

**Joint Feedback Mechanism**

**Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

**template**

[month and year]

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1. Introduction

*[Note: This template can be used as a starting point for developing standard operating procedures for a joint feedback mechanism. The elements in yellow should be adapted to the context in which the joint feedback mechanism will be implemented.]*

Whenever **community members** have any **questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns or complaints**[[1]](#footnote-2) regarding the assistance that is being provided, they should be able to raise these with the concerned actors through an accessible **feedback mechanism**[[2]](#footnote-3) in a **safe** and **confidential** way.

The **World Food Programme (WFP)** and the **UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** are both committed to being accountable to affected people in their operations[[3]](#footnote-4), including through the establishment of feedback mechanisms. As a consequence, the two agencies aim to ensure that **all formal and informal communication** from community members, both **positive and negative**, informs protection, assistance and solutions programming, and that **corrective action** is taken based on **feedback and complaints data** that is fed into **programmatic and senior management decision-making** to continually adapt and improve assistance.

Effective feedback mechanisms are central to strengthening accountability to affected people**[[4]](#footnote-5)** and contribute to **community members feeling more respected and empowered** since their ideas, suggestions, concerns and capacities will be taken into account, and the assistance they receive will be **better adapted to their needs, capacities and context**.

**Joint feedback mechanisms** make it **easier for community members to share feedback and complaints** and as a result **improve their experience of communicating with and influencing the assistance provided by humanitarian and development organisations**. Moreover, joint feedback mechanisms allow for **centralised data and referral management** which provides a more **comprehensive overview** of the feedback and complaints shared by community members and the follow-up required by humanitarian or development actors. **Joint feedback data analysis** and **joint reporting**, including on any broader trends, leads to more comprehensive information to **inform programmatic and senior management decision-making** so that assistance can be continuously adapted and improved through more consistent actions.

The [**name** of the **joint feedback mechanism**] covered by these **standard operating procedures (SOPs)** is managed jointly by **WFP** and **UNHCR** as well as [**other partners** participating in the management of the joint feedback mechanism]. It serves as an **add-on to existing feedback mechanisms**. *[Note: Add a* ***brief overview of the existing feedback mechanisms*** *that WFP, UNHCR and any partners will keep in place separately from this joint feedback mechanism, and also mention the most relevant feedback mechanisms managed by other operational partners]*. Note that the **name of the joint feedback mechanism** was decided in consultation with communities to ensure that it is widely accepted and encourages community members to engage with it.

The **SOPs** aim to explain **how the joint feedback mechanism works** and **how and by whom it is managed**. More specifically, the SOPs detail how the joint feedback mechanism receives feedback and complaints through a **variety of feedback channels** (e.g. help desks, community committees, joint helpline, etc.), the **roles and responsibilities** of those involved in managing feedback and complaints, how **quality is assured** throughout the process, **information management** aspects (including **data protection**), the different **feedback and complaint categories** used by the joint feedback mechanism, how feedback and complaints are processed, the role of **joint** **feedback data analysis and reporting**, the **monitoring of community satisfaction** with the joint feedback mechanism, and, finally, how **awareness of the joint feedback mechanism is raised** among community members.

These SOPs will be **reviewed by the** [**Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator**] in close collaboration with the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] **every [six] months** to ensure their accuracy and relevance.

1. Objective

The overall **objective** of the [**name** of the **joint feedback mechanism**] is to ensure a **coordinated and effective response** to community members’ questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints. More specifically, the joint feedback mechanism aims to:

* Increase **accountability to affected people** 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.
* Enable WFP, UNHCR and [other partners] to **effectively manage questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints** from community members in [country] and to provide **timely and appropriate responses**.
* Ensure that community members’ questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints that are linked to another organisation’s assistance are **systematically referred**, followed up on and responded to.
* Provide an **accessible**, **safe** and **confidential** mechanism for reporting **sensitive complaints**, ensuring the safety of the feedback mechanism user as well of the accused.

