# SOP for Managing a Community Feedback Mechanism

#### 1. Background

The [NS/organisation] has identified Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) as a strategic priority area to support diverse programme delivery and its disaster preparedness and response capacities. A fundamental pillar of CEA centres around establishing, implementing and managing a well-functioning and sustainable feedback mechanism. A community feedback mechanism comprises the tools and processes for:

* Receiving feedback,
* Managing, analysing, and sharing feedback data,
* Ensuring feedback is acted upon and providing communities with a response and informing them of the actions taken.

To ensure the feedback mechanism will be able to support all departments and the vision is agreed and clear to everyone, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed.

The below table provides a basic overview of the main tasks and responsibilities of the staff (including CEA and protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) focal points) and volunteers of [NS/organisation] in collecting, analysing, responding to and acting on community feedback.

#### 2. Objective

The overall objective of the [NS/organisation]’s community feedback mechanism is to ensure an effective response to community members’ questions, suggestions, comments, concerns and complaints. More specifically the feedback mechanism aims to:

* Strengthen accountability to communities we work in by making sure that community members are engaged and their voices are heard and systematically acted upon, meaning that programmes are adapted and improved based on the needs and priorities identified by community members.
* Provide an accessible, responsive and trusted means of two-way communication with community members.
* Ensure questions, suggestions, comments, concerns and complaints shared by community members are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.
* Provide an accessible, safe and confidential mechanism for reporting sensitive complaints, including serious breaches of the [NS/organisation]’s Code of Conduct, threats to security, fraud, corruption, sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA), and child safeguarding concerns, ensuring confidentiality and safety of the feedback provider is always maintained.

#### 3. Overview of the mechanism

The feedback mechanism of [NS/organisation] receives and responds to questions, suggestions, comments, concerns and complaints from community members in [country/region]. Community members can share their feedback on services and support provided by [NS/organisation], including on the behaviour of staff and volunteers.

#### 3a. Communication channels

To share, receive and respond to feedback, a range of different communication channels were identified based on key considerations such as existence and penetration of communication infrastructure, accessibility to everyone in the community, appropriateness for different kinds of feedback received, personal preferences of community members, and ability to maintain confidentiality of reporters and timely responses in the case of sensitive complaints. Based on these factors, the [NS/organisation] offers the following feedback channels:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CHANNEL** | **DESCRIPTION OF CHANNEL** |
| **House to house** |  |
| **Community meetings** |  |
| **Information / help desks** |  |
| **Focus group discussions** |  |
| **Perception survey** |  |
| **Noticeboards** |  |
| **Suggestion box** |  |
| **Call-in radio shows** |  |
| **Telephone hotlines** |  |
| **Messaging apps -**  WhatsApp, Signal etc |  |
| **Social media –** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc |  |
| **SMS** |  |
| **Chatbots**  Automated services, usually within a messaging app, where people information and get an automatic reply |  |
| **E-mail** |  |

#### 3b. Information flow

The feedback mechanism will ensure that everyone involved will receive the information that is relevant to their responsibilities. This enables the questions, suggestions, comments, concerns and complaints received from community members are divided into different types of information including:

* **Operational feedback** – this relates to ongoing projects, programmes, activities, or operations that are being undertaken by the [NS/organisation]
* **Big-picture feedback** – this relates to strategic issues or broader challenges rather than specific projects or interventions carried by the [NS/organisation]

Some of the operational and big-picture feedback might have to be treated separately and/or urgently, depending on it’s sensitive and criticality:

* **Sensitive feedback** – this relates to any information that can put the person sharing it or other people linked to it at risk and needs to be handled with care such as serious breaches of the [NS/organisation]’s Code of Conduct, threats to security, fraud, corruption, sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA), and child safeguarding concerns by [NS/organisation]’s staff or volunteers
* **Critical feedback** – This related to any feedback that requires urgent or timely follow-up

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WHAT | WHO | | | | HOW | | |
| *Sensitive* | *Critical* | | *Routine* | *Sensitive* | *Critical* | *Routine* |
| **Operational feedback** |  |  |  | |  |  |  |
| **Big-picture feedback** |  |  |  | |  |  |  |

