



PCPM

Polish Center
for International Aid

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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Purpose:

This document of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is designed to guide the overall operation of the Feedback and Complaint Mechanism in humanitarian projects coordinated by PCPM.

The SOPs aim to explain how the feedback mechanism works and how it is managed. The document describes how the feedback and complaints are received through a variety of feedback channels (e.g. hotline, social media, e-mail communication, focus groups, etc.), the roles and responsibilities of those involved in managing feedback and complaints, information management aspects (including data protection), the different feedback and complaint categories, and how feedback and complaints are processed.

These SOPs will be reviewed by the Feedback and Accountability Mechanism Officer in close collaboration with the Safeguarding Officer once a year to ensure their accuracy and relevance.

Scope:

The SOP applies to all the humanitarian projects delivered in Poland which involve direct aid distributed among the beneficiaries in any form (for instance: in-kind, cash, housing and work-related assistance).

It may take the form of questions, feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints related to registration, targeting or prioritization, beneficiary selection, in-kind distributions, cash transfers, the transfer modality, the quality or quantity of assistance, distribution delays, the behavior of staff members, cooperating/ implementing partner staff, the use of personal data, etc.

1. Definitions

Feedback – for the purposes of this document it defines both sharing of information, opinions, remarks, or concerns (usually defined as feedback) and expression or dissatisfaction (usually defined as a complaint).

Feedback giver/ complainant – an individual or a group of persons who has given feedback or lodged a complaint with PCPM.

Feedback channel – a channel of communication established to collect feedback and complaints.

2. Feedback channels

The Operations team receives feedback through various contact channels. Contact channels used by PCPM (each project may slightly differ - detail information presented in the Annex to the SOPs):

- **Hotline**
Direct phone line is advertised among current or potential beneficiaries, partner staff etc. and used for phone communication. Hotline number dedicated for each project is specified in the Annex to the SOPs.
- **E-mail**
Receiving feedback via e-mail enables deaf and hard-of-hearing persons to give us feedback or a complaint. E-mail address dedicated for each project is specified in the Annex to the SOPs.
- **Social media (facebook)**
This channel meets the needs of people used to communication via social media. A link to the social media account dedicated to collect feedback and complaints for each project is specified in the Annex to the SOPs.
- **Face to Face**
This channel requires meeting feedback givers in person. This conventional method allows them to share their issues directly with PCPM staff, partners staff or volunteers during regular project activities.
- **Focus group discussion**
PCPM staff actively organizes focus group discussions to enable beneficiaries to have a voice and share the information.

The above feedback channels were chosen to address the challenges of PCPM projects. The variety of locations included in the projects hinders contacting the staff of PCPM in person.

In order to communicate with complainants in the languages that they understand best, it is required to hire staff who can easily communicate in these languages. For such a reason, instead of the direct contact with the feedback givers, we put emphasis on communication channels available for everyone including phone calls, e-mail communication and social media. The feedback recipients are based in the center of our activities and can be reached through mentioned channels.

3. Recording feedback

PCPM receives feedback through a contact channel. Based on the input, the team then documents the following information:

- Type of feedback channel
- Name of the staff who received feedback
- Information regarding the person's consent to the feedback being recorded
- Date of feedback
- Name of the person giving feedback (if not anonymous)
- Location
- Gender
- Contact details
- Topic of the issue
- Description of the issue
- Category of feedback
- Information about participation in PCPM programs
- Description of actions taken/ solutions
- PCPM Case number
- Information about participation in the specific project

Feedback is being collected in the feedback form which automatically opens a respective case in the database. PCPM ensures that feedback is handled in a confidential manner. If requested, the feedback is collected anonymously.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Feedback recipients/ Operators	The role of feedback recipients is to collect information, record it through the feedback form and respond to it. If it is not possible to resolve the matter while the complainant is reporting the feedback, Operator is responsible to leave respective comments in the database for the dedicated project staff.
Dedicated project staff	Dedicated project staff addresses all the cases which require further actions. They are responsible for monitoring of the cases in the database, contacting partner institutions and resolving complex matters. Dedicated project staff closes the cases which are not solved while the complainant is reporting the feedback.
Feedback and Accountability Mechanism Officer	FAM Officer implements Feedback and Complaint Mechanism among the projects and monitors its functioning. Based on the input database FAM officer drafts a monthly report for the respective donors.

