**Tool 2**

**Context Analysis Checklist**

This tool is designed to assist teams to consider factors that may influence communication and engagement with program participants, such as local power dynamics, access to communication technology, and the experience and resources of CRS and our partners for community engagement or FCRMs.

**What is this tool for?**

This checklist is designed to support program teams designing FCRMs to analyze available data to understand the communication landscape in their program’s target area. Available data can include secondary sources, data collected through previous programs, and the local knowledge of staff and partners.

The checklist can also help teams to identify information gaps for primary data collection with target communities, to determine the communication needs, preferences and barriers of diverse community members. Finally, it can help teams to make decisions on the most appropriate scope and channels for their context, project and/or country program.

**1. Review agency, country program and donor requirements**

Many donors have requirements for accountability, protection mainstreaming and safeguarding/PSEA[[1]](#footnote-1) that relate to communicating with program participants, and to feedback and complaints. CRS MEAL Policies and Procedures (MPPs) also have auditable requirements that need to be taken into consideration. Some questions to reflect on for this step are:

* **For this project, what are the relevant agency requirements related to feedback and complaints?** *The MPPs have different requirements depending on the duration and level of funding of each project.*
* **What are the donor requirements related to feedback and complaints?** *These may be found in guidance on accountability, protection mainstreaming, safeguarding and/or PSEA.*
* **What country program requirements or priorities need to be considered?**
* Is there an opportunity to create a CP‑level channel, to complement other project‑level efforts?
* Are there opportunities to expand existing FCRMs that partners have already set up?
* Are there opportunities to codesign and establish a jointly managed mechanism with partner organizations?
* Are there opportunities to collaborate on a shared feedback system with consortia members?

**2. Review existing data**

FCRMs that are grounded in the local communication landscape will be safer, more accessible and relevant to program participants and the wider community. Significant information often exists on the local context, and can include initial needs assessments; secondary sources such as reports from peer organizations; data collected through previous programs; and the local knowledge of staff and partners. Key questions to consider when reviewing existing data are:

* **What are the power dynamics that may affect people’s ability to give feedback or complain about staff or programmatic issues?** *Review the collated documents to identify potential barriers to community engagement or participation. Barriers can be logistical, financial, security‑related, technological, physical, psychological, attitudinal or cultural.* Consider the following:
* Who are the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, based on gender, age, disability and other relevant diversity factor (e.g., minority ethnic, religious or political groups)?
* Who has power in the community, based on gender, age and/or diversity?
* What community decision‑making structures exist and which leaders participate in them? Are the leaders representative of diverse groups within the community, and who are the potential “gatekeepers”?
* How may gender roles and norms for different age groups increase or decrease access to communicating with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)?
* What are the literacy rates across gender, age and relevant diversity factors?
* What languages are spoken by diverse groups in the community?
* What barriers may community members encounter if they file a complaint? *Common barriers include fear of losing access to services, fear of NGOs leaving the area, and fear of retribution if complaining about staff conduct.*
* Is face‑to‑face communication between sex groups culturally appropriate?
* Is technology, such as mobile phones and the internet, accessible regardless of sex, age, disability, literacy, ethnicity and socioeconomic status?
* **What operational constraints could impact participants’ ability to provide feedback or complaints?**
* What infrastructure is available for travel to and from likely project sites? Are project sites likely to be easily accessible and frequently accessed?
* What are the access issues for people with restricted mobility and other forms of disability or impairment, including visual and aural impairments, and intellectual impairments?
* Does access to technology or other communication channels differ in rural versus urban areas?
* **What can existing feedback and complaints program data tell us? What can the utility of previously designed channels tell us?** *Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback channels that CRS or our partner organizations have established previously, as follows:*
* Disaggregate feedback and complaints data by sex, age and any other relevant diversity factor.
* Determine which groups used which channels for programmatic feedback and complaints.
* Determine which groups used which channels for sensitive complaints on staff conduct, fraud or safeguarding issues.
* Determine which channels were most or least frequently used for sensitive complaints.
* Determine which channels were most or least frequently used overall.
* Determine which groups did not provide feedback or complaints of any kind.
* Determine which groups did not make sensitive complaints.
* Review existing monitoring or evaluation data for any information on communication preferences and barriers.
  + Review existing monitoring or evaluation data for any protection (e.g., safety and dignity), anonymity and confidentiality concerns and needs.
* **What technology‑enhanced feedback and complaints channels may be relevant and appropriate in this context or for this program?** *NGOs are relying more frequently on technology to transmit and receive information; however, this is not appropriate in every situation. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of technological solutions for collecting, analyzing and responding to feedback and complaints.*
* Determine the benefits of technology use in the local context, in terms of efficiency, data quality and maintaining confidentiality.
* Assess potential online safeguarding issues and conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure that we are not putting any one at risk of harm.
* Review network providers in the area, including their signal strength and the cost of calls, SMS and data.
* Review available technology at country and partner organizations, such as basic/smart mobile phones, landlines, tablets and laptops, and power sources to keep devices charged.
* Assess the information and communications technologies for development (ICT4D) skills of CRS and partner staff, and training needs.
* Determine national regulations and requirements on telecommunication use for public messaging and data collection. Are any technologies banned by government (e.g. WhatsApp)? These may be legally and financially restrictive.
* Consider community members’ access to technology by gender, age, disability, literacy level, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

