

# Mission East Complaints Handling Report Annual report 2020

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## Background

Mission East is committed to being accountable to the affected populations – beneficiaries and communities where we are working. Mission East is, an organization that welcomes complaints and feedback on what we do and how we do it, as we are constantly striving to improve our work. Beneficiary Complaints mechanisms (BCM) allow us to improve our programmes and quickly react to feedback; they are also indispensable in allowing prevention and detection of fraud, corruption, sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, as well as other breaches of the code of conduct. We are striving not only at maintaining a well-defined and accessible complaints mechanism, but also at creating an organizational culture where complaints are welcomed and addressed.

Beneficiary complaints mechanisms are set up in each of the countries where Mission East operates, including at local partner level, as well as at HQ level,

When setting up and maintaining a complaints mechanism, Mission East consults with the communities, striving to set up communication channels that are most convenient for the context and communities, and are inclusive and allowing all the people affected by crisis to reach us. We continuously inform the communities about the existence of a system to leave complaints and feedback.

## Objectives of the report:

This report is intended to provide a transparent overview of complaints handling at Mission East, as part of our strategy of being accountable to local population. This report provides an overview of the complaints received and of the actions taken and changes adopted following complaints received, in order to improve the quality of our work. Transparent reporting on complaints follows from Mission East commitment to Accountability to Affected populations and Core Humanitarian Standards<sup>1</sup>

## Complaints received in 2020 - Overview

	HQ level	Afghanistan	Armenia	Iraq	Nepal	Tajikistan	Total
Serious complaints (e.g, alleged fraud, corruption, breach of Code of Conduct)	3	1	0	0	0	1	3

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<sup>1</sup> CHS commitment 5: "Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints."

Standard complaints (operational complaints, e.g. quality of services, beneficiaries selection, etc.)	1	11	1	14	10	7	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>48</b>

## Overview of complaints received in 2020 per country

<b>Standard complaints</b> (e.g. operational complaints) 48 <sup>2</sup> received	Lessons learned and programme adaptation
<b>BCM at HQ level</b> 1 standard complaint received – related to alleged unfair treatment by staff member. The complaint was investigated as per investigation procedure, response provided to complainant	HQ receives a number of anonymous complaints that cannot be processed and responded to.  There is a clear need to build awareness on the HQ complaints management processes among all HQ staff.
<b>Afghanistan</b> 11 Standard complaint were received (some of the complaints were presented by a complainant on behalf of a group of people) Main issues in complaints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaint from the supplier about using the name of the company in vouchers</li> <li>• Complaint against the supplier that did not deliver the liquid gas in exchange for vouchers (group complaint)</li> <li>• Long waiting time in the distribution site (group complaint)</li> <li>• Complaint by a beneficiary who was missing from a distribution list.</li> <li>• Complaint from a beneficiary who received broken item in the hygiene kit were broken,</li> <li>• Delays with delivery and distribution of agricultural inputs (group complaint)</li> <li>• Complaint about the poor quality of water in a water supply well that was dug out by Mission East.</li> <li>• Complaint by a group of beneficiaries (22) that did not receive all of the construction materials for building greenhouses</li> <li>• Complaint from a group of beneficiaries who received poultry that were not producing eggs as expected.</li> <li>• Complaint by female beneficiaries who objected to their photos being taken by male staff of a supplier</li> <li>• Complaint against the supplier of sim card vouchers who failed to deliver the vouchers.</li> </ul>	The complaints received prompted ME in Afghanistan to introduce changes in programming, in internal processes, and to the Beneficiary Complaints Mechanism  Changes to internal processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of suppliers will pay closer attention to the capacity of suppliers to deliver in emergencies.</li> <li>• Control over cash distributions will be strengthened.</li> <li>• Change the organization of distribution sites, so that there is a separate space for Mission East to take photographs of women</li> <li>• The suppliers that are in contact with beneficiaries would receive a training on humanitarian principles and on how to communicate with beneficiaries</li> </ul> Changes to programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The distribution of poultry for rearing would switch to a different type of chickens, and will provide additional fodder to beneficiaries</li> <li>• The WASH team will introduce an additional check of the water quality before handing the WSS structures to the communities.</li> </ul> Changes to BCM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional training will be provided to BCM focal points in communities, and additional awareness building to community members on BCM, as this is a very active channel to communicate feedback, especially during distribution</li> <li>• Add the information about BCM to procurement documents, such as Requests for quotation.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Armenia</b></p> <p>1 group complaint was received about the organization of online webinars, as the quality of connection was poor as the internet was overloaded.</p>	<p>Changes to programming</p> <p>The timing of webinars was switched to a time during the day outside of the peak load of networks</p> <p>Changes to BCM</p> <p>The organization (Bridge of Hope) receives too few complaints, and the official channels are not used, despite sensitization (this can be due to cultural factors). BoH will discuss with beneficiaries the reasons why the complaints channels are not used and how they could be made to trust them</p>
<p><b>Iraq</b></p> <p>14 Standard complaints (including group complaints) were received in the past period, 6 -related to selection process, 5 complaints directed at Mission East staff which were found unsubstantiated, and 3 related to the quality of service provided.</p>	<p>One of the issues identified was that ME staff received complaints that should be directed to other organizations, but since the beneficiaries could not name the organization, the complaints could not be referred. In addition, ME has never registered complaints from some categories of beneficiaries (e.g., Protection), which could indicate either poor awareness or cultural barriers against using the BCM. Accepting this as lessons learned, Mission East adopted several changes:</p> <p>Changes to programming</p> <p>Beneficiary lists are now requested from the authorities (rather than other NGOs), which are seen by the beneficiaries as more reliable. In addition, programme team introduced additional verification to ensure that vulnerable beneficiaries are selected.</p> <p>Changes to BCM</p> <p>Mission East will focus on informing the beneficiaries about the BCM, especially to beneficiaries of activities where no complaints had ever been registered.</p>
<p><b>Nepal</b></p> <p>10 complaints were received in the past period (including complaints from groups of beneficiaries). The complaints related to delays in payment to staff by one of our partner NGOs, complaints on inaccessibility of a training venue site to participants. ME also received 2 complaints that related to other organizations, which were referred.</p>	<p>Mission East in Nepal will continue to promote the culture of welcoming complaints from the field and maintaining records of all complaints.</p> <p>Mission East and partner NGOs will continue to inform about the BCM in the villages where we work, increasing awareness</p>

<sup>2</sup> Includes group complaints

<p><b>Tajikistan</b></p> <p>7 standard complaints were received (some of them were from groups of beneficiaries).</p> <p>Main issues in complaints were related to the work of contractors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaint from on poor quality of rehabilitation works by contractor</li> <li>• Complaint about a slow speed of water system rehabilitation</li> <li>• Complaint from residents of a village where the construction was disrupting the irrigation.</li> <li>• 2 separate complaints where the contractors failed to pay labour on time</li> <li>• Complaint on lack of payment for local materials used.</li> </ul> <p>Another complaint related to the delays in payment of labour by Mission East, which was due to security reasons.</p>	<p>In complaints related to contractors action was taken to solve the respective issues with the contractors through negotiations. All the complaints were thus addressed. In the case where delays of payments were caused by insecurity, the reasons were explained to, and accepted by the complainants, and the payments were made when the security situation allowed it.</p> <p>Changes to the BCM.</p> <p>Mission East team in Tajikistan noted that BCM channels need expansion, as the only active complaint channel are visits of ME staff, while the complaint boxes are not used. ME team will conduct a study (community assessment and consultations) to assess the relevance of additional BCM channels, such as hotline or apps, and introduce respective changes in the BCM</p>
<p><b>Sensitive complaints received – 3</b></p>	
<p><b>BCM at HQ level</b></p> <p>3 sensitive complaints received – 2 were forwarded from country offices. The complaints were investigated and dealt with in accordance with the investigation procedures, after which the complaints were closed and followed by management decisions taken in countries.</p> <p><b>Afghanistan</b></p> <p>One sensitive complaint received, forwarded to HQ for investigation and action.</p> <p><b>Tajikistan</b></p> <p>One sensitive complaint received and forwarded to HQ for investigation and action.</p>	