



Razi Social Development Organization

Grievance Redress Service/Mechanism (GRS/M)

Inclusive Emergency and Rehabilitation Services Project (Afg124-20)

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1. General Background

Razi Social Development Organization (RSDO) is an Afghan NGO that implements social development activities in Afghanistan. RSDO works for the development and relief of marginalized communities to achieve economic prosperity and improve humanitarian and social capital through delivering the social, educational, agricultural and livelihood services to vulnerable and marginalized societies. RSDO was established in 2002 under the name of "Abu Hanifeh Orphan High School", to assist orphan children who lost their parents and families during the long lasting war in Afghanistan to learn and build their future. RSDO was re-registered with the government of Afghanistan as an NGO in April 2008. Throughout years of hard-working, RSDO slowly developed and now has a permanent stay in Herat and Ghor provinces.

2. Introduction

This document defines the Grievance Redress Mechanism the project Afg124-20 has developed to address any grievances, complaints, or concerns related to physical and economic losses, submitted by the people or target communities who may be benefitted or impacted by the implementation of RSDO – Afg 124-20 project. The manual intends to provide clarity and predictability on how complaints will be received, assessed, sorted, and resolved and monitored.

Furthermore, the document also defines the GRS/M system and procedures that will be followed to accept, register, resolve and monitor/evaluate results. The manual is intended for GRS/M implementers, project staff and persons wishing to file grievances and complaints or express concerns.

3. Definition

The formal and informal means of receiving and facilitating resolution (through dialogue, negotiation, mediation or arbitration) of complaints or disputes, of groups and individuals, whose rights may be affected through the implementation of RSDO activities. And also we aim to use GRMs as a source of information for their organization and project.

Via Grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs), we capture beneficiary complaints or grievances related to targeting, service delivery, or other program functions, and provide redress. For RSDO Grievance redress is an important element of managing a targeted program, particularly when food or non-food service is involved. By Grievance redress mechanisms we mitigate inclusion and exclusion errors and for monitoring corruption as well.

4. Defining the type and scope of a grievance redress mechanism

Grievance redress mechanisms can take different forms and have different functions depending on the context in, and purpose for, which they are established. It is a key recommendation to provide the necessary legal instruments to enable the grievance redress mechanisms to deliver a response, to provide redress, or to pass the grievance to a more powerful decision-making body such as in the justice system or government. Grievance redress mechanisms can be judicial or non-judicial. Judicial grievance redress mechanisms have the advantage of having the "teeth" to sanction wrongdoing, which a non-judicial grievance redress mechanism usually cannot. However, non-judicial grievance redress mechanisms can provide an important alternative to processing a grievance through the national legal processes, which can sometimes be lengthy or ineffective.

It is important to define the scope of a grievance redress mechanism, and provide clear guidance to potential users on what they can expect from the mechanism, what issues the mechanism deals with and what issues are outside its remit. Types of grievance redress mechanisms include:

- community-based grievance and dispute resolution mechanisms
- operational-level mechanisms to handle grievances relating to a specific project
- national human rights institutions that handle more serious allegations of abuse or mismanagement
- anti-corruption hotlines, integrity units or anticorruption agencies to deal with allegations of corruption, fraud or abuse of authority
- mechanisms associated with international development and climate finance institutions (e.g. the Inspection Panel of the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund's Independent Redress Mechanism and Independent Integrity Unit)
- sectoral and multi-stakeholder grievance mechanisms that address breaches in commonly agreed standard.

5. Aim of GRM

Specific purposes of the current GRM are:

- To be responsive to the needs of beneficiaries and to address and resolve their grievances;
- To serve as a conduit for soliciting inquiries, inviting suggestions, and increasing community participation;
- To collect information that can be used to improve operational performance;
- To enhance the project's legitimacy among stakeholders;
- To promote transparency and accountability;
- To deter fraud and corruption and mitigate project risks.