Safeguarding Officer (focal point)	Safeguarding team is responsible for managing sensitive cases involving PCPM, partner staff and volunteers. They also address cases not involving PCPM, partner staff or volunteers but related to the program.
Project Coordinator	Project Coordinator supervises the work and monitors the development on regular basis.

5. Feedback categories/ response timeframe

All the feedback received by the project staff is classified according to the respective category of the feedback. Depending on the category, following steps are taken:

- a) Expression of gratitude - A positive expression or appreciation about the assistance received.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form and automatically set the status as “Closed”. In this kind of feedback, it is recommendable to specify the main topic in detail in order to be able to identify the reasons for the positive outcome.

- b) Suggestions for improvement - An idea or plan put forward for consideration on how to make a service, good or activity better in the future.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form and automatically set the status as “Closed”. This category of feedback requires to verify the issue that needs improvement and to document suggested solutions (if given). Such information is subsequently presented to the delegated project staff for consideration.

- c) Request for information - A question asked to the organization to get more information about services available or to clarify any issues related to the already processed cases.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form. If the information is provided at the time of receiving the feedback, the staff automatically sets the status as “Closed”. If it requires the staff to get information and return to the complainant, the case is being treated as “Open”. The delegated project staff responds to the inquiry in the database by verifying the information in order to solve the case. As the information is in the process of verification, delegated project staff sets the status as “In progress” or “Waiting for the beneficiary’s response” depending on the course of action. The maximum time reserved for response to the feedback is 10 days. Unless the complainant is unresponsive, the feedback loop will be closed as the information is finally verified and provided to the complainant. The role of the delegated project staff is to deliver answers to the operators who communicate it back to the feedback giver.

- d) Request for assistance - Someone expresses a need for support from the organization.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form. If the support is provided at the time of receiving the feedback, the staff automatically sets the status as “Closed”. If it requires the staff to reach out for the assistance and return to the complainant, the case is being treated as “Open”. The delegated project staff responds to the inquiry in the database by providing assistance through the technical staff/ partner institutions or other entities. As the assistance provision is in the process, delegated project staff sets the status as “In progress” or “Waiting for the beneficiary’s response” depending on the course of action. The maximum time reserved for response to the feedback is 10 days. Unless the complainant is unresponsive, the feedback loop will be closed as the assistance is finally provided to the complainant. The role of the delegated project staff is to reach out for the support, to monitor its progress and to communicate with the operators the results. The role of the operators is to contact the feedback giver and communicate the final status of the case.

- e) Minor dissatisfaction with services/ aid provided - An expression of discontent that does not have serious implications or long-term consequences for a person or a group of people.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form. This category of feedback requires to verify the issue that caused dissatisfaction. If the feedback is irrelevant the recipients set the status as “Closed”. If it requires the staff to reach out for the assistance or information, and return to the caller/ beneficiary, the case is being treated as “Open” and proceeded as those categories. At times it is likely that feedback givers are disappointed with not being eligible for the program and such discontent refers to the selection of target group of beneficiaries. It is important to record the feedback, such information is subsequently presented to the delegated project staff for consideration. In any kind of minor dissatisfaction, it requires the delegated project staff to analyze the case and to focus on preventing such situations.

- f) Major dissatisfaction with services/ aid provided - Expression of discontent or report of a situation that can have serious negative impact, pose safety threats or generate serious longer-term consequences for a person or group of people.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form. This category of feedback requires to verify the issue that caused dissatisfaction. Any case of the major dissatisfaction needs to be carefully scrutinized. This feedback cannot be automatically set as “Closed” even if it is irrelevant. Delegated project staff is treating each case individually. In case of major dissatisfaction inquiry that can be resolved by PCPM or partnering institutions, delegated project staff makes every effort to address the problem within 5 days. In case of expression of major dissatisfaction that cannot be resolved by PCPM, operators are instructed to refer the caller/ beneficiary to other public or non-governmental institutions offering assistance. In any kind of major dissatisfaction, it requires the delegated project staff to analyze the case and to focus on preventing such situations in the future.

- g) Report of violence, protection concern - An allegation or suspicion of violence, intimidation or protection issue that occurred within the community we work in, involving PCPM or partners staff or volunteers.

The feedback recipients document feedback in a questionnaire provided by the Safeguarding focal point or through a direct e-mail message to the Safeguarding Officer. This category of feedback requires to identify all the facts related to the situation such as: location and time of the incident, person or group involved (if the names are unknown – all the characteristic features e. g. color of uniform, appearance), description of the situation etc. Any feedback related to violence, intimidation or protection issues needs to be forwarded to the PCPM Safeguarding Officer. Feedback recipients are responsible to provide Safeguarding Officer with collected data. From that moment Safeguarding Officer has overall responsibility for communication with the complainant including notification of relevant services. Safeguarding Officer addresses the problem as soon as possible, makes first contact with the feedback giver within 3 days after notification. Safeguarding Officer communicates with the team if the case is solved.