**3. Discuss with staff**

CRS and partner staff often have significant knowledge of communication in a given context or local area. Meet with a cross section of program, MEAL, protection and operations CP and partner stakeholders to discuss the information gathered above.

Present the findings gathered in Steps 1 and 2 to frame the discussion, and update these questions to reflect initial findings, addressing new queries that the data review generated. If useful, use   *Tool 3: FCRM channels pros and cons* to help inform the discussion.

Reflect on the presentation and consider the questions below:

* How do CRS and FCRM manager partner staff request complaints and feedback?[[2]](#footnote-2)
* How do CRS and partner staff respond to complaints and feedback?
* How do CRS and partner staff use complaints and feedback in program decisions?
* What is successful in these feedback, complaints and response processes?
* What challenges exist in the feedback and complaints process? How can this FCRM address these?
* Who needs to access and use feedback and complaints data to ensure timely and effective action and response (closing the feedback loop)? Consider access to data for programmatic issues and sensitive complaints separately, as information on sensitive complaints must be limited for confidentiality purposes.
* What level of staffing is required to adequately collect, analyze, respond to and use feedback and complaints data?
* What sources of funding are available to cover FCRM costs (donor, CP, etc.)?
* What channels have been used in the past by the most vulnerable groups?
* Which groups experience the most communication barriers and/or marginalization, and should be targeted as a priority for primary data collection? This could be different genders, ages, religious or ethnic groups, for example.
* What information gaps exist in terms of potential barriers or safety risks for accessing feedback, complaints and response channels?
* What other information still needs to be collected from the target community?

**4. Consult diverse community members**

Conduct community consultations to determine community preferences for FCRM channels, and fill in gaps in understanding of context after the data review and staff interviews. In these consultations, it is important to include a diverse cross‑section of the target community, to ensure FCRM channels are appropriate, safe and accessible for all program participants, regardless of gender, age or other relevant diversity factor. At a minimum, talk to men and women separately, but note that is best to also hold separate consultations with previously identified vulnerable groups.

When possible, questions for communities should be integrated into broader scheduled assessments, to avoid duplication and participant survey fatigue.

The Inter‑Agency Standing Committee has produced a useful tool with questions on communication with communities, and accountability: Menu of accountability to affected populations (AAP) related questions for multi‑sector needs assessments (MSNAs) (IASC 2018).