6. The principles of the current GRM:

This procedure favors an approach that ensures internal coordination to resolve grievances, and that is immediately responsive to community concerns. This will increase the likelihood that complaints / grievances can be addressed in a harmonious manner, which in turn will facilitate the promotion of a more stable operational environment. The principles on which this GRM is based are:

- **Accessibility:** Easily accessible to persons who wish to submit a grievance, complaint, or concern and with assistance provided to persons who face barriers such as language, literacy, awareness, cost, or fear of reprisal;
- **Predictability:** A clear procedure with time frames establishing for each stage and clarity on the types of results that can and cannot be delivered;
- **Fairness:** Processes that are widely perceived as fair, especially in terms of access to information and opportunities for meaningful participation in the final decision;
- **Rights compatibility:** Consistent with applicable national and international standards and without restriction of access to other redress mechanisms;
- **Transparency:** Transparent processes and outcomes that meet the public interest concerns at stake;
- **Capacity:** Implemented with adequate technical, human, and financial resources
- **Feedback:** Serves as a means to channel citizen feedback to improve project outcomes for the people.

7. Importance of GRM for RSDO

In order to ensure transparency and accountability a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) to address project-related grievances is established by RSDO as part of the organizational policies.

Where an individual has a grievance with regard to a specific project she or he, should, in the first instance, be encouraged to make use of existing local-level structures (e.g. RSDO sub-office or the staff in the field sites) to try to resolve quickly any concerns or grievances related to project development and implementation.

A grievance redress mechanism is a locally based, formalized process for receiving, evaluating, and addressing project-related grievances from affected households, person or stakeholders at the community, project, region, and country levels. Project-level grievance mechanisms offer an accessible point for complaints to be received and a predictable process timeline for communities to obtain a response. GRM recognizes the right of complainants to take their grievances to a dispute-resolution mechanism available at sub-project level.

All complaints should first be negotiated to reach an agreement at the local community/village level. If this fails, complaints and grievances about these Guidelines,

implementation of the agreements recorded in the Community Meeting Minutes or any alleged irregularity in carrying out the project can also be addressed by the affected persons or their representative at the RSDO Grievance Redress Mechanism. If this also fails, the complaint may be submitted to the relevant implementing agency for a decision.

8. Establishing accessible channels to submit grievances

RSDO will has always tried to establish grievance redress mechanisms that are accessible to all stakeholders, socio-culturally appropriate, gender sensitive and tailored to the local context. We, in RSDO, have tried to prepare such a grievance redress mechanism which is tailored to the needs and context of the potential users. For example, we have secure channels for verbal communication of grievances (which are transcribed and reported) may be most appropriate where literacy is low, whereas in other contexts written or online reporting schemes may have the greatest reach and accessibility and such channels are also accessible. We are determined and decisive to build upon or adapt existing mechanisms in the local or national context, rather than establishing new mechanisms. so, a variety of channels are established to ensure that all potential complainants are able to submit their grievances. Depending on the context, these channels can include:

- Grievance Boxes; it will be located in a visible place in each sub project site (District or province).
- Personal Visit: Complainants can personally submit their grievances to one of the relevant Grievances Redress Committees.
- Anonymous complaints: are also accepted, where the identity of the complainants is not necessarily required- particularly complaints at workplace conditions. However, anonymous complaints are not always accepted where specific incidents are investigated, and a complainant's identity can be crucial during the investigation. A complainants' identity may also be required at the end of an investigation if the complainant is needed to testify at an adversarial hearing.
- dedicated email address or web page
- verbal or written feedback at a drop-in center
- By letter or by hand delivery to the RSDO
- Telephone Hotline: The complainant can report his/her grievance verbally through telephone hotline on all working days from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
- Help desk; there will be temporary help desk when needed in each project site;
- text message (e.g. SMS)
- • social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)

RSDO shall facilitate all the above mentioned channels to ensure that all complains and grievances are submitted and by which be resolved.

