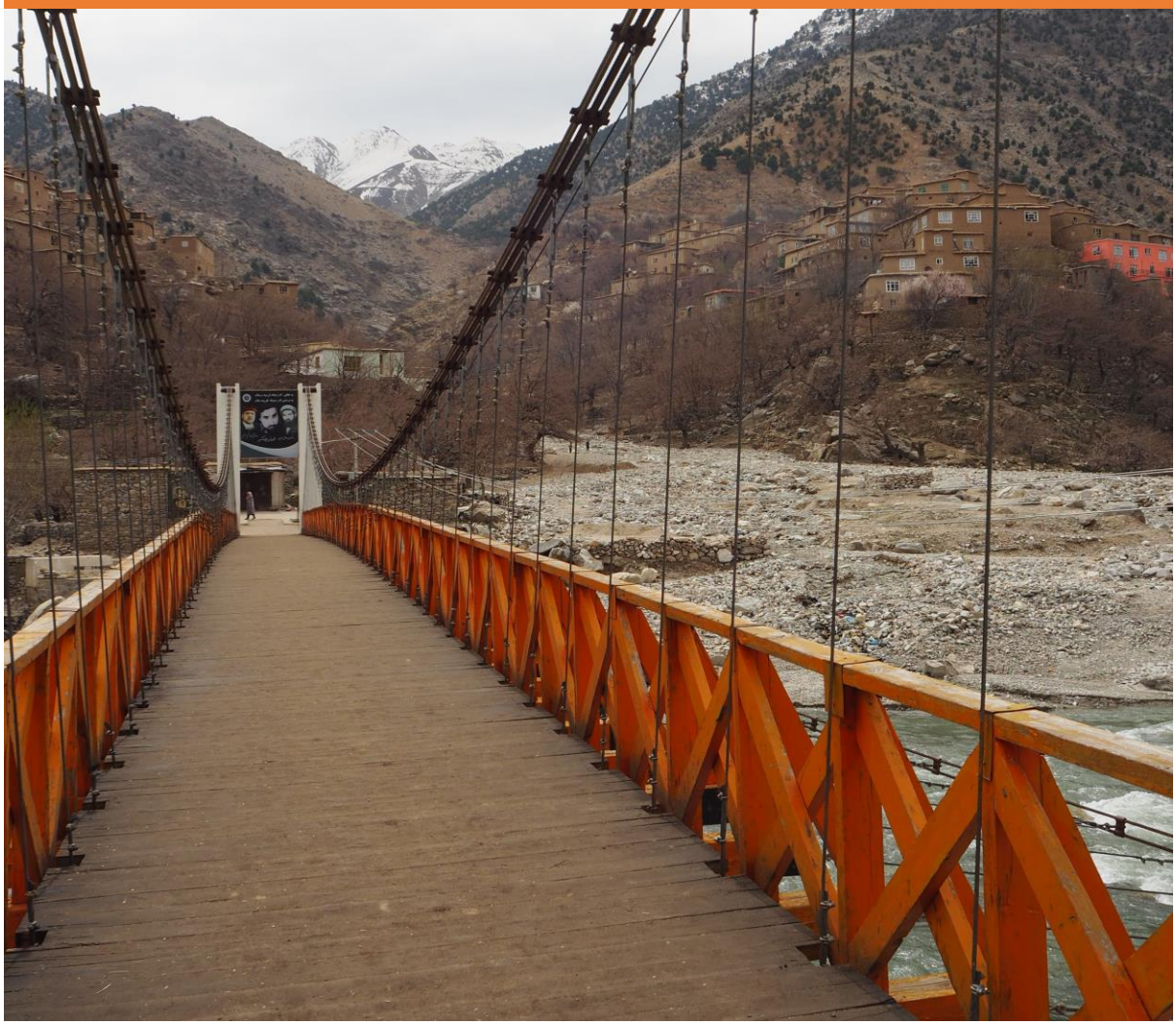
Norwegian Afghanistan Committee

PROVISIONAL

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK 2021



"It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable."

Molière

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PROVISIONAL
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK 2021

COMMITMENT

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) is firmly committed to the highest ethical standards, to transparency and accountability, towards the community members we serve, national and international donors, powerholders on national and subnational levels in Afghanistan, and towards our members in Norway.

NAC staff exercise caution in all interactions with government officials, parliament members, and formal and informal powerholders, on national and sub-national levels, to reduce the risk for elite capture, and in working together with non-governmental organizations that are aligned with particular political factions, as this may jeopardize the standing and reputation of NAC as an independent and non-party-political organization.

Furthermore, NAC is committed to fostering an atmosphere of trust between its staff members, community members and government organizations who benefit from NAC programs. To do so, NAC promotes the use of feedback mechanisms to reduce the risks of nepotism and corruption within the organization, among government and civil society partners, and elders and community members. Trust, transparency, and effective communication about NAC's ethical guidelines and commitments and anti-corruption and whistle-blower policy also leads to more effective and efficient programs, projects, and activities.

