JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING JOINT FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

OPTION B: JOINT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Option B involves the following elements highlighted in green:

Common **entry points** for feedback and complaints	1. Common **feedback and complaint categories**	2. Joint **database**	3. Coordinated **frequently asked questions (FAQs)**	4. Coordinated **referrals**
Joint **coordination**	Joint **quality assurance**	5. Joint **reporting**	Joint **monitoring** of community satisfaction	6. Joint **awareness raising**

1. COMMON FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

To be able to jointly analyse and report on feedback and complaints at response level, **agreement is needed on the feedback and complaint categories** that will be used by both agencies so that feedback data will be compatible. A mapping of existing categories can be carried out to achieve this.

For **feedback and complaints that are received electronically**, both agencies will have to use the same data fields in the joint database for the categorisation of incoming feedback and complaints[1] as well as for basic personal information (age, gender, location, etc.).

Where feedback and complaints are communicated face to face, **tablets or phones** should be used as much as possible to **record feedback and complaints digitally** (with both agencies using the same data fields). Where tablets or phones are not available, a **joint feedback and complaints form** should be developed and utilised so that both agencies record incoming feedback and complaints in a consistent way (e.g. a common form for help desks, ideally for all incoming feedback and complaints, but at a minimum for referrals).

2. JOINT CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) DATABASE

Where a **joint Client Relationship Management (CRM) database** ("joint database" in short) is in place, incoming feedback and complaints can be recorded and processed centrally.

Jointly using the same database facilitates the **central management of data** which **strengthens the systematic follow-up on referrals**, **joint feedback data analysis**, **joint reporting**, and the feeding of **more comprehensive information** into **programmatic and senior management decision-making processes**.

The three main **joint database options** are: 1) WFP's **SugarCRM** (which comes with an annual cost per user licence); 2) UNHCR's **proGres**; 3) a **third-party software solution**.[2]

[1] The same data fields will have to be used for joint reporting purposes, but each organisation is free to collect other additional information for any internal reporting.

[2] It should be noted 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.

An important issue to consider is that **proGres v4 has limitations** when being used for feedback mechanisms, especially in terms of the **visibility of referrals**: In proGres v4 visibility of sensitive referrals cannot be restricted to specific individuals, which can lead to protection risks. While the contents of a referral can be protected, the name of the complainant and the complaint category will remain visible for all proGres users who have access to the referral system. For this reason, some UNHCR Country Offices have opted to use a third-party software solution for their feedback mechanism and to manage referrals.

In case a **database solution other than proGres** is chosen, that database should ideally be **linked through an API[3] to proGres** so that feedback mechanism staff can have **limited access to certain proGres data fields** (e.g. eligibility status).

It should be ensured that new **feedback data** is systematically recorded in both **proGres** and **SugarCRM** either through an API or regular manual data transfers, independent of the database solution that is chosen (even where, for example, a third-party solution is used).

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF A JOINT DATABASE

To be able to jointly decide which **database solution** to use, it is necessary to have clarity around what functional requirements a joint database should fulfil[4]. The below list covers key technical aspects to consider:

Data management (the database solution should facilitate the management of the following data):

- The personal information of those who ask questions or provide feedback and complaints (the "feedback mechanism users");
- The details of questions, feedback and complaints;
- The contact details of internal and external focal points for referrals;
- The current status of referrals (open/resolved);
- Information on actions taken to respond to questions, feedback and complaints.

Data access: The database solution should make it possible to manage a range of different database user profiles to determine data access, data management levels and software user actions. This is necessary to give different levels of data access to different database users, thereby compartmentalising data. Especially important is that the visibility of sensitive complaints and referrals can be restricted to specific database users. At a minimum, the database solution should protect the name of the feedback mechanism user, the feedback category and the contents of the feedback or referral.

Security: The database solution should create and maintain a running log of all administrative and software user actions. All information should be encrypted, and the solution should be equipped with the necessary industry standard security protocols to ensure reliable functioning in an online environment.

Referral management: The database solution should facilitate the tracking of referrals of feedback and complaints (internally and externally), 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 recording of any actions taken to address feedback and complaints. Focal points should be able to log into the database so they can review the information of a specific referral and record any status updates on their follow-up (for historical knowledge).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Ideally, the database solution offers a knowledge management component where the answers to

[3] An Application Programming Interface (API) is a computing interface which defines interactions between multiple software intermediaries.

[4] Third-party software would have to be assessed and approved by headquarters, following due diligence processes.

frequently asked questions can be saved. The FAQs should be searchable.

Outbound calls: If the database is also used for a helpline, outbound calls would ideally be possible so that call operators can call feedback mechanism users back in case they have left a message or to share information on any actions taken in response to their feedback or complaints.

Information campaigns: Ideally, the database solution would have a function to disseminate messages to relevant contacts in the database through SMS, automated voice messaging, WhatsApp or other messaging services.

Links to proGres and SugarCRM: It should be possible to link the database solution through an API[5] to proGres so that feedback mechanism staff can have limited access to certain proGres data fields (e.g. eligibility status). Moreover, it should be possible to link the database solution through an API not just to proGres but also to SugarCRM so that new feedback data can be automatically recorded in both proGres and SugarCRM.