1. Scope

The joint feedback mechanism receives and responds to **questions**, **feedback**, **suggestions**, **concerns** and **complaints** from community members across [country], including from [**internally displaced people (IDPs)**, **refugees** and **host community members**]. The [country] operations assist [IDPs and refugees] in [settlements/camps in departments and/or urban areas where IDPs and refugees reside].

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**.

1. Joint feedback channels

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).

The [name of the joint feedback mechanism] offers the following feedback channels *[Note: Adapt the below list to the context and add a brief introductory paragraph for each channel to explain why it was chosen, who is managing the channel (e.g. field staff, elected community representatives or a third-party service provider), how it can be accessed, locations, opening hours, etc.]*:

* **Help desks:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **Community committees:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **Community outreach volunteers:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **Community-based organisations:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **Joint helpline:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **SMS:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **WhatsApp, Facebook[[5]](#footnote-6), email:**

[Introductory paragraph]

* **Suggestion boxes:**

[Introductory paragraph]

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[[6]](#footnote-7) and people living in remote locations *[Note: Add/remove any specific groups as relevant to your operational context]*.

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. Therefore, the above channels are accessible in the following languages: [add **main languages** spoken by IDPs, refugees and host communities]. *[Note: Also explain here how you are ensuring that people who speak minority languages have access to at least some of the feedback channels]*.

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.

*[Note: To decide which feedback channels to use, findings from recent* ***communication preferences and information needs assessments*** *should be reviewed or such an assessment should be carried out. It will also be important to* ***monitor community members’ communication preferences*** *over time, for example as part of regular post-distribution monitoring, and to adapt the feedback channels based on monitoring findings whenever necessary.]*

1. 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** |
| **[Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee]** | The [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] with representatives from WFP, UNHCR, [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 WFP, UNHCR [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 WFP, UNHCR 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 staff and community representatives and that these are regularly reviewed 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 its linkages with existing referral pathways. * Ensuring that the perspectives of community members are taken into account in the design and functioning of the joint feedback mechanism, taking into consideration the age, gender, and diversity of [IDPs, refugees and host community members]. * Monitoring the efficacy of the joint feedback mechanism and making or recommending adjustments as appropriate. * [Coordinating and liaising with the third-party service provider for the helpline on planning and programmatic issues related to the joint helpline.] * Preparing analytical reports on trends and key issues raised by community members and providing regular updates to the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] and other key stakeholders. * [Securing sustainable funding for the joint feedback mechanism and its different channels.] |
| **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. |
| **WFP, UNHCR and partner field staff** | WFP, UNHCR 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 [IDPs, refugees and host communities]. |
| **Community representatives** | **Community committee members** respond to questions on the spot whenever 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 [IDPs, refugees and host community members] to the community committees or directly to WFP, UNHCR 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 [IDPs, refugees and host 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[[7]](#footnote-8)** or **email** based on standardised answers to frequently asked questions provided by WFP, UNHCR 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.  *[Note: Explain if the helpline is internal or being managed by a third-party service provider and adapt the rest of the paragraph accordingly.]* 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 WFP, UNHCR and partner approvals. To ensure diversity, both **female and male as well as younger and older helpline operators** are recruited. |
| **Joint helpline project manager** | The helpline’s Project Manager is responsible for overseeing 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. |
| **WFP, UNHCR and partner heads of office** | The heads of office have **overall responsibility for accountability to affected people** in 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 evaluations as appropriate. |
| **Sector/cluster leads** | The sector/cluster leads **monitor and ensure timeliness of responses to referrals** 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, sectors/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 requiring 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[[8]](#footnote-9). |
| **WFP and UNHCR monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams** | WFP and UNHCR 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. *[Note: Add here if IDPs, refugees and/or host community members are part of the monitoring teams.]* |

1. Quality assurance

All joint feedback mechanism staff, including **field staff** dealing with feedback and complaints, **joint helpline operators** and **technical focal points**, as well as relevant **community representatives** are required to sign a **Code of Conduct** and a **confidentiality and privacy agreement**.

