date and place: <i>Dublin</i> <i>30/09/2024</i>

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the quality assurance decision, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 workdays after being informed of the decision.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will confirm that the basis for the appeal meets the appeals process requirements. The Chair will then constitute an Appeal Panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. The panel will strive to come to a decision within 45 workdays.

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

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>Score 0: 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"> • Independent verification: major weakness. • Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: 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"> • Independent verification: minor weakness • Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: 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"> • Independent verification and certification: observation.
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>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: conformity.
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>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020