Adapt these questions to address gaps in knowledge from the review of existing data and staff interviews. If FCRMs are in place in the community, ask directly about the use of these. If no FCRMs are in place, provide a brief introduction to the basic concepts of feedback, complaints and response so that community members are able to answer these questions appropriately. At a minimum, ensure data is collected on the following questions:

* How would you prefer to provide feedback to CRS and our partners about the quality, quantity and appropriateness of the aid, services and support you will receive?
* How would you prefer to provide feedback or make a complaint to CRS/partner about the behavior of CRS/partner staff?
* If FCRMs are in place in the community, which channels are established to provide feedback and complaints to CRS/partner?
* How are these channels accessed?
* Who uses these channels and why?
* Who doesn’t use these channels and why not?
* How can CRS/partner make these channels more effective for the community?
* In which language do you prefer to communicate with CRS and our partners?

**5. Analyze results**

Data collected as part of this process should at a minimum be disaggregated by age and sex, and ideally by disability and any other relevant diversity factor in your context (e.g., social, economic or political). Use your context analysis to identify priority groups to be represented in the analysis to ensure safe access to FCRM for all community members, i.e., people with disabilities, refugees or internally displaced people, and minority groups. Discuss the findings of each step with CRS and partner staff to determine community preferences for channels. Document community consultation results in a table such as the one below. These results will be used alongside   *Tool 3: FCRM channels pros and cons* in selecting FCRM channels in Step 3.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Target groups to consider**  *(please add relevant groups for your context)* | **Communication barriers** | **Previous channel most used overall** | **Previous channel most used for sensitive complaints** | **Safety concerns to giving feedback and complaints** | **Preferred channel for sensitive complaints** | **Preferred channel for programmatic feedback and complaints** |
| **Women** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Men** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Girls** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Boys** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Adolescent girls** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Adolescent boys** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Older women** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Older men** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **People with restricted mobility** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **People with other forms  of disability** *(please specify)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Minority groups** *(please specify)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**6. Decide on scope and channels**

Based on an analysis of the primary data, teams should select channels that are safe and accessible for all program participants, with particular emphasis on the safety and access of women, girls, people with disabilities and any other marginalized group. Teams should also consider donor, agency and CP requirements in their selection, and consider staffing and funding as part of the decision‑making process.

Previous experience and industry‑wide guidance demonstrates that regular feedback collection through *active channels* (e.g., focus group discussions, unstructured listening sessions, community meetings and help desks) should be included, in combination with *static* *channels* that are designed to receive feedback at the time and on the subject the individual chooses, and that are confidential and/or anonymous (e.g., hotlines, suggestion boxes, digital platforms).

As part of channel selection, teams should:

* Hold discussions with relevant operations and project staff to review the data gathered on communication preferences and to assess all available options for static and active channels.
* Use both context analysis findings and consideration of the pros and cons of each channel type. Use   *Tool 3: FCRM channels pros and cons* to guide selection, as needed.
* Choose channels that are safe and accessible for all program participants, with particular emphasis on the safety and access of women, girls, people with disabilities and any other marginalized group.
* Consider face‑to‑face channels that integrate well with planned project activities and can support regular, meaningful and constructive communication with communities and program participants during implementation.
* Build active feedback collection into ongoing project‑monitoring processes by planning for brief open‑ended listening and feedback sessions at the end of structured data collection visits.

**7. Document decisions**

Document feedback, complaints and response channel selection in the *SMILER+ FCRM* *planning worksheet template* along with subsequent decisions on staffing and resource allocation. Besides a short description of the channel, the template captures channel access and availability, anticipated access limitations and how they may be addressed, linkages with other channels or projects, and ICT4D needs. Teams should also include initial plans for FCRM close‑out, handover or other sustainability planning in the template.

1. .   
   Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is a subset of safeguarding and is a commitment made by the global humanitarian sector to ensure that staff and affiliates do not sexually abuse or exploit program participants or members of the wider community. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. .   
   When designing a CP‑level FCRM, consult staff from all programs. Each team may have distinct and specific needs related to complaints and feedback. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)