We are determined to secure the safety and rights of all stakeholders who use grievance redress mechanisms, where necessary ensuring anonymity and/or protection of complainants from potential reprisals. Anonymous reporting is an option to support the safety and security of complainants. RSD offers Specific protections to complainants, especially in contexts where whistle-blower protection is weak or non-existent. RSDO will provide the above channels for the beneficiaries and stakeholders to submit their grievances, anywhere (where our projects are being implemented) and at any time. We shall have specific timelines, steps and processes for handling grievances and we are responsive to the types of responses and outcomes that can be expected. There is also the possibility of submitting a grievance anonymously. We are also committed to the rights and protections provided for complainants.

9. Publicizing the grievance redress mechanism

RSDO finds it important to publicize the mechanism widely with all stakeholders and potential users, so that they are aware of channels available and what they can expect when submitting feedback or a grievance. We have already defined the best means of communication and outreach to build awareness of the mechanism in the context, such as websites, information boards or community meetings at the level of project implementation.

10. Grievance Redressed Mechanism Training

In order to have proper implementation of GRM, first of all GRC members would be trained on their TORs and core responsibilities. Furthermore, they would be familiarized to best ways of collecting, redressing, and referring of some critical cases to referral points, reporting plus giving feedbacks in a proper way.

11. Project Beneficiaries' awareness Program

The beneficiaries of the project would be aware of the GRM through RSDO social media (HEDP Web site, Facebook, and email). Moreover, an awareness program would be conducted by RSDO Focal Points in each site and the procedure would be explained clearly.

12. Filing a complaint

Any individual or community who believes that an RSDO-supported project has or is likely to, adversely affect them can submit a complaint.

13. The GRS considers a complaint admissible when:

- The complaint relates to an RSDO-supported project that is under preparation, active, or has been closed for less than 3 months;
- The complaint is submitted by individuals or communities affected by an RSDO supported project, or by their authorized representative; and

- The complainant(s) allege that they have been or will be affected by the RSDO-supported project.
- Complaints must be in writing and addressed to the GRS. They can be sent by the above methods and channels.

Information to include in a complaint
Complaints must:

- Identify the project subject of the complaint
- Clearly state the project's adverse impact(s)
- Identify the individual(s) submitting the complaint
- Specify if the complaint is submitted by a representative of the person(s) or community affected by the project
- If the complaint is submitted by a representative, include the name, signature, contact details, and written proof of authority of the representative.

Supporting evidence is not necessary but may be helpful in reviewing and resolving the complaint. The complaint may also include suggestions on how the individuals believe the complaint could be resolved. All complaints will be treated as confidential. The GRS will not disclose any personal data that may reveal the identity of complainants without their consent.

14. Process of Grievance in RSDO

The received grievances will be registered into standard registration database, analyzed, and categorized by the assigned person, who is authorized by the RSDO and the GRM committee. The following represents complaints registration process and grievances flow in RSDO sub-projects implementation:

15. Grievance Redress Committee (GRC)

The RSDO has constituted a grievance redress committee at different level to redress the grievances of the Affected Persons (APs)/ or Bens or process stakeholders' comments. The GRC at different stages doesn't have any legal mandate or authority but acts as a facilitating source on voluntary basis trying to resolve issues between the complainant and the RSDO. The committee comprises of the following elements:

16. District Level GRC Committee Members

- District Supervisor/MCs' Officer as the chairman
- District Focal Point Person as a member
- Shora Head/ Religious Scholar/Community member as a member
- Lead Ben as a member
- District Coordinator as a member
- Extension Worker as a member
- M&E Officer as a member

- Complainants or their representative as the members

At the district level, each of the above members will be responsible to receive the grievances directly from complainants or through different uptake channels like verbal, written, call, comment, and etc. The grievances will be submitted to GRC meeting on a regular basis.

17. Provincial Level GRC Committee members

- Provincial Project Manager as the chairman
- Regional Coordinator as a member
- MEAL Manager as a member
- Relevant Sectorial Representative as a member
- Regional Focal Point Person as a member
- Community Member as a member
- Lead Ben as a member

The Grievances at the regional level will be received, registered and processed by a relevant it will then be shared with regional level GRC committee on a regular basis. The GRM Focal Point at the provincial office will register, categorize, analyze and share the complaints and feedback with the regional level GRC. The committee will discuss the issues and find a suitable resolution. It is anticipated that most of the complaints will be solved at this stage and suggestions and feedback will also be considered or processed for project improvement. In case, the regional level GRC could not find a solution or it is not within their level of authority, then it will be referred to headquarter level GRC for further actions. The Focal Point will also report the outcome to the RSDO regional coordinator on a regular basis.

