

How to access the Sphere Handbook

The Sphere Handbook is free to everyone



Sphere remains fully committed to providing a voluntary set of standards which are available for free as a PDF download, online or via a smartphone app. Print versions can be ordered at a cost-recovery rate at developmentbookshop.com/sphere.

Languages



The 2018 Sphere Handbook is produced in English, Spanish, French and Arabic. Translations into more languages will be done with the support of Sphere members and the wider Sphere network in the months and years to come. These will be available on the website as they are completed. Earlier versions of the Sphere Handbook are available in 39 languages.

Explore the Interactive Handbook online



The Handbook is presented online for fast navigation using a menu system and search function. It includes supplementary resources and references. A new digital platform brings the Handbook to life.

- **Dynamic – The online Handbook becomes a living document**

While the standards themselves remain unchanged between editions, practice evolves and lessons continue to be learned. The Interactive Handbook will become a repository as work evolves, supported by technical briefs and new guidance as it is developed.

- **Interactive – User comments**

From 2019, users will be able to add comments in the Interactive Handbook, sharing experience of working with the standards, providing evidence or case studies and reacting to other users' contributions.

Learning and Training



Whether you are a learner or a trainer, we have resources to support you. Online learning modules and a suite of training materials are available, including an emergency training kit and a longer menu for workshop sessions.

About Sphere:

What started as a project by a few committed individuals 20 years ago is now a community of purpose with broad ownership and shared principles.

Sphere was created in 1997 by a group of humanitarian organisations to improve the quality of their own humanitarian response and to be accountable for their actions.

The Sphere Handbook is the oldest initiative in the field of humanitarian standards. It has become an essential reference for a growing community of practitioners working in humanitarian action around the globe.



Join Sphere!

Sphere has entered a new chapter by becoming an independent membership organisation, registered in 2016.

With the possibility of **Sphere membership**, the commitment to Sphere is taken to a new level. As Sphere members, you can determine the strategic direction of the organisation and play an active role in the future of the standards.



Learn



Act



Connect

The Sphere Handbook

Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response



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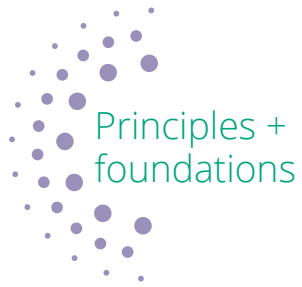
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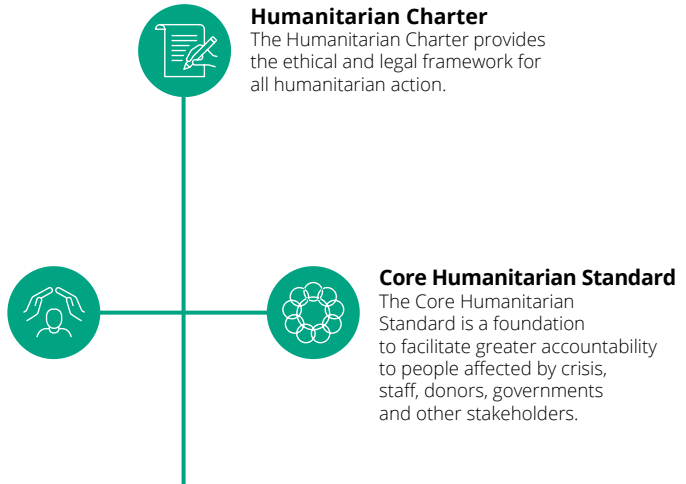
Welcome to the Sphere Handbook

From humanitarian principles to humanitarian practice:

When crisis strikes, people have the right to assistance, the right to life with dignity, the right to protection and security, and the right to fully participate in decisions related to their recovery.



Principles + foundations



Humanitarian Charter
The Humanitarian Charter provides the ethical and legal framework for all humanitarian action.

Core Humanitarian Standard
The Core Humanitarian Standard is a foundation to facilitate greater accountability to people affected by crisis, staff, donors, governments and other stakeholders.

