

Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM)

January 2023

Resources Development Foundation (RDF)

House 21, Road 12, Block-Kha, Pisciculture Housing Society, Adabor, Dhaka-1207 Phone: +880 2 481117315

1. Introduction

Community members should have a safe and confidential way to voice their opinions on the assistance they receive. This includes questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns, and complaints. The Resource Development Foundation (RDF) prioritizes accountability to those we serve. To achieve this, we've established a feedback mechanism. This mechanism captures all forms of communication from the community, both positive and negative. This information is then used to improve how we deliver protection, assistance, and solutions. It also informs corrective actions based on data analysis. Ultimately, your feedback helps us continually adapt and improve our programs. Strong feedback mechanisms are essential for accountability. They empower communities by ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are considered. When you provide feedback, you directly influence the type of assistance you receive.

Joint feedback mechanisms streamline the process for communities to share their experiences. This improves communication and collaboration between aid organizations and the people they serve. Additionally, centralized data management provides a comprehensive picture of community needs and concerns. This allows for more informed decision-making at both program and leadership levels.

These SOPs explain how the joint feedback mechanism operates and who manages it. Specifically, they detail:

- Feedback Channels: How you can provide feedback through various methods (help desks, community committees, joint helplines, etc.).
- Roles and Responsibilities: Who is involved in managing feedback and how they contribute.
- Quality Assurance: Maintaining high standards throughout the process.
- Information Management: How data is collected, stored, and protected.
- Feedback Categories: How feedback is classified for analysis.
- Processing Procedures: How feedback and complaints are addressed.
- Data Analysis and Reporting: How insights from feedback are used to guide decision-making.
- Monitoring Satisfaction: Continuously gauging community satisfaction with the feedback mechanism.
- Awareness Raising: Strategies for informing communities about the mechanism and how to use it.

2. Objective

The joint feedback mechanism exists to create a strong and coordinated response to all forms of community input, including questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns, and complaints. Here's how we achieve this:

- Accountability and Improved Programs: We prioritize accountability by ensuring your voices are heard and acted upon. This means adapting and improving programs based on your needs and priorities.
- Open Communication: We offer accessible, responsive, and trusted channels for two-way communication with the community.
- Efficient Response: The RDF, along with our partners, works together to manage your input effectively. This ensures timely and appropriate responses to your questions and concerns.



Seamless Referral: If your feedback involves another organization's assistance, we have a system
for systematic referral, follow-up, and response.

Safe Reporting: We provide a safe and confidential space for reporting sensitive issues. The safety
of both the user and the accused is our top priority.

3. Scope

The joint feedback mechanism receives and responds to questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints from community members across Bangladesh. Community members can share questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints related to, for example, registration, targeting or prioritisation, beneficiary selection, in-kind distributions, cash transfers, the transfer modality, the quality or quantity of assistance, distribution delays, the behaviour of staff members, cooperating/implementing partner staff or retailers, gaps in essential information, the use of personal data, etc.

Complaints can also be of a sensitive nature and may include fraud, corruption, security issues, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian or development workers, and human trafficking.

Different community members have different communication preferences due to a range of possible reasons, including literacy, trust issues, culture, disability, other access factors, etc. It is therefore essential to offer a variety of ways for community members to communicate with us, including different face-to-face communication channels as well as the possibility to submit feedback and complaints in writing (and anonymously).

- Help desks:
- Community committees:
- · Community outreach volunteers:
- Community-based organisations:
- Joint helpline:
- SMS:
- · WhatsApp, Facebook, email:
- Suggestion boxes:

The above joint feedback channels were chosen in consultation with a diverse range of community members, including women, men, girls, boys, youth, older people, illiterate people, people with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ people and people living in remote locations. Unless the joint feedback mechanism has the capacity to communicate with community members in the languages that they understand best, access to and effectiveness of the joint feedback mechanism will be severely limited. Furthermore, for all joint feedback channels where live interactions are taking place, it is ensured that there is a balance between female and male as well as younger and older representatives dealing with incoming feedback and complaints.