Joint feedback mechanism staff and community representatives also receive **regular training** on the **Code of Conduct**, **protection** including the **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** by humanitarian or development workers, the **local context and culture(s)**, the responses to **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** – so that they fully understand the assistance that is being provided by WFP, UNHCR and [other partners] – and on **how to process and refer incoming feedback and complaints**, including **sensitive and highly sensitive complaints**.

While all trainings are coordinated by the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator], UNHCR and WFP **protection experts** are involved in preparing and conducting the trainings as much as possible. The training materials are regularly updated by key technical experts from UNHCR, WFP and [other partners].

The **trainings are adapted to the specific information needs of different audiences**. Third-party helpline operators, for example, are provided additional information about WFP, UNHCR and [other partners], the community members, the humanitarian sectors and the humanitarian and development assistance provided in [country].

Joint feedback mechanism staff also undertake selected **online trainings** that are mandatory for WFP, UNHCR and partner staff, e.g. on protection, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by humanitarian or development workers, prevention of harassment and abuse of authority, and information security awareness.

The work of **joint helpline operators** is **monitored on a daily basis by the helpline’s Project Manager [and the Project Quality Controller]** in close coordination with the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator], [and joint helpline operators undergo **regular exams** to test their knowledge of the SOPs and answers to frequently asked questions]. All phone calls received by the joint helpline are **recorded** so that the details of the conversation can be verified should that be necessary. Callers are informed through an automatic voice message which is played before they speak to an operator that calls are recorded for quality assurance.

Furthermore, the joint helpline’s [Project Manager or Project Quality Controller] reviews at least 10% of resolved feedback and complaints each month by conducting **post-case surveys**. Post-case surveys are carried out by contacting previous feedback mechanism users and assessing their satisfaction with the response they received and the professionalism and competence of the joint helpline operator. The results of post-case surveys are reviewed on a [weekly] basis between the helpline’s Project Manager, [the Project Quality Controller] and the [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator].

The **performance** of **field staff**, **joint helpline operators**, **technical focal points** and **community representatives** is reviewed continuously based on **joint feedback mechanism database statistics** (e.g. first contact resolution rate[[9]](#footnote-10), respect for established response timeframes, number of open referrals, etc.) as well as observation by supervisors and spot checks. Findings from post-case surveys and community satisfaction surveys will also feed into the performance reviews as relevant.

Any **learning** from the performance reviews and the community satisfaction surveys is systematically integrated into the above-mentioned **regular trainings** of joint feedback mechanism staff and community representatives.

**Joint helpline operators are recruited by** [the **third-party service provider** in close cooperation with] **WFP**, **UNHCR** and [**other partners**]. Where there are **conflicts of interest** that could compromise the protection of community members, candidates will not be chosen for the job. Potential joint helpline operators are vetted to ensure the highest standards of ethical conduct, including by assessing their respect for diversity and professionalism. [IDPs, refugees or host community members] with the appropriate set of values and skills should be encouraged to participate in recruitment processes *[Note: if appropriate in the given context]*.

The [Joint Feedback Mechanism Steering Committee] ensures that any **allegations of misconduct**, **lack of compliance** or **fraud** that are raised by community members or other stakeholders are duly investigated.

1. 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** [WFP’s **SugarCRM**, UNHCR’s **proGres** or a **third-party software solution**] (“joint database” from here on).[[10]](#footnote-11)

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 databaseenables 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. WFP, UNHCR 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.

Lastly, information can also be collected **without access to the internet**. Feedback data is stored offline locally on the device until an internet connection is established. As soon as the device has access to the internet, the data is automatically synced with the joint database.

Data protection and sharing

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 WFP’s and UNHCR’s data protection regulations[[11]](#footnote-12), and regularly participate in **trainings** on the importance of data protection conducted by WFP, UNHCR 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**.

At any point in time, feedback mechanism users can request to have their information updated and/or removed from the joint database – they have the “**right to be forgotten**”.