Analytics: The database solution should provide detailed statistics for different geographical areas and humanitarian sectors, including the number and types of feedback and complaints, the types of feedback mechanism users, the number of closed and open referrals, etc. In the case of helplines, the database solution should also facilitate the tracking of unanswered calls to monitor the ability of operators to answer incoming calls and the potential need for additional resources. Ideally, the database solution can also produce customisable reports and dashboards. However, at a minimum, the database solution should be able to provide detailed statistics in an accessible format (e.g. Excel readable) so that the data can be used to create reports and dashboards with third-party software (e.g. Power BI or Tableau).

Performance tracking: The database solution should facilitate the tracking of the performance of relevant individuals, e.g. call operators, focal points, etc. Relevant indicators might include the first contact resolution rate, the average time needed to follow up on referrals for different feedback categories, number of open referrals, etc.

Mobile support: It should be possible to access and feed into the database via tablets and smartphones, so that, for example, help desks and community committees can feed directly into the database from remote locations. At a minimum, the database solution should offer an app for tablets and smartphones that run Android (e.g. through interoperability with Kobo or MoDa).

Offline support: It should be possible to save information without access to the internet. Locally stored information is then synced with the database as soon as the device has an internet connection.

LANGUAGE

Depending on the local context, it may be necessary to discuss language requirements. Most database solutions will be available in English, but it might make sense to have other language versions (e.g. French or Spanish) to ensure accessibility.

COST

The cost of the database solution should be as low as possible while ensuring that it offers the desired features, and it should be avoided that licencing fees are charged for every database user that accesses the database. Instead, the cost of the database solution would ideally be

[5] An Application Programming Interface (API) is a computing interface which defines interactions between multiple software intermediaries.

one-off or, as a second-best option, licencing fees would only be charged at organisational level so that a higher or lower number of actual database users does not affect licencing cost.

3. COORDINATED FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

In order to achieve a **high first contact resolution rate**[6], both agencies and any other relevant partners should continuously **keep each other's responses to frequently asked questions up to date** by regularly reviewing them and sharing updated information.

Coordinating answers to frequently asked questions helps **reduce the need to refer feedback and complaints to internal or external focal points** who will then have to invest time to follow up on these referrals.

4. REFERRALS (USING THE JOINT DATABASE)

Incoming **feedback and complaints** that are linked to another organisation's programmes will have to be **referred and followed up on systematically**.

WFP, UNHCR and any other relevant partners will have to agree on the **referral processes**, **focal points**, **response timeframes**, **what information will be shared** for what kind of referral, and **how the feedback loop will be closed** to ensure that responses are systematically provided to feedback mechanism users.

Particular attention will have to be paid to how and to whom **sensitive complaints** (including fraud, corruption, security issues, gender-based violence (GBV), and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian or development workers) will be referred. **Sensitive complaints** should be referred only to **focal points that have the appropriate skills and capacity** to follow up, fully taking into account protection concerns[7]. It will be important to check if a local Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network or similar AAP-related coordination structure has already come up with relevant SOPs and referral pathways and to build on what's already in place.

Referrals should also be systematically shared with and received from **cooperating/implementing partner feedback mechanisms, financial service provider (FSP) customer service or other inter-agency feedback mechanisms** as relevant.

Using a **joint database** significantly simplifies the referral process. Once a feedback or complaint is referred to a focal point through the joint database, an **email notification** should be 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 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**.

5. JOINT REPORTING (USING THE JOINT DATABASE)

The **joint database contains all relevant feedback data** and feedback data analysis can be done based on the information saved in this central database.

[6] The *first contact resolution rate* is the percentage of incoming feedback and complaints that are addressed on the spot, without the need for a referral. It should be noted 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.

[7] When dealing with the referral of 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. Also note that persons who receive sensitive complaints are at risk of secondary trauma and should therefore have access to appropriate support services.

A **joint dashboard** and different **joint reporting templates** (for different audiences) should be developed to report on the **number and types of feedback and complaints**, the **types of feedback mechanism users** (disaggregated by age and gender), 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**.

The **users of aggregated feedback data**, including programme managers, heads of programme and sector coordinators, should be consulted on **what type of information** they need, in **what format** and **how frequently**.

It should also be explored how the reporting on feedback data can be **automated** as much as possible and **streamlined with any other reporting processes**, e.g. linked to regular field monitoring activities.

Analytical reports should be produced with **feedback data at both response and organisational level** to facilitate **programmatic and senior management decision-making** on how to **adapt and improve assistance**.

6. JOINT AWARENESS RAISING

Raising awareness of the existing feedback mechanisms' purpose and functioning, how to access them, people's rights (including data rights), the expected behaviour of staff, etc. should be done jointly for the **same community members** (including host communities).

This includes the development of a **joint community engagement strategy** which, among other things, details the key messages and communication channels to be used to reach all key stakeholders, including the most vulnerable (women, illiterate people, older people, people with disabilities, minorities, etc.).

Monitoring data, e.g. from post-distribution monitoring, should be used to better understand where there are **information gaps** among community members to **adapt and improve** existing **communication channels** and **key messages**.

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