Roles and responsibilities

The below table details the main roles and responsibilities of the persons involved in managing feedback and complaints received through the joint feedback mechanism:

Role	Responsibilities Responsibilities
Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee]	The [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] with representatives from RDF, [other partners, and, depending on the context, the government] provides strategic oversight over the joint feedback mechanism, including its structure, roles and responsibilities of key actors, reporting on joint feedback data, and funding. The Steering Committee also provides guidance on how to deal with any especially sensitive complaints escalated to the Steering Committee by the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator].
Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator	The [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator] is responsible for daily oversight and management of the joint feedback mechanism, including: Liaising with key stakeholders, both internally within RDF [and other partners] and with external partners, on strategic and operational aspects of the joint feedback mechanism, in consultation with the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] and technical colleagues. Providing oversight to the work of the joint feedback mechanism to ensure its functioning and the smooth referral of feedback and complaints to relevant RDF and partner focal points for follow-up within established response timeframes. The [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator] follows up with concerned actors as necessary. Ensuring that processes for managing sensitive protection cases received through the joint feedback mechanism are in place to handle these cases in a safe and confidential manner and immediately refer them to relevant focal points for necessary action. Escalating any especially sensitive complaints to the Steering Committee for their review and decision-making. Ensuring that the list of focal points involved in receiving and responding to referrals from the joint feedback mechanism is kept up to date. Coordinating training for staff and community representatives involved in the joint feedback mechanism, including on the Code of Conduct, confidentiality and privacy principles, protection, operational issues and communication with community members. This includes the delivery of protection-related training and liaising with technical colleagues for provision of training on other thematic areas. Ensuring that required tools for the joint feedback mechanism, including responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), are made available to all joint feedback mechanism users and updated to adequately address issues raised by feedback mechanism users. Reviewing and updating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the joint feedback mechanism and making or recommending adjustments as
Joint Information Management Officer (IMO)	The Joint Information Management Officer supports the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator] in the analysis of the joint feedback mechanism data and the development of regular reports and other information products for the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] and other key stakeholders.



	The Joint IMO also supports the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator] in the management of referrals as appropriate.
RDF and partner field staff	RDF and partner field staff are responsible for managing the [help desks, suggestion boxes, etc.], which includes the recording of incoming feedback and complaints in the joint database, responding to feedback and complaints on the spot whenever possible, and making referrals where necessary. Field staff also play an important role in the sharing of key messages on the joint feedback mechanism and its different channels with communities].
Community representatives	Community committee members respond to questions on the spot wherever possible, and record and refer other feedback and complaints through the joint database. Community outreach volunteers and representatives of community-based organisations support the activities of community committees by referring feedback and complaints from members to the community committees or directly to RDF and partner field staff. Community committee members, community outreach volunteers and representatives of community-based organisations also play an important role in the sharing of key messages on the joint feedback mechanism and its different channels with communities
Joint helpline operators ,	The joint helpline operators provide the initial response to the feedback and complaints of community members who call the joint helpline or get in touch by SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook or email based on standardised answers to frequently asked questions provided by RDF and partners, and, where necessary, make referrals to relevant focal points for further follow-up whenever feedback or complaints cannot be handled by the helpline operators themselves. The third-party service provider provides the hardware and human resources to ensure that the incoming calls and written messages are managed effectively. Joint helpline staff, including the helpline operators, a project manager [and a project quality controller], are hired subject to RDF and partner approvals. To ensure diversity, both female and male as well as younger and older
Joint helpline project manager	The helpline's Project Manager is responsible for oversecing the helpline operators and liaising with the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator]. The [Project Manager or a separate Project Quality Controller] is responsible for ensuring that the helpline operators maintain agreed-upon quality standards as well as for planning the regular training of the helpline operators.
RDF and partner heads of office	The heads of office have overall responsibility for accountability to affected people to the projects that they manage. As a consequence, they are responsible for monitoring and ensuring timeliness of responses to referrals from within their respective office and evaluate technical focal points' responsiveness to referrals in their performance
Sector/cluster leads	The sector/cluster leads monitor and ensure timeliness of responses to reterrals from within their respective sector/cluster and evaluate technical focal points' responsiveness to referrals in their performance evaluations where possible.
Technical focal points	Technical focal points assigned by sub/field offices, clusters, partners and the government deal with the feedback and complaints that are referred to them. Each unit also provides a back-up focal point. The focal points' role is to follow up and respond to feedback and complaints that they receive through the joint feedback mechanism database, which may include communicating with community members or liaising with other technical units, partners and the government for feedback and complaints requirin a multi-sectoral approach. Once a feedback or complaint has been dealt with and the original feedback mechanism user has been given a response, focal points mark the referral as resolved in the joint feedback mechanism database and clarify how the feedback or complaint has been addressed ² .

