



Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Organization

SWRO Complaint Response Mechanism

Approved by board January 2018



SWRO Complaint Response mechanism

The overall purpose of this document is to prepare a basis for promoting contextualized Complaint Response Mechanism in SWRO in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). The information and processes reflected in this document have been designed after consultation with SWRO program staff, field staff, experience from other like-minded organization and target communities. This document is demonstrate the organization commitment to CHS standard 4 and 5. The standard 4 emphasis on communication, participation and feedback to affect population while standard 5 focuses on complaint response mechanism (CRM).

Why share information¹ ?

- Greater understanding of SWRO's principles and objectives
- more open, public reporting on the outcomes and impacts of SWRO's work – successes, setbacks, ways of working and future plans
- better engagement of supporters with the issues we are working on
- better engagement with people living in poverty, marginalized situations and conflict, , increasing their understanding of SWRO, enabling us better to hold each other to account for our mutually agreed commitments, and supporting their increased participation in SWRO's decision-making processes that affect them
- clearer understanding among supporters, staff and affected population as to how SWRO seeks to exercise transparency and accountability to rights-holders in our working approach and projects
- A practical way of implementing our commitment to accountability through transparency ensuring that the key information listed below is always accessible.
- Continuous learning and improvement

What information to share

- the basics about SWRO
- governance and management information
- organizational policies
- strategies, plans and budgets
- information on our finances and our performance
- Mechanisms by which stakeholders can give feedback and make complaints.
- Public Relations information and information about our campaigns
- SWRO and staff Code of Conduct

What information not to share

- Personal details of supporters and SWRO staff unless they have given their approval to take part in campaigns etc.
- Intellectual property or other information disclosed or provided to SWRO under obligation of confidentiality or which is subject to legal disclosure restrictions

¹ CHS commitment 4, information sharing and participation



- legal advice and matters in dispute or under negotiation including disciplinary and investigative information generated in or for SWRO
- Information dealing entirely with internal administration or operating systems
- Planning, monitoring and evaluations of campaigns and fundraising, sharing of which will jeopardise SWRO's competitiveness in fundraising.

How we can share information:

The information sharing process will be as follows:

- SWRO to prepare a template for a brochure, magazine and pamphlet
- Circulate brochures among communities. Considering communities level of literacy - in areas with low level of literacy communities could be informed through meetings. Before circulation of the brochure the context of the communities to be thoroughly reviewed to minimize the risk posed SWRO staff
- The information about other project stakeholders such as authorities, development and humanitarian actors and other donors present in the province and host communities can be shared through face to face meetings
- Organizing year end events to call major stakeholders and share SWRO information(annual function meetings)
- SWRO (where applicable) to have sign board for visibility
- Where applicable SWRO to place project information and the progress at public places(example common places such as CDCs office, community schools, and other public visible places such as local markets and shopping centers)

How to monitor – means of verification that the information has been shared

- SWRO means of verification of CRM compliance will be a checklist as part of field visit by SWRO program staff
- Minutes from the meetings conducted with rights holders
- Pre and post beneficiary feedback
- Short clips and photo of the how the information is shared with host communities

1. Complain Response Mechanism System

SWRO program role

- SWRO program staff to include CRM component as a check list in the field visit template. While in the field, for those who cannot read and write, program staff will listen to their complaints, note them in writing and forward them to the focal point for CRM
- While in the field, in cases where the issue is minor and does not require representation or senior level decision, program staff can respond to beneficiaries in the field. Some specific response could be; why we are not part of the program, why all members of our family do not get SWRO assistance, but serious complaints as reflected shall be addressed by the complaint



mechanism committee. If staff deal with a complaint in the field, they should notify the SWRO focal point of the complaint and of their method of resolution.

- All program staff to fully understand this mechanism and while in the field shall conduct meeting with communities, authorities and other stakeholders if they have specific complaints
- SWRO program team to increase the education level of communities on the CRM
- Involve communities in the design of the CRM system
- Inform and educate communities on our CRM,
- Inform beneficiaries how to submit complaints through different mechanisms
- Distribution of brochures to communities as part of Complaint Procedures

Plan: How to implement, medium to put in place

- As most districts where SWRO works are insecure and there exists a danger in the misunderstanding of the information we could provide and used against us, the medium of complaints will be mobile phone and face to face meetings with SWRO staff.
- SWRO should not limit our beneficiaries to complaining only to SWRO but we should equally involve field staff of SWRO in responding to complaints. SWRO will support field staff in promoting CHS standards related to CRM and information sharing.
- SWRO brochure to include contact details for feedback/complaints

1.1 Referral:

- Complaints not relevant to SWRO need to be referred to a third party, while some might be so serious that they need to be referred to local police or medical attendance – such as sexual exploitation and abuse.