#### 3c. Roles, responsibilities and timeframes

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MAIN TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF [NS/ORGANISATION] STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN MANAGING A COMMUNITY FEEDBACK MECHANISM** | | | |
| **Action to be taken** | | **Feedback Type** | **Responsible** | **Timeframe** |
| **Collecting and documenting feedback** | |  |  |  |
| *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is updated and shared with volunteers* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *CEA officer* | *Once a month* |
| *Community feedback is received and recorded during [add methods or channels].* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *Staff and volunteers during regular activities* | *Daily* |
| *When possible initial responses are provided to the individuals or groups who shared feedback* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *Staff and volunteers during regular activities* | *Daily* |
| *All feedback data collection activities are supervised* | | *Routine, Critical* | *Team leader* | *Daily* |
| **Consolidation and prioritisation** | |  |  |  |
| *Feedback forms used during the day by volunteers collecting feedback are handed over to the team lead* | | *Routine, Critical* | *Team leader, staff and volunteers recording feedback* | *Daily* |
| *Feedback data is entered into the feedback database* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA officer, PMER officer, or staff and volunteers tasked with data entry* | *Within one day after receipt of the forms* |
| *Feedback from different locations are consolidated into one central database* | | *Routine, Critical* | *PMER officer* | *Once a week* |
| *Sensitive feedback is handled by specially trained personnel who will escalate it for attention and add it to a separate database with a password protection* | | *Sensitive* | *PGI officer, Safeguarding officer, HR officer, or other staff tasked with handling sensitive feedback* | *Within one day after receipt of the forms* |
| *The feedback data is reviewed and cleaned* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *PMER officer* | *Within one day of data entry* |
| *Feedback which requires individual action is referred* | | *Sensitive, critical* | *CEA or PGI officer* | *Immediately, latest within 24h* |
| *Feedback on the data collection process is provided to data collectors* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Within one week after data collection* |
| *Feedback comments are translated into one language, in instances where feedback is provided in a local language* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *Staff or volunteer tasked with translation* | *Within one week after cleaning of the data* |
| **Analysis and reporting of feedback data** | |  |  |  |
| *Feedback comments are coded to identify common themes and patterns. If coding is not possible, they are grouped together* | | *Routine, Critical, Sensitive* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Once a week* |
| *Coded data is reviewed by a second person to ensure consistency with the coding* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Once a week* |
| *Coded data is explored and disaggregated to identify whether trends or patterns are similar or differ across different ages, gender or other diversity groups* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Once a week* |
| *Data is triangulated with other information sources including [add sources here]* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Once a week* |
| **Sharing and acting on the feedback** | |  |  |  |
| *Feedback is prepared for sharing* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Once a week/month* |
| *Feedback is packaged into information products [add types of information products e.g. dashboard, feedback reports/briefs, newsletters, etc.]* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Once a week/month* |
| *Feedback is shared with stakeholders [add different stakeholders e.g. RCRC partners, Government, communities, Working Groups, etc.]* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA officer and technical sector leads* | *Once a week/month* |
| *Critical feedback is shared directly with the relevant focal points* | | *Critical* | *CEA or PMER officer* | *Immediately, latest within 24h* |
| *Feedback is discussed through different channels [add channels e.g. internal coordination meetings, meetings with volunteers, Working Groups, etc.]* | | *Routine, Critical,* | *Operations/Project and technical leads* | *Once a week/monthly* |
| *Recommendations or actions agreed on during the discussions are documented in the action’s tracker* | | *Routine, Critical* | *Operations/Project and technical leads* | *Once a week/monthly* |
| **Referral of feedback** | |  |  |  |
| *Sensitive feedback and complaints is shared directly with the with the relevant focal points who have the skills and capacity to follow up on the issue [e.g. line manager, leadership, NS integrity line, or IFRC’s integrity line.]* | | *Sensitive* | *Staff tasked with handling sensitive feedback* | *Immediately, latest within 24hrs* |
| *Feedback related to protection concerns or misconduct that is about another agency is reported to their own internal reporting mechanism* | | *Sensitive* | *Staff tasked with handling sensitive feedback* | *Immediately, latest within 24hrs* |
| *The feedback or complaint is reviewed by the focal points in charge of follow up of sensitive feedback and complaints* | | *Sensitive* | *Referral focal points* | *Immediately, latest within 24hrs* |
| *Sensitive feedback is escalated appropriately. In the case of SEA or child safeguarding concerns, medical care and mental health and psychosocial support are immediately offered and referrals to medical care and justice system are made, with the survivor’s/guardian’s consent* | | *Sensitive* | *Leadership, Security officer, PGI officer, Health officer* | *Immediately, investigation launched within 72 hours* |
| *Designated personnel contact the individual who shared the feedback or complaint* | | *Sensitive* | *Referral focal points* | *Latest within 72 hrs* |
| *Where warranted, an investigation into the sensitive complaint is launched* | | *Sensitive* | *Leadership, HR officer, legal advisor, internal or external investigation committee* | *Latest within 1 week* |
| *The referral focal point updates the dashboard containing sensitive feedback or complaints to mark the referral as resolved* | | *Sensitive* | *Referral focal points* | *As soon as the case is referred to an external service or is resolved internally* |
| **Closing the feedback loop** | |  |  |  |
| *The action’s tracker is discussed during coordination meetings and updated* | | *Routine, Critical* | *Operations/Project and technical leads, CEA officer* | *Once a week* |
| *Any updates on actions to respond to the feedback received is discussed during the weekly meeting with volunteers who collect data* | | *Routine, Critical* | *CEA officer* | *Once a week* |
| *For general feedback, information is shared to communities on how the feedback is being addressed. This also includes feedback that cannot be addressed or is still pending action. Channels used include: [e.g., add channels used to share information]* | | *Routine, Critical* | *Staff and volunteers in regular contact with communities, technical colleagues* | *Within two weeks (14 days) of receiving the feedback* |
| *For feedback shared by an individual or related to a specific individual, information is shared directly with the individual. This also includes feedback that cannot be addressed or is still pending action* | | *Routine, Critical,* | *Staff and volunteers in regular contact with communities, technical colleagues* | *Within one week (7 days) of receiving the feedback* |
| *When feedback has been responded too or addressed, this is documented in the actions tracker* | | *Routine, Critical,* | *Staff and volunteers in regular contact with communities, technical colleagues* | *Once a week* |