JK.

RDF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams RDF M&E teams are responsible for regularly monitoring community satisfaction with the joint feedback mechanism through joint post-distribution monitoring (PDM), other perception surveys or qualitative data collection, e.g. through focus group discussions and/or key informant interviews.

4. Quality assurance

The success of the joint feedback mechanism hinges on a well-trained and committed workforce. This essay explores the comprehensive training program and robust monitoring procedures in place to ensure high-quality service and user trust.

Building Capacity Through Training:

All personnel involved in the feedback mechanism, from field staff to helpline operators and community representatives, undergo a rigorous training program. This program emphasizes adherence to a Code of Conduct, ensuring confidentiality and data privacy.

Training delves further into critical areas like:

 Protection: This includes a focus on preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by aid workers.

Cultural Sensitivity: Understanding the local context and respecting cultural nuances is

crucial for effective communication.

 Programmatic Knowledge: Staff gain a thorough understanding of the assistance provided by RDF and partner organizations. This equips them to answer questions and handle concerns effectively.

Processing Procedures: Training covers the proper methods for receiving, analyzing.

and referring feedback, including sensitive and highly sensitive complaints.

RDF leverages expertise from internal protection specialists and partners to develop and deliver these vital trainings. Additionally, training materials are constantly updated to reflect evolving needs. Recognizing the diverse needs of different audiences, the program tailors content accordingly. For example, helpline operators receive supplementary training on the humanitarian context, specific communities served, and the types of assistance offered.

Ensuring Quality Through Monitoring:

The joint feedback mechanism prioritizes continuous improvement. A comprehensive monitoring system tracks performance across all levels:

 Helplines: Daily monitoring by project managers ensures quality control. All calls are recorded for verification purposes, with caller consent obtained through an automated

message.

Field Staff, Operators, Focal Points, and Representatives: Performance reviews are
conducted regularly. These reviews analyze data from the feedback mechanism database
(e.g., resolution rates, response times) along with supervisor observations and spot
checks. Feedback from post-case surveys and community satisfaction surveys is also
incorporated.

 Training Integration: Learning from performance reviews and community feedback is systematically integrated back into training programs. This ensures continuous

refinement and improvement.



5. Information management

The personal information of feedback mechanism users, the details of feedback and complaints, the status of different feedback and complaints, the contact details of internal and external focal points for referrals, and information on the actions taken to respond to feedback and complaints are recorded in the joint Client Relationship Management (CRM) database. The joint database facilitates the central management of data and referrals. Technical focal points can access the joint database to manage their referrals by logging in as third-party users. The joint database enables the management of focal point contact information, the sharing of automatic email notifications to focal points to draw their attention to new or pending referrals, and the tracking of the status of referrals of feedback and complaints. It is also possible to access and feed into the joint database via tablets and smartphones, so that, for example, help desks and community committees can feed directly into the joint database from remote locations without the need for paper forms. RDF and partner field staff as well as community committees are provided with the necessary devices, internet access and training to be able to access the joint database remotely.