1.2 By Pass Option

- If the complaint is related to the recipient of the complaint, the complainant might not want to file the complaint. The complainant can complain to the next level, meaning directly to the executive Director or to our donors.

2. Receipt of the complaints

- **Tools and means:** The primary means of lodging a complaint will be through mobile contact numbers and face to face meetings. A focal point will be assigned to deal with complaints. The complaint will be assessed by the complaint mechanism committee. The committee to review and assign specific committee member or staff members to investigate the issue and forward the findings and make recommendation to the committee. The committee to decide and share the response with the complainant. With reference to CRM guideline of SWRO, the managing director is the overall responsible. Presently SWRO proposes three staff members for the Complaints Committee; Program Manager, female Economic Empowerment Coordinator and Managing Director(MD) or Deputy Executive Director (in the absence of MD)
- **How to record:** A complaint register will be established. The complaints to be registered with the focal point for receiving the complaints. In case of verbal complaints the details to be registered in the format used for complaints.

- **Who responds to complaint:** The dedicated staff who receives written and verbal complaints. The complaints will be forwarded to Compliant Mechanism Committee.
- **Time frame:** When complaint is received the focal point to confirm that the complaint is received, then letting the complainant know when he/she could expect a conclusion from SWRO, somewhere between 2-4 weeks from receiving the complaint.
- **How to respond:** The complaints committee thoroughly discusses, investigates and recommends a response. The MD is responsible person to ensure responses are communicated to complainants both written or verbally.
- **Sensitive conflicts-** gender mainstreaming training to be provided to staff in handling sensitive complaints. This type of complaints specifically, will require some information on how the complaint will be stored. The complainant will be informed and assured that that his/her information is safely archived and he/she is safeguarded from any kind of possible retaliation.

3. Mediation SWRO:

In case the complainant is not satisfied with the response they can appeal and mediation can be conducted. The role of mediation will be to assess whether SWRO has thoroughly investigated the issue and the response corresponds to the complaint and that the decision made is fully in compliance with SWRO policy and procedures.

- **Conflict/disagreement:** In case there is still conflict and that the complainant is not satisfied, 3rd party mediation can be suggested.
- **Who will mediate:** A staff member who is not part of the complaint committee at SWRO or a third party mutually agreed upon by complainant and SWRO
- **Donor:** If a complainant is not satisfied with the response, SWRO to seek collaboration from one of SWROs donor and other staff member of SWRO.
- **Communities:** Complaints by communities are mainly about SWRO's performance. If a response is not satisfactory the community (ies) can seek SWRO staff member trusted by community and can re-assess the response or communities might seek the mediation of one of other engaged actors implementing projects in the same district or possibly by the donor.

4. How to investigate

- Sensitivity/ sensitive (complaints, behavior): Culture, religion and respect to women are highly sensitive issues in Afghan context. While delivering services the context should be very carefully assessed to avoid any unexpected harm to the reputation of organization and mitigate SWRO risks. Protecting the name of someone who has complained is important as Afghan society is not transparent nor well educated and complaints can be taken personally resulting in harm to the complainant.



[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

- **How and who make the decision:** Complaints will be addressed to the focal point in SWRO and passed to the Complaints Committee for consideration. The decision on action to be taken will be made by this committee.
- **How to communicate the decision:** Written and verbally. Verbally and supported in writing if applicable) in areas where SWRO have access. Through sealed letter to complainant to the field staff member handing it over to the complainant. In the case of a very serious matter SWRO staff to visit the complainant in person in a mutually safe place. Verbally by calling the complainant (provided that he has put his contact number) and letting the complainant knows of the decision.

Appeal process: In cases where a decision is made and the affected party is not satisfied he/she can make an appeal. The appeal must be viable and be supported by adequate information, justification and reasons why a decision is not fair. The complaint committee will review the details and the committee might either stick to the decision or might assign a team to re-investigate or further assess the complaint. The decision depending on the serious of the issue will be responded by the complaint committee or final decision body.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, is written across the bottom of the page.