#### 4. Sensitive feedback

Sensitive feedback can be shared through any channel, no matter if the channel was set up to handle this kind of information or not. When sensitive feedback is received the [NS/organization] is required to refer the information to the relevant focal points who are trained in handling and investigating this type of feedback.

The steps for receiving and referring sensitive feedback is laid out in the **SOP for Sensitive Feedback** which details the channels used to receive sensitive feedback and complaints, the list of focal points for handling sensitive feedback and the referral pathways.

#### 5. Data protection and sharing

Whenever sharing any feedback data, either individual feedback comments or feedback datasets, the [NS/organisation] ensures that data protection laws are adhered to according to internal policies.

#### 6. Review and adaptation

Regular checks are carried out to make sure the feedback mechanism is working, and community members feel comfortable using it. As part of monitoring, [enter data collection methods e.g. perception surveys, focus group discussions and/or key informant interviews, etc.] are carried out [enter timeframe e.g. every 6 months]. The findings are then disaggregated by age, gender, disability and [enter other diversity factors].

The key areas that are monitored include:

* Community members’ awareness of the feedback mechanism
* Community members’ access to the different feedback channels
* Communities’ trust in the feedback mechanism
* Community members’ satisfaction and views on the process, in terms of the different channels used, the responsiveness, timeliness, and treatment received by the [NS/organisation]

Standard indicators and targets have been agreed upon to help ensure that the feedback mechanism is performing. These include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **INDICATOR** | **TARGET** |
| # and types of methods established to collect feedback and complaints from the community | 4 |
| # and types of methods used to advertise the existence of community feedback systems | 4 |
| # and types of methods used to educate communities about types of feedback, with emphasis on sensitive feedback | 4 |
| # of operational decisions made based on community feedback | 80% |
| % of community members who feel their opinion is taken into account during operation planning and decision-making | 80% |
| % of community members, including marginalized and at-risk groups, who know how to provide feedback or make a complaint about the operation | 90% |
| % of people who received a response to their feedback or complaint about the operation | 90% |
| % of people who received a response after an investigation into a sensitive complaint they made was concluded | 100% |

After the review process, if the feedback mechanism needs to be adapted, any changes that are made are systematically communicated to community members and relevant stakeholders.

#### 7. Advertising the feedback mechanism

It is important that communities know that the feedback mechanism exists and how to access it. The following information on the feedback mechanism is regularly shared with communities and relevant stakeholders:

* Purpose and objective of the feedback mechanism
* Which channels can be used to share feedback and complaints, including for people who may be blind and/or deaf, have low or no literacy levels, people with limited mobility, children, etc.
* What type of feedback or complaints the system can respond to, which channels will be used to respond to feedback and how long it will take to respond
* Opening hours
* Confidentiality and privacy of the mechanism
* Whether feedback or complaints can be shared anonymously
* People’s right to share feedback or complaints, including purpose of collecting the data, consent for data collection and referrals, who has access to the data, how it will be used, timeframe for keeping the data, etc.
* Expected behaviour of staff and volunteers and the communities right to complain on issues related to SEA
* Actions taken to respond to feedback and complaints (closing the loop)

Information about the feedback mechanism is shared through different trusted and preferred communication channels to make sure the information is received and well understood by communities. The communication channels were chosen in consultation with [add relevant community groups here] and include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * [NS/orgnaisation] staff * Community committees and volunteers * Community meetings * Information/ help desks * Community theatre and mobile cinema * Radio, sound trucks and megaphones * Interactive voice response | * Leaflets and posters * Noticeboards and wall murals * SMS and messaging apps * Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) * TV ads or shows * Newspapers |