18. Headquarter GRC Committee members

- RSDO Director as the chairman of the committee
- Head of Programs as a member
- Project Manager of Relevant Project as a member
- MEAL Manager as a member
- HR Manager as a member
- Representative from relevant sector as a member
- Focal Person of Relevant Project as a member
- Lead Bens as a member
- Community Member as a member

19. Function/ToR of the GRC Committee

- Receiving, recording and sorting of grievances
- Conducting assessment of grievances
- Referring grievances to appropriate units or persons;

- Tracking, monitoring, documentation, evaluation and reporting
- Determining the resolution process;
- Making decisions, including parameters and standards for accurate and consistent decision making;
- Directing relevant agencies responsible for implementing decisions;
- Notifying complainants and other affected parties of eligibility of the complaint, the resolution process, and outcomes;
- & Field visits (if needed)
- Complainants visit (if needed)

In case the issue wouldn't be solved by the field offices' (district and provincial level committees) then it will be referred to HQ GRC for further instruction or action. Central GRC will analyze and evaluate the issue in order to find out a possible solution. The committee will discuss the issue with related technical components and propose a solution.

For any complex and rare issue, which cannot be solved by different level GRCs, the complainant will have a chance to go to the relevant court for legal follow-up.

20. Handling grievances

RSDO grievance redress mechanism is responsive, and process grievances in an efficient and timely manner. They also provide regular and systematic information to the complainant on the progress of their case until it is resolved. Receiving, processing and resolving grievances is a systematic process that follows clear guidelines and principles of objectivity, integrity, and respect for the rights and confidentiality of all involved stakeholders. The exact process to be followed will depend on the details of the case in question, but the core steps involved in receiving and processing grievances are in RSDO as follows.

Step 1: Record the grievance and acknowledge receipt

Once a grievance is received through one of the established channels, log it in the grievance data management system. Send the complainant a prompt acknowledgement, and information on the potential follow-up actions and timeline. Complaints should be acknowledged within 3–5 days of receipt. Even where a grievance is minor or can be directly resolved, record the details in the centralized system for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Step 2: Assess eligibility

To ensure consistency and objectivity, RSDO tries to follow clearly established guidelines to assess the eligibility of the grievance. The criteria for eligibility should be publicly available. If the grievance is assessed as falling outside the scope of the mechanism,

clearly communicate this to the complainant, together with the criteria used to reach this conclusion.

Step 3: Review and analysis the information

RSDO Conducts an independent, objective and impartial review of the information submitted. Based on such review, we will identify and implement a solution for the grievance received. If the case was more complex and we will further conduct investigation and analysis involving multiple stakeholders. When dealing with serious allegations, we, in RSDO, are committed to collaborate with law enforcement bodies. We systematically record all actions and findings, and send the complainant regular communications on the progress of their claim.

Step 4: Develop a resolution

We are flexible in ensuring effective resolution of grievances, which may have a broad scope. For relatively straightforward or common grievances, it may be possible for the team handling the case to directly develop a response that deals with the issues raised. For more complex cases, further assessment and engagement with the complainant and other stakeholders may be required to jointly determine the best course of action.

Step 5: Communicate the proposed response

We are committed to issue the response normally within days of receipt of the grievance.

Step 6: Close the case

Once agreement has been reached with the complainant on the proposed course of action to address the grievance, implement the response and close the case. Collect evidence on the corrective actions taken (e.g. photos or documents, a record of resolution, an agreement with the complainant, a confirmation from the complainant).

Step 7: Handle appeals

Ensure that an appeals process is in place in case complainants are not satisfied with the decision of the grievance redress mechanism. The appeals process should involve an independent panel that can objectively verify the outcome of a case. Inform complainants about their rights to appeal, as well as any alternative national legal or administrative channels that may be available to address their case.