Respectively the same procedure applies to cases not involving PCPM or partners staff or volunteers but related to the program.

If the mentioned issue is not involving PCPM or partners staff or volunteers (e.g., domestic violence) the feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form as “Out of scope” category. All the information must be anonymized to protect the identity of the complainant. Operators must re-direct the complainant to other institutions or services who can help, providing their contact information. If the feedback refers to life-threatening situation or any other case in which PCPM staff is legally obligated to report the matter to the police or other community services, they act accordingly.

- h) Sensitive concerns - An allegation of misconduct by CARE or its partners including sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, fraud, corruption and other breaches of the Code of Conduct, involving PCPM or partners staff or volunteers.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form. This category of feedback requires to identify all the facts related to the situation such as: location and time of the incident, person or group involved (if the names are unknown – all the characteristic features e.g. color of uniform, appearance), description of the situation. Any feedback related to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, fraud, corruption etc. needs to be forwarded to the PCPM Safeguarding Officer. Delegated project staff is responsible to provide Safeguarding Officer with collected data. From that moment Safeguarding Officer has overall responsibility for communicating with the complainant including notification of relevant services. Safeguarding Officer addresses the problem as soon as possible, makes first contact with the feedback giver within 5 days after notification. Safeguarding Officer communicates with the team if the case is solved.

Respectively the same procedure applies to cases not involving PCPM or partners staff or volunteers but related to the program.

If the mentioned issue is not involving PCPM or partners staff or volunteers (e.g., corruption by a local council official) the feedback recipients document feedback in the Google form as “Out of scope” category. All the information must be anonymized to protect the identity of the complainant. Operators must re-direct the complainant to other institutions or services who can help, providing their contact information. If the feedback refers to life-threatening situation or any other case in which PCPM staff is legally obligated to report the matter to the police or other community services, they act accordingly.

- i) Out of scope - Feedback or requests for assistance that fall outside the activities of PCPM or where PCPM can realistically intervene.

The feedback recipients document feedback in the feedback form. If the questions are answered at the time of receiving the feedback, the staff automatically sets the status as “Closed”. Feedback regarding other NGOs should be accepted and systematically referred. Where no possible referral path exists, this should be explained to the feedback giver.

Feedback categories	Response timeframes
Expression of gratitude	no response required
Suggestions for improvement	no response required
Request for information	10 days
Request for assistance	10 days
Minor dissatisfaction with services/ aid provided	no response required/ 10 days (if it contains request for information or assistance)
Major dissatisfaction with services/ aid provided	5 days
Report of violence, protection concern	5 days to make first contact with the feedback giver
Sensitive concerns	5 days to make first contact with the feedback giver
Out of scope	no response required

The response timeframes refer to the time period within which the focal point will make first contact with the feedback giver. The response timeframes are not intended to reflect the time limit within which a definite solution needs to be found.

Depending on the feedback channel used, it may be necessary to close the feedback loop in two stages. Firstly, by acknowledging the feedback was received and informing them that we are exploring solutions. Secondly, by reporting on the chosen solution and implementation plan.

6. Information management

Databases used for collecting feedback are stored virtually in the cloud, available only to shared users (restricted to email domain: @pcpm.org.pl). The ability to edit the form and the database will be granted exclusively to the FAM Officer and the dedicated project staff. The right to share the database with other users is granted only to the FAM Officer.

Once each month, the database files will be saved on the FAM Officer's hard drive and secured with a password. These copies will be deleted after 1 year of the completion of the given phase of the project.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

The effectiveness and use of the Feedback and Complaint Mechanism will be reviewed by the PCPM MEAL Officer who will be granted access to the database.

ANNEX TO THE FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Date:.....

Name of the program:

Duration of the program:

Feedback channels' referrals

- Hotline number:
- E-mail:
- Social media (facebook):

Assigned roles

- Project Coordinator:
- Dedicated project staff:
- Feedback recipients/ operators (with the division into channels)
 - ✓ Hotline:
 - ✓ Email communication:
 - ✓ Social media communication:
 - ✓ Other:

Safeguarding focal point referral

- E-mail: complaint@pcpm.org.pl
- Online questionnaire: