

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

SPECIAL FINANCING FACILITY FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (SFF-LD)

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNIT



COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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COMPLAINTS HANDLING - POLICIES AND PROCEDURE

1.1 Background

As part of an ongoing move to improve accountability, accessibility and transparency, the Special Financing Facility for Local Development (SFF-LD) is committed to establishing and implementing a Complaints Handling Mechanism (CHM) for managing, responding to and monitoring of complaints. This mechanism aims the sole objective of enabling stakeholders, partners and individuals raise issues and provide feedback on SFF-LD activities and policies.

Project Implantation Unit (PIU) of the Ministry of Finance is tasked with the role of receiving, managing and responding to feedback and complaints received on SFF-LD activities. The PIU aims to establish a CHM that is not only user friendly, safe and accessible, but that is also simple, efficient and effective. Such a mechanism will be in line with the SFF-LD's commitment to transparency, accountability and accessibility.

1.2 Key Principles of the Complaints Handling Mechanism (CHM)

To ensure that the SFF-LD complaints mechanism is effective, trusted and therefore practical, the PIU will ensure that the following key principles guide the handling of complaints:

- i. Participation** – Involve people and stakeholders at every stage.
- ii. Transparency** - Develop a CHM that is transparent so that all users are aware of the procedures; that they understand its purpose, have sufficient information on how to access it and understand how it works.
- iii. Accessibility** - A CHM that is available to be used by as many people as possible within any stakeholder group in the place where SFF-LD projects and programs are being implemented.
- iv. Confidentiality** - Confidentiality assures that any information given is restricted to a limited number of people and that it is not disseminated wider, therefore offering an element of protection and security to the complainant.

1.3. Who can make a complaint under this policy

Parties raising complaints about SFF-LD activities, projects and policies may include (but are not limited to):

- Individual beneficiaries of SFF-LD activities (general public)
- Stakeholders affected by the implementation of SFF funded activities including local leaders, government representatives, representatives of civil society organizations or other NGOs
- Implementing partners and donors
- Interested third parties e.g. subcontractors

1.4 Key areas and Types of Complaints

Key areas of possible complaint may include (but are not limited to):

- SFF-LD Project Implementation
- SFF-LD General Policies and Procedures
- Misuse of SFF funds/fraud
- Behavior/Conduct of SFF staff
- Insufficient data on SFF activities and spending
- Complaints against Implementing Partners, Contractors and or Local Government officials
- Constructive recommendations and or comments

2. COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

2.1 Communicating and Establishing the Complaints Handling Mechanism (CHM)

All relevant stakeholders need to be fully informed and made aware of SFF-LD's policy and procedure for handling complaints. The PIU will communicate with stakeholders and partners about their right to complain and seek redress and will explain the full scope of this policy and procedures.

The PIU will communicate with stakeholders in a number of different ways, including:

- In Consultative Meetings;
- During monitoring visits and needs assessments of projects;
- Via SFF Website
- Other media channels as deemed appropriate

2.2 Receiving Complaints

The complaints handling process described under section 3 below sets out an overview of the process that the PIU will use to respond to complaints from stakeholders and beneficiaries of SFF-LD activities.

Complaints can be made in writing or via e-mail to the PIU. Additionally, complaints can be received by telephone or in person to the PIU.

In the case of complaints on projects being implemented by the SFF-LD, the Project Oversight Committee established to oversee the project will be the first stop for those wishing to register complaints or to make recommendations. The composition of each Project Oversight Committee should ensure adequate representation for Community Leaders, Business Leaders, Local Government, Women and Youth groups, and Civil Society groups. Committees will be required to conduct targeted discussions to elicit feedback on PIU

projects in the community from stakeholders. Stakeholder representation on these committees will provide the first outlet for feedback from the public. However, communities will also be provided with information allowing them to contact the PIU directly, in cases where complainants do not feel comfortable registering a complaint with the local committee directly.

All complaints once received will be logged on to the SFF-LD's database.

2.3 Processing and Investigating Complaints

It is the responsibility of the PIU to determine the type and nature of the complaint and thus decide on the specific procedures and actions that needs to be followed. The nature and seriousness of the complaint will determine how the investigation should be conducted:

- a) **SFF-LD Project Activities** - In cases where the complaint is raised with a local committee, it must be reported immediately to the PIU by the committee or one of its member groups. The PIU will then consider how the issue should be handled. In cases where the PIU decides that the issue can be managed by the local committee the PIU will be responsible for documenting how the issue was addressed by the local committee and following-up after a period to ensure the issue was genuinely resolved. When appropriate, PIU implementing partners will play an important role in reporting and monitoring cases of complaints relating to PIU activities.
- b) **PIU-level resolution of project-specific complaints** - In cases where the PIU decides an issue cannot be resolved at the local committee level or has been reported directly to the PIU project officer, the PIU will report the incident to the Minister of Finance, recommending what he may wish to do to resolve it. The Minister will then determine how the issue should be dealt with. Issues that cannot be solved at the local level may include complaints against PIU staff, PIU Implementing Partners, Local Government Officials, or PIU policies in general.
- c) **Misuse of funds or fraud** - In cases of alleged financial misconduct, the PIU will immediately inform the Minister who will constitute an investigations team to look into the allegations. The findings of the team are to be forwarded to the Steering Committee for further and appropriate action where necessary.
- d) **Misconduct of SFF-LD Staff or Associated Parties** - All cases of misconduct should be forwarded to the PIU. The PIU will then report the incident to the Minister who will make a determination as to how the issue should be dealt with or he may take necessary action as he deems fit in the circumstance.

Investigations will be carried out confidentially and only a limited number of persons who need to know about the complaint will be involved in the process.

2.4 Acknowledgement

Once the PIU receives a complaint, it will ensure that a formal acknowledgement is sent out to the complainant within one calendar week of receiving such a complaint. Where appropriate, the Complainant will at all times be kept abreast of the investigations through frequent updates. Once the complaint has been resolved, the complainant where appropriate, may receive feedback setting out how the complaint was processed, outcomes and or action taken to achieve such resolution.

2.5 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting Complaints

All complaints are to be logged using the SFF-LD Complaints Record Form (Annexe 1). The PIU are required to report on quarterly basis, all complaints received and action taken to resolve such complaints to the Steering Committee.

3. SFF-LD COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS - DESCRIPTION

A: Receive complaint

- **Complainant:** Issue complaint either directly to the PIU (in writing via letter or email or telephone call) or via project oversight committees (verbally or in writing)
- **PIU:**
 - Receive complaint in writing or verbally, either directly from the complainant or via someone acting on their behalf
 - Log the complaint and send acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to the complainant or the complainant's representative (within **1 calendar week** of receipt of the complaint)

B: Process complaint

- **PIU:** To process and agree on the nature of the complaint:
 - a) Project Implementation
 - b) Misuse of funds / fraud
 - c) Misconduct
 - d) SFF-LD General Policies and Procedures
- **PIU:** Assign the complaint to the appropriate responsible person for further action and investigation.

C: Review and investigate complaint

- **Responsible Person:**
 - Review the complaint, decide actions to be taken with reference to SFF-LD procedures and identify risks e.g. potential reprisals against complainants or witnesses.
 - Delegate the complaint to a Complaint Handler to carry out the investigation.
- **PIU:** Contact the complainant (within **2 calendar weeks** of receipt of the complaint) to inform them about the case and provide a date when they can expect to receive further information about the complaint.
- **Complaint Handler:**
 - Investigate the complaint in line with SFF CHM policy
 - Update the status of the investigation with PIU Management.

D: Response and action

- **Complaint Handler with support from Responsible Person:**
 - Take action in line with recommendations made
 - Record a summary of action taken
 - Address and monitor any risks e.g. about reprisals against complainants or witnesses
- **PIU:**
 - Contact the complainant (within **6 calendar weeks within receipt of complaint**) to give them feedback about the conclusion of the investigation
 - For more complex cases where the complaint has not been able to be resolved within 6 calendar weeks, provide a progress update to the complainant
- **Complaint Handler with support from Responsible Person:** If the complainant does not seem satisfied with the outcome, discuss their concern and offer to provide further clarification or feedback where possible (e.g. for non-sensitive complaints). If complainant is still not satisfied, refer them to the appeals process.
- **PIU and Responsible Person:** Monitor progress and chase up if necessary.

E: Resolution

- **PIU:** Advise involved parties that resolution of the complaint has been achieved and record actions taken for reporting to the Steering Committee.
- Monitor progress of the complaints initiated under the SFF CHM and follow-up with the relevant responsible person to ensure that all complaints are satisfactorily resolved.

F: Reporting

- **PIU:** Prepare quarterly reports for the Steering Committee setting out number and nature of complaints and action taken to resolve the complaints.

SFF-LD Complaints Record Form

<p>Date:</p> <p>Date complaint is received</p>	
<p>Personal Details:</p> <p>name, contact details, if appropriate</p>	
<p>Nature of Complaint:</p> <p>Brief outline of the complaint</p>	
<p>Detail of Complaint:</p> <p>a detailed description of the complaint the person has made</p>	
<p>Who dealt with it:</p> <p>name of person who is or has responded to the complaint</p>	
<p>How it was dealt with:</p> <p>action taken to handle the complaint</p>	
<p>Outcome:</p>	

outline of what has happened as a result of the complaint	
<p>Follow up required:</p> <p>any action required as a result of the complaint. This may include a change to SFF procedures and policies</p>	