Before the establishment of the joint feedback mechanism, a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) was carried out to understand the context and map joint feedback mechanism data flows and transfers, data access and associated risks. Based on the results of the PIA, a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) was established which details what data (non-personal and personal feedback data) is shared through which channels, at what intervals, protected by what type of security measures, accessed and managed by whom, etc. All joint feedback mechanism staff and community representatives sign a confidentiality and privacy agreement, which includes provisions on the protection of personal data in line with RDF data protection regulations, and regularly participate in trainings on the importance of data protection conducted by RDF, or partners. Feedback mechanism users are always informed about the purpose of collecting their personal information and asked to consent to its collection as well as for a referral of their feedback or complaint to a trusted focal point. If feedback mechanism users prefer not to share any personal information, feedback and complaints can be submitted anonymously.

Different database user profiles are created based on roles and responsibilities to determine data access, data management levels and database user actions. This is necessary to give different levels of data access to different database users, thereby compartmentalising data. The visibility of sensitive and highly sensitive complaints and referrals is restricted to specific database users. The database protects the name of the feedback mechanism user, the feedback category and the contents of the feedback or referral.

6. Feedback and complaint categories and response timeframes

RDF and [other partners] have agreed on the below feedback and complaint categories to be used by the joint feedback mechanism to ensure compatibility of collected feedback data and to be able to jointly analyse and report on feedback and complaints at response level:

Feedback and complaint category		Response timeframe for referrals
1.	General feedback (no response required)	7
2,	Information request (ideally the requested information is provided directly on first contact by the respective field staff member, joint helpline operator	5 days (in case a referral is necessary)

JK.

	or community representative and guided by the FAQs; this category includes requests to update or erase personal information)	
3.	Request for assistance	5 days
4.	Urgent request for assistance (including, for example, urgent medical issues or acute malnutrition)	Less than 24 hours
5.	Non-sensitive complaint (including about targeting or prioritisation, the quality or quantity of assistance, the transfer modality, the behaviour of staff members, partner staff or retailers, the malfunctioning of a service card, distribution delays, etc.)	5 days
6,	Sensitive complaint (including fraud, corruption, security issues, and past GBV and SEA)	3 days
7.	Highly sensitive complaint (including urgent and life-threatening ongoing security issues, GBV, SEA and human trafficking)	Less than 24 hours

The response timeframes of 5 days, 3 days and less than 24 hours refer to the time period within which the respective focal point will make first contact with the feedback mechanism user. The response timeframes are not intended to reflect the time limit within which a definite solution needs to be found. However, in life-threatening situations or in the case of serious protection risks immediate action may be required.

7. Processing feedback and complaints

Receiving and recording feedback and complaints

Feedback and complaints that are received through the different joint feedback channels including the [help desks, community committees, joint helpline, SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook, email and suggestion boxes] are recorded in the joint database according to the feedback and complaint categories (see section 8 above). Feedback mechanism users are always asked to give their consent to any data collection after being explained that their personal information will be treated confidentially and not shared with anyone without their consent. If a feedback mechanism user does not give her/his consent, the feedback or complaint is recorded anonymously.

The following personal information is recorded together with the details of the feedback or complaint:

Data field	Purpose of data collection
ID number, group case number or ration card number (if available: not mandatory)	Authentication of feedback mechanism user
First and last name (not mandatory)	Authentication of feedback mechanism user
Age	Key component of joint feedback mechanism user statistics
Gender	Key component of joint feedback mechanism user statistics
Location (city, village or camp)	Key component of joint feedback mechanism user statistics



Contact information	To facilitate communication during follow-up on referrals and when providing responses (where relevant), and for
	post-case surveys

Frequently Asked Questions

The joint feedback mechanism prioritizes swift and effective resolution of concerns. This essay explores the process for handling feedback, complaints, and referrals within the system.