In all its development and humanitarian programs, NAC remains committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and the Do No Harm (DNH) principle. UN SDGs underpin all of NAC's work, while DNH is relevant for all humanitarian and development actors like NAC, who are actively involved in the current rapprochement between the two sectors. The NAC's 'Accountability Framework' is designed and implemented to reduce the risk of negative impacts of programs, projects, and activities, and to foster mutual learning, respect, solidarity, and cross-cutting reflections between the countries of the North and the South.

NAC VALUES AND WORKING PRINCIPLES

NAC is a member-based solidarity organization doing long-term development work in rural Afghan communities. For NAC, solidarity embodies the values of equality, inclusivity, friendship, and respect. NAC remains committed to the Afghan people, regardless of which government is in place. Voluntarism is promoted at all levels within the organization, by actively involving members and communities.

Independence

NAC's work shall not be dictated by political, religious, or commercial actors or interests.

Integrity

NAC has zero tolerance for corruption. Anti-corruption efforts are an important component within all of NAC's programs and initiatives.

Accountability

NAC is accountable towards its members, donors, project partners and communities. It acts to enable access to information and ensure transparency and active participation in the processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Alignment with human rights and international development agendas

All NAC programs, projects and initiatives are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, UN conventions and resolutions, and Afghan national strategies and priority plans.

ACCOUNTABILITY FROM A GLOBAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE[1]

Governments, community elders and members, businesses and investors, and civil society actors are all encouraged by the United Nations to collaborate in solving global problems. In line with this model, NAC's Accountability Framework presents a cooperative path to encourage the empowerment of rural Afghanistan – the children, youth, women, and men with diverse abilities and backgrounds in rural and hard-to-reach communities. Accountability is a critical aspect of all development and humanitarian programs, projects, and activities.

A robust Accountability Framework will enable transparent recognition and tracking of voluntary commitments to NAC's programs, projects, and activities, while facilitating feedback and learning. The framework will complement other core NAC policies, handbooks, rules, and regulations, and support Internal Audits, project specific evaluations, the NAC bi-annual work plan, NAC's 'Monthly Output Activity Tracking Sheets' (MOATS), and the monthly and quarterly 'Budget Tracking Sheets', all of which work towards measuring overall progress on administrative, organizational, and programmatic goals and objectives. This Accountability Framework is intended as a living document – one that will evolve over time as programs, projects, and activities develop, particularly as commitments among community members and leaders, civil society organizations, and national and sub-national governance structures continue to grow in importance.

Tracking progress at both levels will prompt ongoing dialogue and debate about the pace and scale of change. It will also provide a basis for regularly updating NAC'S 'Yearly Plan of Operations' (YPO) that guides all of NAC's work in Afghanistan. Measuring progress will enable participants and other stakeholders to better revisit, refine, and steer priorities towards addressing changing needs at national and sub-national levels in the country, thereby helping to ensure that NAC's initiatives remain relevant and effective throughout each program and project cycle, and beyond.

The Framework provides a structure of NAC accountability towards its:

[1] UN (2020) / Ref: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1644se4all.pdf [01.03.2021]

Members

NAC is a member-based solidarity organization. The Board are elected through an annual meeting where all members have the right to participate and vote. The Board reports on activities and finances on an annual basis.

Donors

NAC receives funding from national governments, UN agencies and other international organizations. In addition to larger institutional donors, NAC raises funds among members, supporters, smaller organizations, universities, research institutes, and private corporations. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are NAC's largest donors and support the main components of NAC's work:

1) Governance and Civil Society, Dialogue and Conflict Transformation
2) Education
3) Health
4) Food Security, Natural Resource Management and Disaster Risk Reduction

Crosscutting issues, in line with Norad priorities, are:

1) Human rights, with a particular focus on participation, accountability, and non-discrimination
2) Women's rights and gender equality
3) Climate change and the environment
4) Anti-corruption

Other donors contribute to one or more of NAC's main programmatic components.

National and Sub-national Governance Structures, Project Partners, Communities and Community Elders and Members

Currently NAC directly supports programs in Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghazni, Kabul, Kapisa, Khost, Nangarhar, Paktia, and Takhar Provinces, and indirectly supports capacity building of youth within the healthcare sector in Bamiyan, Kunar, Laghman, Logar, Nuristan, Paktika, Panjshir, Parwan and Wardak provinces through education and TVET programs at three regional Institutes of Health Sciences.

NAC coordinates all program activities with relevant authorities at national, provincial, district and community levels in Afghanistan, and seeks to formalize its collaborations through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and partnership agreements.

MOUs and agreements define roles and responsibilities, as well as monitoring and reporting requirements. Information about a particular project, activities and expected deliverables and

outcomes are made available at the project site, together with information about beneficiaries' rights to provide feedback and raise complaints related to activities, or the behavior of NAC staff.

