

Complaints Handling Procedure

WHERE AND HOW COMPLAINTS MAY BE MADE

The Alliance is able to receive complaints in writing by post, email or online via our website. Where complaints are made orally, we will ensure our write up of the complaint contains all the information the complainant wishes to provide. Complaints may be made by a friend or advocate of the complainant on their behalf. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted by the Alliance.

Lodging a Complaint in Australia

Complaints should be lodged as soon as possible after the complainant becomes aware of the concern. Complaints made more than 24 months after the event will not be considered unless they are of a serious nature.

Complaints should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer, or to the Board Chair (contact details below) where the CEO is the subject of the complaint. Complaints may also be lodged via Contact Us at the Alliance website at: <https://www.evergreening.org/contact/>

Or to:

Chief Executive Officer

Ph: 04 9037 1417

Email: complaints@evergreening.org

Postal Address: 12/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East, Victoria, Australia 3151

Board Chair

Email: [Complain to Board](#)

Lodging a Complaint Overseas

The Alliance acknowledges that all beneficiaries and stakeholders have the right to make complaints but that the Alliance does not have the capacity to communicate with everyone. As such, implementing partners are required to implement a complaint-handling mechanism in compliance with this Policy and ACFID and donor's standards. These mechanisms must be suitable to the cultural context, advertised to all stakeholders in appropriate ways and made accessible (including being able to make complaints orally or confidentially) to all people, including children.

Complaints received by implementing partners which concern the Alliance funded staff or projects must be forwarded to the Alliance secretariat to be addressed in agreement with the relevant partner CEO. Minor complaints or complaints about partner programs which do not concern the Alliance may be handled solely by the partner but, in all cases, should be reported to the Alliance.

HOW COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED AND JURISDICTION

For all complaints made the Alliance will:

- Seek from the client the outcome/s they are expecting.
- Make an initial assessment of the severity of the complaint and the urgency of action.
- Clearly explain to the client the course of action that will follow:

- if the complaint is out of our jurisdiction;
- if we may exercise a discretion not to investigate;
- if preliminary enquiries need to be made, or further consideration needs to be given:
or
- if the complaint is to be investigated.
- The Alliance will not create false expectations, but assure the client that the complaint will receive full attention;
- The Alliance will give an estimated timeframe or, if not possible, a date by which we will contact them again;
- The Alliance will check whether the individual is satisfied with the proposed action and, if not, advise them of alternatives.
- The Alliance will ensure that the complaint is appropriately acknowledged, follow up where necessary and monitor whether the individual is satisfied.
- The Alliance will register all complaints.

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

The Alliance will first assess whether there is more than one issue raised in the complaint and whether each needs to be separately addressed.

To determine how a complaint should be managed, we will assess it in terms of the following criteria:

- a) severity
- b) health and safety implications
- c) financial implications for the complainant or others
- d) complexity
- e) impact on the individual, public and organisation
- f) potential to escalate
- g) systematic implications; and
- h) the needs for, and possibility of immediate action.

The Alliance will assess the complaint as significant in terms of one or more of these criteria and classify the complaint accordingly.

The Alliance shall determine whether or not a complaint should be investigated. If based on a misunderstanding or insufficient information, it may be that provision of information immediately satisfies the complainant, and thus, the complainant becomes an inquirer, and the complaint can be recorded as an inquiry. Careful consideration and negotiation will be taken, and if necessary, to take the matter further and refer the complaint externally, the Alliance shall do so as by the ACFID's Code Committee.

If the complainant disputes an assessment that a complaint should not be investigated, the member of staff handling the complaint will refer it to a more senior colleague for review. If such a dispute is unresolvable, we will refer it to a more senior colleague for review. If such a dispute is unresolvable, we will refer the complainant to the Code Committee of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

If a complaint made is outside the jurisdiction of the Alliance as it relates to the actions of another organisation or an individual who is unconnected with the Alliance, it may be dealt with by the police or another authority of the relevant state, and thus, the obligation of the Alliance is to notify the police or relevant authority. Such notable matters include those that appear to involve criminal

offences, e.g. assault, sexual or otherwise, theft and severe damage to property. Civil matters such as defamation may also be outside the Alliance's jurisdiction.

The Alliance will make every reasonable effort to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a submitted complaint. The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness and frequency of the complaint.

RESPONDING AND OUTCOMES OF COMPLAINTS

The Alliance will acknowledge written complaints within 5 days. Oral complaints will be acknowledged immediately. We will aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and within 30 days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a complaint is not resolved within 30 days, we will inform the complainant of progress and keep them informed of progress every two weeks.

Our CEO will normally make the decision on a complaint that has required investigation (that is not a minor complaint). Decisions on serious complaints may be referred to our governing board. The Alliance will encourage the complainant to respond and advise whether or not they are satisfied with our decision. In our decision, we will advise that if a complainant is not satisfied, we will be prepared to consider any additional information they may provide and to review our decision. In all cases, we will advise that the complaint may be referred to the Code Committee of ACFID. We will provide all necessary information for the referral to the Code Committee and offer to assist in the referral.

CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORDING AND REPORTING

We will not reveal a complainant's name or personal details to anyone in or outside our organisation other than staff involved in handling the complaint without obtaining the complainant's permission.

Complaint Data

The Alliance will register all inquiries and complaints. We will ensure that the following information is contained in written complaints and if not, and in the case of oral complaints, record this information ourselves:

- a) date or receipt
- b) a description of the complaint and relevant supporting data
- c) the requested remedy
- d) the service (s) and/or good(s) and/or practice or procedure complained about
- e) the due date for a response

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN COMPLAINT HANDLING

We will ensure that all relevant personnel are informed of the outcomes of complaints and the implications for our services, goods, procedures and processes. We will take all required action and be prepared to change the way in which we operate and improve or undertake further staff training. Where needed, we will counsel or discipline staff or volunteers.

Where appropriate, we will consult and take advice from ACFID and/or other relevant regulatory/enforcement authorities.

Continuous Improvement

On a continuing basis we will monitor the effectiveness of our complaint handling and make improvements as appropriate.

The Alliance shall –

- a) maintain data collection on complaints for the purpose of identifying trends for the purpose of enhancing information management and service provided;
- b) keep abreast of best practices regarding complaint handling;
- c) Foster a consumer/client-focused approach;
- d) undertake specific training and retraining of staff to foster better complaint handling practises;
- e) encourage innovation in complaint handling development; and
- f) recognise and reward exemplary complaint-handling behaviour.

The Alliance will conduct an internal review of the effectiveness of our complaint handling every year. We will commission an independent review of the effectiveness of our complaint handling after 3 years and then every 5 years.

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy number:	IGOV-1	Version:	01
Policy accountability:	CEO	First approved:	13 th July 2026
Policy implementation:	P&C Manager	Next review:	July 2027

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Revision no:	Summary description of revision(s) made:	Section(s) changed:
13 th July 2026	1	Creation of Policy	All

AUTHORISATION



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