21. Feedback Mechanism:

It is one of the most important steps of the RSDO's GRM to provide clear feedback of outcome to the complainants. One of the important activities of the GRC will be to

provide an acknowledgement to the complainants through email, phone call or personal visits. The complainants must know that their complains were recorded by the Committee and are investigating the issue. This can only happen when the complainant has identified himself/herself. In case of anonymous complain/grievance, acknowledgement will **not** be possible. The means through which the complainant has been acknowledged shall also be recorded in the database.

In this regard, there will be the below options for the complainants in order to receive the final feedback within five working days after the issue solved.

- Message: the final resolution will be entered in to database in to two languages, English and one of the Afghanistan official languages (Pashto or Dari). The local one will automatically be forwarded to complainants mobile.
- Website: the final resolution will also be put in to RSDO website in English as well as one of the local languages.
- Email: The complainant, who has sent his /her grievance through email, will receive the final feedback through email.
- Call: The complainant, who has shared his /her grievance through mobile, will also receive feedback through a call by relevant Focal Point.

22. Monitoring cases and grievance redress mechanism effectiveness

Careful records should be maintained within a computerized data management system of all grievances received, as well as the actions taken to respond to them. Carefully maintaining records for future analysis has two chief purposes:

- to monitor the grievances that are received, in order to identify common issues and potential trends that may imply systematic capacity issues or gaps that need to be addressed on a wider scale (e.g. by altering policy design).
- We are also committed to evaluate the overall performance of the grievance redress mechanism and compliance with the principles of fairness, impartiality, accessibility and responsiveness. We try to identify the weaknesses in the system, and will allow adjustments to be made to the processes and procedures, as necessary.

For the above mentioned objectives, we will try to establish an oversight body with advisory authority to monitor performance and provide strategic advice about the grievance redress mechanism. This can be an independent entity or a multi-stakeholder body that includes government and representatives of relevant stakeholder groups.

RSDO believes in transparency as a key element of any effective review and evaluation process. Although there will likely be case-specific information that is sensitive and should not be shared publicly, it is important to make aggregate information (e.g. on

the types of grievances received and the approaches used to resolve them) publicly available to demonstrate the effectiveness of the system.

23. Database

RSDO is determined to design a database to keep the record of any grievance related to the project (redressed at the site or referred to HQ or any other referral points). Each grievance must be registered and recorded to the Grievance Redress Database and to be shared with team on monthly basis.

24. Supporting the functioning of grievance redress mechanisms

Ongoing resources, financial and otherwise, will need to be identified and made available for the functioning of grievance redress mechanisms. These include resources for receiving and processing grievances, as well as for providing redress, as appropriate.

25. Grievance Redressed Form

RSDO would like to know your concerns related to our project and our activities. The more information (including contact details) and supporting evidence provided, the more helpful it will be to our process. You may request us to keep your personal details confidential.

Please submit this form to GRM Focal Point of the Project online or offline. This should be submitted within 5 working days.

Comments:

.....
.....
.....

Action to be Taken:

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.....
.....
.....

Outcome:

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.....
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.....
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.....
.....

Signed by: (GRM Focal Point)

Date:/...../.....

Annex 3

Format for reporting of complaints and grievance to higher GRM Committee

Complaints Name	Ph.No	Province	District	Date	Complaints	Committee Decision

Annex 4

GRIEVANCE FEEDBACK FORM

Grievance No: _____

General Information

Name of Grievant..... Type of Grievance.....
Date Grievance Lodged..... Date Grievance Decided.....

Committee Decision and Justification

Please describe the type of grievance, what the committee decided, and how. (include specific details)

Discussion: _____

Final Decision: _____

Committee Members

1: Name..... Position..... Signature..... Date.....

2: Name..... Position..... Signature..... Date.....

3: Name..... Position..... Signature..... Date.....

4: Name..... Position..... Signature..... Date.....

5: Name..... Position..... Signature..... Date.....

Agreement of the Grievant to the above Decision

I agree/disagree with the decision taken.

Name..... Signature..... Date.....