Key themes to inform the institutionalisation process, with practical considerations

Rationale for theme	Considerations and what it may look like in practice
1. It's time to unite the sector	
The sector's diversity might be the reason for the lack of coordination and a coherent understanding of development and transformation. It's time to act collectively to become future-ready.	The idea is to synthesise the country's development priorities and align sector actions on a national level, with a single institution that serves all actors and to which anyone can belong. Such an institution should bring social partners together, ensure that different humanitarian endeavours complement one another, create a vision for the future of South Africa, and develop programme interventions that are aligned with national development priorities.
2. It's time to organise the sector	
A national institution should represent the interests and voices of the entire humanitarian ecosystem – including participants from the public, private and social sectors – if it is to be successful.	**Several factors must be considered in the organisation process:** • How to categorise the stakeholder value chain across demand, supply and support services. • The format of the institution, e.g. a membership organisation, a professional body or a network/collective. • Proposed roles of the institution (e.g. thought leader, advocate, capacity builder) and the functions that will support role fulfilment (e.g. influencing policy, sharing research, big-picture information, hosting training).
3. It's time to hold the sector accountable	
The importance of accountability and transparency surfaced in different forms during stakeholder engagements.	**Potential ideas:** • Set up a whistleblowing mechanism to deal with unethical practices and unscrupulous behaviour. • Create a code of conduct to promote ethics and governance across the sector. • Create a certification/verification body for organisations and practitioners in the sector. • Promote and encourage performance management, e.g. monitoring and evaluation.
4. It's time to protect the sector	
Resources for the sector are on a downward trajectory, especially with government's failure to provide basic services. An unprotected sector has a limited say in developing policies and resources that influence its work.	The sector must respond and act beyond its mandate and intent to close the funding gap. To acquire the necessary financial resources, it's time to create, influence and tap into new capital structures, with the private sector/capital playing a catalytic role and a nationally representative institution acting as enabler, influencer and facilitator to ensure the mobilisation, coordination and direction of funding.
5. It's time to innovate within the sector	
Instead of trying to save a struggling sector, many stakeholders believe that civil society organisations should be future-ready by building resilience.	The main idea here is to grow and expand existing institutional organisations and create new ones that reflect the way in which the sector has evolved over the years, i.e. from traditional philanthropy rooted in faith and community to corporate initiatives, impact investment and empowerment trusts, to name a few. New approaches to social investment and development must be actively encouraged.
6. It's time to capacitate the sector	
Infrastructure via institutionalisation is critical in supporting the sector's sustainability and providing opportunities for learning, relationship-building and influence.	**Examples of mechanisms a national institution could use to grow the sector:** • Make requests for proposals, quotations and tenders public to bring about transparency. • Facilitate resource flows by sharing funding/fundraising requests and providing matchmaking services. • Create, influence and tap into new, different capital resources and direct them where needed most. • Strengthen the workforce through training and position the sector as a viable career opportunity.
7. It's time to promote the sector	
A national institution should raise the sector's profile as being substantial, legitimate, dynamic, important and vital to a functioning democracy.	**Ideas for promotion:** • Facilitate representation of the sector on existing forums such as Business For South Africa (B4SA), Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) and Nedlac. • Educate the public about the sector's work and impact and facilitate increased giving. • Create and promote a uniquely SA humanitarian/socio-economic development brand and narrative.
8. It's time for a more dynamic sector	
Like the sector, an institution will have to evolve over time, i.e. it won't be realistic to deliver all services from the beginning.	A phased approach, with a clear short- and medium-term roadmap of deliverables, will be most effective. A possible roadmap based on stakeholder input looks as follows: Phase 1: Organise and map the sector to ensure a collective, inclusive approach. Phase 2: Develop an information system and database that can service all stakeholders. Phase 3: Capacitate and strengthen the ecosystem through e.g. research, innovation and funding.
9. It's time to fund the sector	
The question of how the institution will generate an income came up in all stakeholder engagements, with stakeholders agreeing that the value it delivers will determine its income.	**Possible ways in which an institution can generate income:** • Charge fees, such as for membership, and raise funds, including internationally. • Take over certain government services, such as grants and contract work. **Suggestions for value-added services and products that could drive membership and therefore fees include:** • A portal that facilitates information exchange, knowledge sharing and relationship building. • A platform that facilitates transactions between funders/investors and grantees/investees.
10. It's time to measure success	
Stakeholders agreed that the strengthening of the ecosystem should be measured over time.	**Success should be measured across several dimensions. Examples include the sector becoming more:** • Inclusive, with effective mobilisation, facilitation and coordination of resources and efforts. • Sustainable, i.e. having access to adequate financial and non-cash resources. • Resilient, with the knowledge, skills, capacity and competencies that are critical to its growth, development and reputation, despite uncertainties and challenges.