The joint database, which can be accessed through an **encrypted web access**, creates and maintains a **running log of all administrative and software user actions**. All **database information is encrypted**, and the database is equipped with the necessary **industry standard security protocols** to ensure reliable functioning in an online environment.

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.

If a **third person** approaches the joint feedback mechanism on behalf of an [IDP, refugee or host community member], the person is assisted with information that is not case specific. If needed, feedback and complaints are referred to focal points for further follow-up. If a third person uses the joint feedback mechanism on behalf of a community member and needs case-specific information, the feedback or complaint is referred to the relevant focal point. The focal point will then contact the feedback mechanism user and respond to that person’s feedback or complaint if deemed appropriate.

1. Feedback and complaint categories and response timeframes

WFP, UNHCR 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)* | – |
| 1. **Information request**   *(ideally the requested information is provided directly on first contact by the respective field staff member, joint helpline operator or community representative and guided by the FAQs; this category includes requests to update or erase personal information)* | 5 days  *(in case a referral is necessary)* |
| 1. **Request for assistance** | 5 days |
| 1. **Urgent request for assistance**   *(including, for example, urgent medical issues or acute malnutrition)* | Less than 24 hours |
| 1. **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 |
| 1. **Sensitive complaint**   *(including fraud, corruption, security issues, and past GBV and SEA)* | 3 days |
| 1. **Highly sensitive complaint**   *(including urgent and life-threatening ongoing security issues, GBV, SEA and human trafficking)* | Less than 24 hours |

*[It is recommended to create more detailed subcategories for each feedback or complaint category in order to be able to collect more accurate information which will be useful when reporting on joint feedback mechanism data.]*

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.

1. 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[[12]](#footnote-13), 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

**Field staff** members and **joint helpline operators** who receive questions, feedback or complaints **record** the feedback mechanism users’ personal information as well as the details of the questions, feedback or complaints in the joint database and **provide a response on the spot**, **if possible**, based on the information provided in the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**.

**Community committees only respond to questions** based on the FAQs. Any questions that they are not able to respond to on the spot as well as all other feedback and complaints are recorded and referred after asking for the **feedback mechanism users’ consent**.

To avoid having to refer a large number of feedback and complaints, the aim is to achieve a high **first contact resolution rate**, meaning that incoming feedback and complaints are addressed on the spot without the need for a referral. For this reason, the **FAQs** are continuously updated and regular **trainings of relevant field staff, joint helpline operators and community representatives** are carried out.

The FAQs can be accessed online as well as offline and are **searchable** so that key information can be easily found.

Referrals

If a **field staff** member or **joint helpline operator** is not able to respond to a feedback or complaint on the spot, the **feedback mechanism user is asked to consent** to the referral of her/his feedback or complaint, and the issue is then **referred to a focal point** in the joint database depending on the **feedback and complaint category** and the **sector**.

If there are any doubts about who to refer a feedback or complaint to, feedback and complaints can always also be referred to the **[Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator]** who, with the support of the joint IMO, will then ensure that the right focal point receives the referral.

**Sensitive complaints** (e.g. about fraud or corruption) and **highly sensitive complaints** (e.g. about urgent ongoing security issues, GBV or SEA) are referred only to **focal points that have the appropriate skills and capacity** to follow up, fully taking into account protection concerns. The contact details of these focal points must be listed in the joint database and immediately updated whenever necessary. When dealing with the **referral of sensitive and highly sensitive complaints**, the **feedback mechanism user** as well as **the accused** must be protected from any harm, including possible retaliation, while the situation is being investigated and until appropriate action is taken.[[13]](#footnote-14)

*[Note: In case relevant, explain here how the chosen referral pathways build on already existing referral pathways that have been put in place by a local Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network or similar AAP-related coordination structure.]*

The **[Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator]**, with the support of the **Joint IMO**, ensures that **feedback and complaints are referred to the right focal points** and that unallocated feedback and complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion. The [Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator] can also adjust the feedback and complaint category of referrals should that be necessary.

