

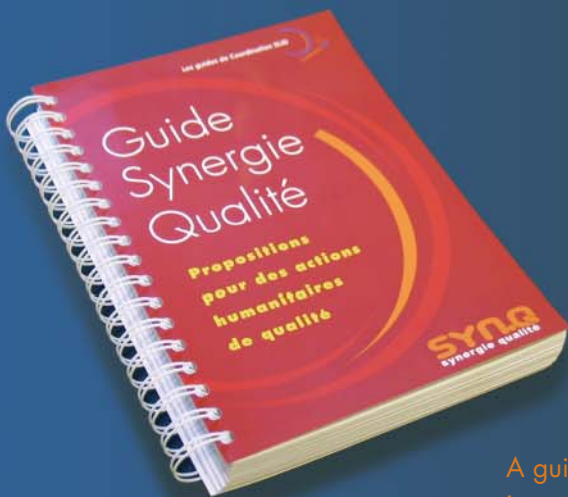
Synergie Qualité

A multidimensional approach defining the scopes of quality at NGOs

- Humanitarian ethics
- Governance within the agency
- Human resources management
- Project cycle (Quality COMPAS)
- The role of the affected populations

A methodology to help in implementing procedures of quality within NGOs. It is based on:

- ◀ the assertion of major principles for each of the above 5 themes;
- ◀ the right questions to ask oneself, rather than standards to apply;
- ◀ warning signs to anticipate problems and things that may go wrong.



A guide intended for international solidarity actors

Why a new approach to the quality of humanitarian actions?

The conviction behind this approach is that the quality of international solidarity actions must be grasped in a multi-dimensional way. Quality includes ethical principles, organisational factors at the headquarters of NGOs, technical know-how, and forms of human relations between members of the NGO, and between these members and the local actors (beneficiary populations and Southern partners). This conviction led to the formulating of a coherent set of principles and methods based on five themes:

- ▲ humanitarian ethics
- ▲ governance within the agency
- ▲ human resources management
- ▲ project cycle
- ▲ the role of the affected populations

The ambition of the Synergie Qualité approach is to help NGOs implement their own 'quality approach' by suggesting that they incorporate these five elements.

Furthermore, Synergie Qualité asserts that quality criteria vary according to the contexts in which the actions occur. This is why this approach deals with the right questions to ask oneself rather than with responses to apply whatever the context one is in.

At the same time, this approach favours the risk-prevention way of thinking. It gives keys for identifying possible dysfunctions, in particular at each stage of the project cycle.

Synergie Qualité does not replace other approaches to the quality of humanitarian actions; it acts as an additional approach.

For whom is the Synergie Qualité guide intended?

- for managers of emergency and development NGOs;
- for people in charge of human resources at NGOs;
- for people in charge of the design, monitoring and assessment of projects;
- for the teams in the field.

What are the contents of the Synergie Qualité guide?

The guide is made up of five chapters that can be read independently from one another. Each chapter corresponds to a theme that NGOs must incorporate into the definition of their approach for improving the quality of their actions: **humanitarian ethics, governance within the agency, human resources management, project cycle, role of the affected populations.**

For each team, the guide presents:

- ▲ major principles: *The internal operations and the external relations of the NGO respect and promote its values;*
- ▲ quality criteria: *The project responds to a demonstrated need;*
- ▲ examples of good practices: *Setting up joint committees made up of trustees and employees with regards to the major events of the agency's life;*
- ▲ key questions to ask oneself: *What do you do at your agency – be it at the headquarters or in the field – to acquire operational knowledge of the legal frameworks in which you take action?*

Who wrote the guide?

Coordination SUD, the national platform of French international solidarity NGOs, coordinated the publishing of the guide.

A steering committee made up of several organisations – Action Contre La Faim, Handicap International, Médecins du Monde, French Red Cross, Solidarités – determined the major orientations and monitored the editorial work by the specialists who helped in writing the book.

1. How to incorporate ethics in an agency

The chapter on **humanitarian ethics** is based on the conviction that collective ethics can exist – that of all the people involved in the NGO's projects.

It proposes ideas for action that make it possible to incorporate the ethical dimension within the actions and decisions of an NGO.

- ▲ by writing the agency's own ethical reference texts, in which at least three absolutely essential humanitarian action principles must be mentioned: independence, humanity, impartiality;
- ▲ by incorporating these principles in the NGO's decision-making process;
- ▲ by carrying out 'ethical rereadings' of the NGO's actions after the event.

2. What kind of governance within the agency?

The definition of the objective of governance adopted by Synergie Qualité is: 'to ensure, in the long term, the social mission of the NGO'. With this regard, the guide champions the governance model called 'partnership value'; i.e., taking into account the expectations of all the stakeholders of the agencies.

