

# Feedback and Complaints Policy

## 1. Purpose

AFAO values feedback and complaints and recognises these as an essential part of our quality assurance and accountability to members, partners, stakeholders and donors.

This policy sets out AFAO's approach to feedback and complaints from members, partners including Sub-Recipients, external stakeholders and the community.

## 2. Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers are required to comply with this policy.

AFAO's Deputy Chief Executive Officer acts as AFAO's complaints officer.

## 3. Application of policy

This policy applies fully to AFAO's operations, including its international activities and the AFAO Foundation. References in this policy to AFAO include the AFAO Foundation.

Where this policy is contradicted by contractual obligations to funders, the contractual obligations must be adhered to. Exceptions to such obligations should be sought from funders prior to entering into contracts and any substantive areas of difference must be drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer.

This policy does not relate to concerns that arise within the workplace between staff and/or volunteers. For these issues, staff and volunteers should refer to AFAO's EEO, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Grievance Policy or Performance Counselling and Disciplinary Policy.

## 4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- *feedback* is positive or negative comment about an employee or volunteer, activities of the organisation or the organisation itself
- a *complaint* is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service or lack of action by AFAO or its staff, volunteers, partners or anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work.

**Policy number:** 030

**Date approved:** 24 January 2020

**Review date:** January 2022

**Approved by:** AFAO Chief Executive Officer

## 5. Benefits of feedback

Feedback, including complaints, provides AFAO with the opportunity to:

- understand the needs and expectations of participants, stakeholders and communities with which AFAO works and supports
- identify improvements to what AFAO does and how it is done
- record, register, respond to and resolve issues and share these to improve practices
- analyse and learn from trends to ensure AFAO is proactive and effective in its work.

AFAO's feedback processes have been designed in accordance with nine core principles of the Australian Standard *Customer Satisfaction—Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations*.

	Principle	Action
1	Visibility	All staff and volunteers know how to find this policy and how to follow procedures. AFAO publishes this policy on its website.
2	Accessibility	The feedback process is straightforward. A person's age, language, culture or disability will not be a barrier to providing feedback.
3	Responsiveness	Timely acknowledgement, progress and action is provided.
4	Objectivity	Investigations are conducted impartially, fairly, equitably, ethically and completely.
5	Charges	Provision of feedback is free of any charge or cost.
6	Confidentiality	Personal information is only disclosed on a need-to-know basis and is handled in accordance with AFAO's Privacy Policy.
7	Person-focused	AFAO welcomes and promotes the right to provide feedback and recognises feedback as important to what AFAO does and how it is done.
8	Accountability	Roles, processes, and decisions are clear, balanced, ethical and fair.
9	Continuous improvement	AFAO seeks to learn, explore new solutions and improve performance.

## 5. What to do if you wish to provide feedback or make a complaint

Feedback, including complaints, may be provided to AFAO in a variety of forms including through formal correspondence, verbally or via email.

Written complaints may be sent to AFAO's Deputy Chief Executive Officer. Should the complaint relate to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint may be addressed to the AFAO President.

Complaints can be sent to Level 1, 222 King Street, Newtown NSW 2042, Australia or 138/8 Sukhumvit 33 (Phrom Chit), Klongton-nua, Watthana, Bangkok 10110, Thailand.

Alternatively, complainants may write to [complaints@afao.org.au](mailto:complaints@afao.org.au) or call +61 2 9557 9399 (Australia) or +66 2 023 0966 (Thailand).

## 6. Complaints handling

AFAO staff or volunteers who receive a complaint should refer the complaint immediately to AFAO's Deputy Chief Executive Officer who will register the complaint and acknowledging its receipt in writing within three working days.

In the case of verbal complaints, the person receiving the complaint should make a record of the complaint and provide that record to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer. If the complainant is seeking a response to their complaint, the record must include contact details of the complainant to allow a response to be provided.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer will work with a senior staff member associated with the matter to which the complaint relates in order to consider the complaint.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer will escalate the complaint to AFAO's Chief Executive Officer, who may in turn refer it to the Board, if appropriate.

In acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer will advise of the course of action to be taken in investigating the complaint. If advising of this course of action is not possible within three working days, an acknowledgement of the complaint will still be provided, with further advice on the course of action to be taken provided within a reasonable period.

AFAO is a member of the Australian Council for International Development and signatory to their Code of Conduct. If AFAO's response to the complaint is not satisfactory to the complainant, an appeal can be made to ACFID at Private Bag 3, Deakin, ACT, 2600 or on +61 2 6285 1816 or at [main@acfid.asn.au](mailto:main@acfid.asn.au).

## 6. Breach of this policy

Any staff member or volunteer who is found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer engagement.