Once a feedback or complaint is referred to a focal point through the joint database, an **email notification** is automatically sent to the concerned focal point to make that person aware of the new referral. The focal point can then **log into the joint database** to review the details of the referral and start following up.

As detailed in section 8 on the feedback and complaint categories, specific **response timeframes** have been established to follow up on different types of feedback and complaints. The focal point is expected to make **first contact with the feedback mechanism user within the established timeframe**.

As soon as a decision has been made about what actions will be taken to respond to the referral, the **focal point informs the feedback mechanism user**, **provides a brief explanation** in the joint database about how the issue has been addressed and **marks the referral as resolved**.

Closing the feedback loop

The **feedback loop is closed** as soon as the focal point provides a **response to the original feedback mechanism user** (or the wider community where appropriate) explaining **how the feedback or complaint has been addressed**.

Responses to **sensitive and highly sensitive complaints** are always given individually. If feedback or a complaint results in the adaptation of a programme or a response more broadly affecting the community at large, the **wider community is informed** of the changes.

If a **referral cannot be resolved within a short time period**, the **referral remains open** in the joint database and is only marked as resolved once a definite response has been provided. While the referral remains open, the focal point provides **regular updates to the feedback mechanism user as well as in the joint database** on the status of the process.

If a **referral cannot be closed within a reasonable time period**, the **feedback mechanism user is asked to approach the joint feedback mechanism again at a specific moment in the future**, and the referral is marked as resolved in the joint database. *[Note: It is recommended to add more detail here to clarify the types of referrals that may be challenging to close within a reasonable time period.]*

Where the **original feedback mechanism user cannot be reached over a time period of [two weeks]**, even at different hours of the day, to communicate the response to the feedback or complaint, the issue is marked as resolved in the joint database.

*[Note: Nuanced “resolved” status categories could be considered in the joint database, detailing if a feedback or complaint has been resolved at first contact, through referral and response, or a feedback mechanism user was unreachable or withdrew the feedback or complaint, etc.]*

1. Data analysis and reporting

**Feedback data** from **all joint feedback channels** is **regularly analysed and reported on**. An [online] **dashboard** and different joint feedback mechanism **reporting templates** for different audiences are used to present relevant information to key stakeholders in an **appropriate format** and in a **timely fashion**. The users of joint feedback data, including programme managers, heads of programme and sector coordinators, have been consulted on what type of information they need, in what format and how frequently.

Reports include information on the **number and types of feedback and complaints**, the **types of feedback mechanism users** (disaggregated by age, gender [and other diversity factors]), the **number of resolved and open feedback and complaints**, the **actions that have been taken to address feedback and complaints**, **any trends** and other key information for **different geographical areas and humanitarian sectors**.

Analytical reports are produced with **joint feedback data at both response and organisational level** and include **recommendations** to facilitate **programmatic and senior management decision-making** on how to **adapt and improve assistance** as well as **community engagement**, including the **joint feedback mechanism itself**. The findings from these analyses of feedback data are also used to continually update the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**.

The **[Joint Feedback Mechanism Coordinator]** leads on the analysis and reporting activities with the support of the **Joint IMO** and ensures that the following **monthly reports** are produced in addition to the [online] **dashboard**:

* **Monthly joint feedback mechanism summary report** that details broad trends and recommendations.
* **Monthly reports for the senior management** of WFP, UNHCR and [other partners] which include organisation-specific data and recommendations. *[Note: This is only feasible if there is a very limited number of other partners]*
* **Monthly reports to coordination fora**, including the Humanitarian Country Team where relevant and sectors/clusters.

Both WFP and UNHCR **systematically track how recommendations based on feedback data are implemented** within their operations in [Excel sheets] that list all recommendations approved by their respective senior management as well as any actions taken. The **status of the implementation of approved recommendations** is reported on in the monthly organisation-specific feedback mechanism reports.