The chapter sets forth and illustrates five principles of good **governance within the agency**.

They stress three criteria:

- ▲ the consistency between the actions of an NGO and the values it bears,
- ▲ the relations between the elected bodies and the management teams,
- ▲ the circulation of information between all the stakeholders of the NGO.

3. What kind of human resources management?

The chapter on the **management of human resources** is made up of six independent parts, each of which corresponds to a human resource management process:

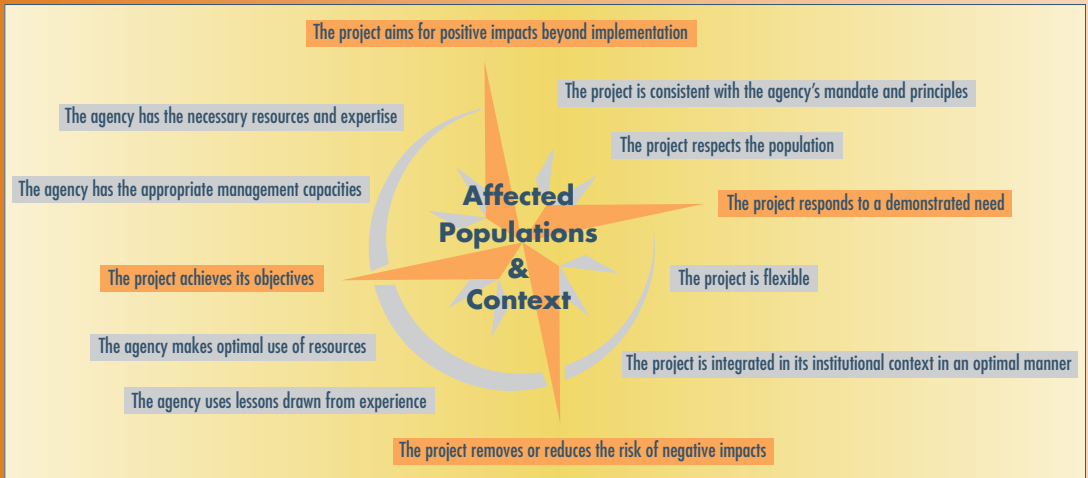
- ▲ human resources policy and strategy,
- ▲ recruitment,
- ▲ legal management of jobs,
- ▲ remuneration,
- ▲ maintaining assessment,
- ▲ training.

For each process, quality criteria are set out, as well as a series of 'key questions' that the people in charge of human resources are urged to ask themselves. With prevention in mind, these questions help to identify and then avoid dysfunctions in human resources management.

Synergie Qualité strives to consider, for each process, the problems tied to expatriate volunteers, to national personnel and to the employees of the agencies' headquarters.

4. How to run a project and assess it

This chapter presents the 'Quality COMPAS' method developed by Groupe URD (Urgence, réhabilitation, développement). Quality COMPAS proposes 12 quality criteria for projects. The method consists in referring to key questions at each phase of the project cycle and during its assessment. Based on the responses given, the actors of the project can evaluate their strong points and weak points with regards to 12 quality criteria.



The CD-ROM that presents the Quality COMPAS method is included with the guide.

5. What role must the beneficiary populations play in the projects?

Synergie Qualité asserts that participation by the affected populations in the projects in the field is one of the essential points for the quality of projects.

The chapter on the **role of the affected populations** provides the keys for seeing to it that participatory approaches in the field are set up, not as methodological gimmicks, but as the result of individual and institutional attitudes and choices.

With this regards, it provides concrete responses to the following questions:

- ▲ How are satisfaction of the affected population and quality of humanitarian action connected?
- ▲ How are participation by the affected population and satisfaction of their needs connected?
- ▲ What type of relationship between the aid actors and the populations is conducive to quality in humanitarian actions?
- ▲ How can participation by the affected population be put into motion in emergency situations?

This chapter has been written by Groupe URD based on its research for the overall study on the participation by affected populations in humanitarian action, for the ALNAP network (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance).

How to obtain the Synergie Qualité guide:

- Upon request from Coordination SUD
- An order form can be downloaded from the Coordination SUD website:
www.coordinationsud.org Click on the item 'Éthique et qualité'.
- The guide can be downloaded, chapter by chapter, from the website:
www.coordinationsud.org Click on the item 'Éthique et qualité'.
- An English-language version of the Synergie Qualité guide will be available shortly.

Coordination SUD - Solidarité Urgence Développement

14, passage Dubail

75010 Paris

Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 72 93 72 / (0)1 44 72 80 03

Fax: +33 (0)1 44 72 93 73

e-mail : sud@coordinationsud.org et ziegle@coordinationsud.org

www.coordinationsud.org



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