First Contact Resolution:

Field staff and helpline operators strive to provide immediate solutions whenever possible. They leverage a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) database to address common inquiries and resolve issues on the spot. Community committees also utilize FAQs for initial responses.

Recording and Referring:

Any question, feedback, or complaint that cannot be resolved immediately is documented in the joint database. This record captures the user's information alongside the details of the issue. To minimize referrals and ensure prompt resolution, the FAQ database is continuously updated, and frequent training equips staff and community representatives to handle diverse inquiries. The FAQs are also readily accessible online and offline for user reference.

Navigating Referrals:

When an on-the-spot solution isn't feasible, a referral process is initiated. Staff obtain user consent before forwarding the issue to a designated focal point within the joint database. Referral decisions are based on the nature of the feedback (complaint category and sector). For situations where the appropriate focal point is unclear, the referral is directed to the Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator. This coordinator, with support from the Joint Information Management Officer (IMO), ensures the issue reaches the most qualified personnel.

Handling Sensitive Issues:

Special attention is given to sensitive complaints (e.g., fraud) and highly sensitive complaints (e.g., security concerns, gender-based violence). These are referred only to focal points with the expertise and capacity to handle such matters delicately, with careful consideration for user and potential offender safety. Contact details for these focal points are meticulously maintained and updated within the database. Throughout the investigation and resolution process, the safety of both the user and the accused is paramount.

Ensuring Accountability:

The Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator plays a crucial role in overseeing referrals. This coordinator, along with the Joint partners, guarantees referrals reach the appropriate focal points and ensures timely resolution of unallocated issues. They also maintain the authority to adjust referral categories as needed. Once referred, an automatic email notification alerts the designated focal point about the new case. The focal point can then access the database for details and initiate follow-up actions. Defined response timeframes are in place for various types of feedback and complaints, ensuring the user receives prompt first contact.

8. Data analysis and reporting

Data from all feedback channels is meticulously analyzed and presented through an online dashboard and various reports. These reports are designed with specific audiences in mind. Prior consultations with program managers, senior staff, and sector coordinators established their preferred information format and frequency.

Reports include:

- The volume and type of feedback received (including complaints)
- User demographics (disaggregated by age, gender, and other relevant factors)
- Resolution rates for feedback and complaints
- Actions taken in response to user concerns
- Trends and key insights from different geographic areas and sectors

Data-Driven Decisions:

In-depth analytical reports, generated at both response and organizational levels, leverage feedback data to yield actionable recommendations. These recommendations inform programmatic and senior management decisions on how to:

- Adapt and improve aid delivery
- Enhance community engagement strategies, including the feedback mechanism itself

Furthermore, analysis findings are continuously used to update the FAQ database, ensuring it remains a valuable resource for addressing common inquiries.

Leadership in Reporting:

The Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator, supported by the Joint IMO, spearheads analysis and reporting activities. This leadership ensures the production of the following monthly reports:

- Joint Feedback Mechanism Summary Report: This report provides a high-level overview of key trends and recommendations.
- Organization-Specific Reports: Tailored reports for RDF and partner senior management include data specific to their organizations, alongside tailored recommendations.
- Coordination Forum Reports: Monthly reports are generated for relevant coordination bodies like the Humanitarian Country Team and sectoral clusters.

Closing the Feedback Loop:

RDF demonstrates a commitment to action by systematically tracking the implementation of recommendations derived from feedback data. All approved recommendations, along with any actions taken, are documented. The status of these implementations is then reported in the monthly organization-specific reports. This approach ensures that feedback translates into realworld improvements for communities.



9. Monitoring of community satisfaction

Community satisfaction is assessed [twice a year] through joint post-distribution monitoring (PDM) [or other perception surveys or qualitative data collection methods like focus group discussions and key informant interviews]. This data is disaggregated by age, gender, and other relevant diversity factors to ensure a nuanced understanding of user experiences.