1. Monitoring of community satisfaction

**Joint post-distribution monitoring (PDM)** [and/or other **perception surveys** or **qualitative data collection**, e.g. through focus group discussions and/or key informant interviews,] is carried out **[twice a year]** to **monitor community satisfaction** with the joint feedback mechanism with findings disaggregated by age, gender [and other diversity factors]. Key aspects that are monitored include:

* Community members’ **awareness** of the joint feedback mechanism;
* Their **access** to the joint feedback mechanism;
* Their **trust** in the joint feedback mechanism;
* Their satisfaction with its **different channels** including in terms of responsiveness as well as the treatment that they received by feedback mechanism representativesas relevant.

Any **adjustments** to the joint feedback mechanism that are made based on these monitoring activities are systematically **communicated back to community members** and other key stakeholders including partners.

1. 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 [IDPs, refugees, host communities], 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 **zero-tolerance 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 in [main **languages** spoken by IDPs, refugees and host communities] to 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 [IDPs, refugees and host communities]** *[adapt the list as needed]*:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * WFP, UNHCR 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**[[14]](#footnote-15) |

**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.

1. Annex

Example confidentiality and privacy agreement

*[Note: Confidentiality and privacy agreements have to be reviewed by WFP and UNHCR legal services.]*

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 WFP’s and UNHCR’s rules on personal data and information security.

Those rules include, but are not limited to, WFP’s Directive on Information Disclosure (CP2010/001), WFP’s Corporate Information and IT Security Policy (OED2015/012), WFP’s Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2016), and UNHCR’s Policy on the Protection of Personal Data (2015).

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 WFP, UNHCR and the [name of the joint feedback mechanism].

Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. “Feedback and complaints” in short from here on. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Note that the *feedback mechanism* is the overall system that deals with feedback and complaints, including the processes, methods and tools that are in place to ensure that feedback is received, processed and responded to, while the *feedback channels* are the different ways people can provide feedback and complaints, e.g. by speaking with field staff or members of community committees or by calling a helpline. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [UNHCR (2018) *Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity*](https://www.unhcr.org/5aa13c0c7.pdf); [WFP (2020) *Protection and Accountability Policy*](https://tinyurl.com/yx74mhb6). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Accountability to affected *people* and accountability to affected *populations* are used interchangeably. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Note that WhatsApp, Facebook and similar social media platforms aren’t corporately approved by WFP as of yet, meaning that WFP Country Offices will have to seek approval from headquarters to use them. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Questioning. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Note that WhatsApp, Facebook and similar social media platforms aren’t corporately approved by WFP as of yet, meaning that WFP Country Offices will need to seek approval from Rome to use them. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Note that, to better monitor the outcomes of feedback and complaints, it is recommended to categorise different possible outcomes using a drop-down list, in addition to a brief narrative explanation (more on this in section 9 below). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Note that if a mechanism has been set up with the aim of dealing with sensitive complaints, a high first contact resolution rate should not be an objective. However, for more general feedback mechanisms, a high first contact resolution rate is desirable as it takes time and other usually limited resources to follow up on referrals. What’s most important is to ensure that all questions, feedback and complaints are treated with the attention they deserve and that appropriate responses are provided systematically. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Note that UNHCR and WFP are developing a global interoperability solution to link proGres and SugarCRM. Once this global solution is available, there won’t be any advantages anymore to using a single joint database as the interoperability solution will facilitate the direct, immediate and secure flow of relevant information between both systems. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. [UNHCR (2015) *Policy on the Protection of Personal Data*](https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55643c1d4.pdf); [WFP (2016) *Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy*](https://tinyurl.com/ybmc9h98). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Note that WhatsApp, Facebook and similar social media platforms aren’t corporately approved by WFP as of yet, meaning that WFP Country Offices will have to seek approval from headquarters to use them. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. For further guidance see: [IASC (2016) *Best Practice Guide on Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms*](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-accountability-affected-populations-and-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-10) and [IASC (2016) *Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms*](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/global_standard_operating_procedures_on_inter_agency_cooperation_in_cbcms.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Note that WhatsApp, Facebook and similar social media platforms aren’t corporately approved by WFP as of yet, meaning that WFP Country Offices will need to seek approval from headquarters to use them. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)