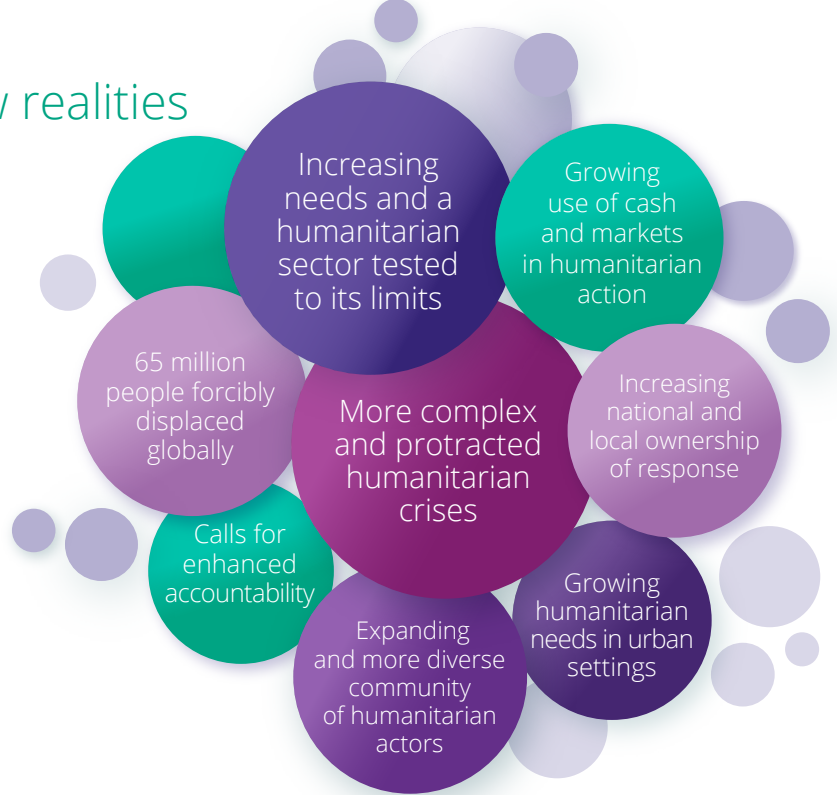
Protection Principles
The Protection Principles apply to any actor in humanitarian operations. They focus on reducing people's exposure to risks and threats, ensuring access to impartial assistance, helping people recover from violations and supporting them to claim their rights.

Standards



The four technical chapters translate the principles and commitments in the foundation chapters into concrete standards, indicators and guidance. The Sphere Standards state what the rights to water, shelter, food, and healthcare mean in practice and help to prioritise response.

New realities



- Increasing needs and a humanitarian sector tested to its limits
- Growing use of cash and markets in humanitarian action
- 65 million people forcibly displaced globally
- More complex and protracted humanitarian crises
- Increasing national and local ownership of response
- Calls for enhanced accountability
- Expanding and more diverse community of humanitarian actors
- Growing humanitarian needs in urban settings

Sphere makes sure humanitarian action is anchored in a principled and ethical framework. Sphere 2018 addresses these new realities within a standards framework that supports meaningful accountability to affected populations, partners, governments, staff and donors in an integrated way.

Focus on people

Sphere has always put people at the centre of humanitarian action, recognising that their active engagement is essential to ensure assistance meets people's needs and supports them in their recovery.

The 2018 Handbook focuses even more on strengthening community engagement and measuring the quality of a programme through this engagement.

Support to local action

Supporting and enhancing local ownership of response and recovery is a key approach in all four technical chapters. Successful interventions in health, nutrition, hygiene promotion, livelihoods support and shelter depend on working with, and through, national, local and community structures.

Context-sensitive programming

The 2018 Handbook is even more focused on contextualising the standards to apply them to their full potential. A new flow chart supports analysis and decision-making in context.

New standards and guidance

- Humanitarian experience, learning and evidence have contributed new elements to this edition:
- A restructured Shelter and Settlement chapter, including security of tenure and explicitly considering long-term displacement.
 - A new section on using cash-based assistance and supply chain management.
 - A new standard on WASH in healthcare settings, highlighting the role of communities and facilities in disease outbreaks.
 - A new standard on sexual violence and clinical management of rape, highlighting the critical role of prevention, treatment and support.
 - A new standard on palliative care, reflecting changes in global demographics, protracted displacement, non-communicable disease prevalence and protracted settings.