Key Areas of Focus:

The monitoring process zeroes in on several critical aspects:

- Awareness: Do community members know about the feedback mechanism's existence?
- Accessibility: Can they easily access the various feedback channels?
- Trust: Do community members feel confident using the mechanism?
- Satisfaction: Are they happy with the responsiveness and treatment they receive from feedback representatives?

Continuous Improvement:

Insights gleaned from monitoring activities are used to inform adjustments to the joint feedback mechanism. These changes are then systematically communicated back to community members and other key stakeholders, including partners. This transparent approach ensures the feedback mechanism continues to meet the evolving needs of the community.

10. Raising awareness of the joint feedback mechanism

It is important that community members are aware of the joint feedback mechanism and its different channels, how these channels function and how to access them. The following information on the joint feedback mechanism is regularly shared with, national and local authorities, and partner organisations:

- Name, purpose and objective of the joint feedback mechanism;
- Available joint feedback channels (including for women, children, illiterate people, people with disabilities, older people, people living in remote locations, minorities, etc.);
- Who can access the joint feedback mechanism and how they can access it;
- Types of feedback and complaints the joint feedback mechanism covers, and response timeframes;
- Opening hours:
- Confidentiality and privacy of the mechanism;

- Whether feedback and complaints can be shared anonymously;
- Data rights (including purpose of collecting data, consent for data collection and referrals, who has access to the data, timeframe for keeping the data, process for updating, withdrawing and/or erasing data);
- The organisations that are involved, the expected behaviour of their staff, and the zerotolerance policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA);
- Actions taken to respond to feedback and complaints (sensitive information will only be shared with concerned individuals).

Information on the joint feedback mechanism is shared through a variety of communication channels and make sure that this essential information is received and understood by all community members, including illiterate people, people with disabilities or other specific needs, older people, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples as well as people living in remote locations. The below communication channels were chosen in consultation with communities:

- RDF and partner field staff
- Community meetings
- Community committees and outreach volunteers
- Community-based organisations (including women's groups, youth groups and organisations for people with disabilities)
- Theatre/role plays and video clips
- Radio, loudspeakers and megaphones
- Posters and leaflets (with a focus on visual messages instead of written information)
- SMS, WhatsApp and Facebook

Key messages are reviewed together with a diverse range of community members and field staff, and adapted based on their feedback, before they are shared with the wider communities.

As a regular practice, a small number of community members, including illiterate people, people with disabilities and older people, is selected in different locations to check in informal and private conversations if they have understood the key messages. Staff members are encouraged to document and report any questions, suggestions, concerns and/or rumours that are shared by community members to the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator]. Based on the findings of these conversations, the key messages and the use of the different communication channels are continuously adapted.



11. Annex

Example confidentiality and privacy agreement

I understand that I will come into contact with people's personal information in the performance of my assigned duties with the [name of the joint feedback mechanism], some of which may be considered sensitive and/or confidential under RDF rules on personal data and information security.

Those rules include, but are not limited to, RDF's Directive on Information Disclosure RDF's IT Security Policy, RDF's Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2016), on the Protection of Personal Data. Under those rules, I understand that sensitive and/or confidential information must be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality. Accordingly, I understand and agree that I must keep any personal information confidential, and that I can neither discuss it with nor disclose it to anyone unless required to do so for the performance of my assigned duties. I acknowledge that improper disclosure may, among other things, present risks to the safety of community members and constitute a violation of their right to privacy. I understand and agree that the information I come into contact with is to be used only for the performance of my assigned duties.

I understand that I am fully responsible for adhering to all aspects of this confidentiality and privacy agreement and that any breach of this agreement may be considered misconduct under the Code of Conduct and result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

I understand that the obligations concerning the handling of personal information extend beyond the end of my involvement with RDF and the [name of the joint feedback mechanism].

Signature

Data