Without the support from the leadership of your organisation and the programme or operation you are supporting, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to ensure your feedback mechanism will be effective. You won’t have the staffing and resources you need, nor will there be consequences if nobody acts on the feedback. We know that a feedback mechanism can only be effective if feedback is discussed, decisions on if and how to act are taken, and the loop is closed with the communities. Collecting information without addressing it sets communities up for disappointment and can even escalate to security issues due to communities’ frustrations.

But how do we achieve the buy-in? Below you can find some practical tips that can help you approach and win over the leaders of your organization and make them advocates for community feedback mechanisms.

1. SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

* **Avoid using jargon** – "CEA", "AAP", "Closing the loop" etc. might not mean much to leaders.
* **Use concrete examples** – Be aware of which areas of work are of particular interest and use specific examples to showcase how community feedback can help in relation to these.
* **Drop important keywords** - Review strategies and plans and use keywords mentioned there when you present your feedback process.

1. ALIGN WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES

* **Understand the leadership's priorities –** You can show how the community feedback mechanism can help achieve their objectives.
* **Integrate into plans and budgets** – Make sure you can input into strategic and operational plans to integrate and budget for feedback components.
* **Complement existing mechanisms** – Find out if there are mechanisms you can tap into or build on, rather than setting up something new that might be duplicative.

1. TALK TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE

* **Understand the power dynamics** – Get an understanding of who is listened to and has an influence on the leadership.
* **Identify champions** – Identify influential colleagues who can advocate on your behalf.
* **Keep your champions informed** – regularly keep your champions informed, provide them with updates and ask them to stress specific points in their meetings with leadership.

1. MENTION THE ADDED VALUE

* **Focus on how it helps** - When starting the discussion on the feedback mechanism, focus on why this will help be more efficient, relevant and trusted.
* **Tailor examples to specific sectors** - It helps to provide concrete examples that speak to the technical sector and leadership, e.g. examples of latrines being built in a wrong location for the WASH colleagues or examples linked to improved efficiency for leadership.
* **Explain how it will make their lives easier** – rather than adding to their busy agendas, the feedback mechanism can save them times and resources by highlighting issues early on.

1. SHOW THE RISKS OF NOT DOING IT

* **Mention what happens if issues escalate** – feedback mechanisms help identify issues and address them quickly. We risk losing trust, access, time, resources, credibility, visibility, and safety if we don't. If we aren’t listening, we won’t be able to identify and address rumours and misinformation.

1. UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION NEEDS AND WAY OF WORKING

* **Discuss how to share the information** – attention spans are short, especially during emergencies, so try to understand how to best and most efficiently share the information with leadership and colleagues.
* **Ask if there are specific areas of interest** – This will help you share the different types of information with those who can take action and avoid overwhelming your leadership and colleagues with too detailed updates.

1. INVOLVE THE LEADERSHIP AND COLLEAGUES IN THE PLANNING

* **Jointly design the mechanism** – do not present a finalised plan to the leadership but involve them in the initial discussions.
* **Discuss everyone's roles and responsibilities** - ownership will only be achieved by treating the feedback mechanism as a joint endeavor and not a standalone CEA activity.

1. PILOT AND SHOW IMPACT

* **Start small** – Choose a context with a strong team and a clear interest and start setting up a pilot system.
* **Demonstrate an effective feedback loop** – once you have your pilot feedback mechanism in place, you can show what it means to go through all steps of a feedback cycle. This will make it more tangible for leaders and colleagues.
* **Scale-up**– when the team is ready and you have the support you need, you can expand the mechanism.

1. DEMONSTRATE HOW IT CAN HELP WITH VISIBILITY AND FUNDING

* **Sell your comparative advantage** – Not all organisations have a direct link to communities, nor do they all have the tools and capacity to systematically record and share the feedback.
* **Explain how you can share with others**– your feedback reports can be shared with other organisations and donors and have often been sought after in emergency responses.
* **Show how you can support fundraising** – donors usually have a high interest in effective feedback mechanisms, as this is a way for them to monitor the impact of what they are funding.

1. MAKE IT THEIR SUCCESS

* **Congratulate them on their idea** - the biggest success we can achieve is for leadership to own the process and see it as their idea.
* **Keep them involved and informed** - Make sure to share short and informative updates with them on a regular basis.
* **Provide quality content for them to share with others** – leadership will value being able to share updates with other organisations and gaining visibility of the efforts