NAC pays particular attention to being inclusive of and accountable to groups of persons who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within education, access to health, from decision-making processes, and development agendas, including[2]:

1) Children, youth, and adults affected by drugs
2) Children, youth, and adults living in communities far away from government services
3) Children, youth, and women suffering from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse
4) Community members affected by conflict and war
5) Ethnic, language and religious minorities
6) Homeless persons
7) Persons in conflict with the law
8) Persons with disabilities
9) Refugees, returnees, and internally displaced persons
10) Women and girls

[2] UNESCO (2010). ILFE toolkit: adapted Afghan version: Embracing diversity: toolkit for creating inclusive, learning-friendly environments. Ref: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000214297 [01.03.2021]

YEARLY PLANS OF OPERATION AND ACTION AGENDAS

Together, the Accountability Framework and 'Tracking Framework' will ensure that all programs, projects, and activities are well defined and can successfully track both commitments to action, and overall progress on all main objectives based on organizational, program or project based logical frameworks (LFAs). All commitments and programs in the bi-annual work plan, yearly plans of operation (YPOs) and action agendas are aligned with Afghan and international laws, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and other international and national commitments, priority plans and agendas:

Figure no. 1

Commitment Development & Recognition

NAC helps potential commitment makers develop and structure commitments, ensuring that they are relevant and well-defined, while sharing promising practices for implementation. To support quality commitments, once commitments are submitted, they are reviewed and screened by NAC staff. If necessary, commitment makers are contacted for clarifications, or to gather additional information about the commitment.

Who can be a 'commitment maker'?

In 2017 and 2018, the Provincial Departments of Public Health (PDPHs) in Khost and Paktia provinces requested NAC's support for the development of a Regional Institute for Health Sciences (IHS) for Ghazni, Khost, Paktia and Paktika. They committed to support any future actions with technical and material resources, they discussed the request with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), and they

initiated the process of establishing an administrative structure, or 'Tashkeel' to ensure greater future sustainability of the proposed action. The proposal was recognized by relevant government actors and approved by NAC and joint initiatives were taken by the 'commitment makers' and NAC to secure funding, which was initially secured from the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (DIKU), and later from Norad, the World Bank and MOPH through the 'Sehatmandi Project', and the EU through the second phase of the 'Towards improved Quality of Rehabilitation services in Afghanistan' (TIQRA II) Program.

Commitments resulting in programs, projects and initiatives are made public on NAC's website (www.afghanistan.no). Registered commitments are highlighted on the website, in stories of progress and in case studies, in press releases, or are featured at public events.

Programs & Actions

Commitments are executed in partnership with stakeholders on national, provincial, district and community levels. Commitments generally lead to concrete actions, with some having direct impacts within a defined and limited time-period, and others involving activities that make significant and lasting impacts by establishing an enabling environment for action by other stakeholders, and/or in the future.

In 2014, NAC held a consultation meeting with members of a Self-Help-Group (SHG) for women in a rural community just outside of Sange-e-Masha, Jaghori District, Ghazni Province, about their micro-businesses. The SHG had empowered and supported the women in developing their businesses and they were interested in expanding them but explained that this was difficult because their childcare responsibilities left them with limited time and energy for business development. To address their concerns, NAC suggested that one, or two SHG members could look after the other members' children as an informal playgroup. The women liked this idea and so, NAC's 'Playgroup' program was born. NAC now supports 36 Playgroups in Badakhshan and Ghazni, each connected to a women's SHG. Playgroup facilitators are SHG members who get additional training and support in child development and early childhood education methods. The Playgroups have become a viable, impactful, and low-cost alternative to formal ECD structures which are expensive to establish and run and not accessible for most rural and hard-to-reach communities in Afghanistan.

Reporting

During implementation, NAC and partner organizations are required to provide an annual update on progress that will be made publicly available. Updates submitted are not required to be standalone reports, but can be part of the NAC's annual communications, such as the 'annual report' or other types of regular public reports. Reporting includes updates on progress against targets laid out in action plans, as well as progress achieved in establishing collaborative ventures around the commitment.

Review

NAC will review all reports to ensure that commitments and programs are being acted upon. Feedback from community members and other national and sub-national stakeholders will be

given to help improve performance on commitments and programs if they are not on track to be met.

Learning leading to More Recognitions & Actions

As activities are undertaken, achievements and promising practices are shared via the website, printed materials, and public events. Achievements are shared with the communities and institutions where the actions were implemented, to facilitate learning within communities and partner institutions and within NAC.

Actions and programs will be internally and externally reviewed, and audited to contribute to internal and external learning, and inform public policies, priorities, and programs.

For example, the experiences with NAC's women owned and run 'Play Groups' established in rural and hard-to-reach communities have been shared with the government and civil society partners in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) working group and have helped inform the Afghan Government's ECD Policy (2020).

This process should lead to enhanced and improved actions over time, both within NAC and among its partners and stakeholders.

MAKING A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION AND CHANGE

When making a commitment, stakeholders must meet the following criteria to maintain the integrity of the commitment-making process and the quality of the commitments. All commitments must include:

- A promise to take action now, or in the future, in support of one or more of the agreed goals and objectives
- A leadership commitment from the highest-level decision-making body, or individual, in the partner organization, institution, and community
- A commitment to transparency through annual reporting on progress
- A description of time-bound targets and goals that can be measured for success
- A general description of key resources partners dedicated to achieving agreed targets and goals

Commitments should fit within one of the following four types of action:

- Scaling up or accelerating existing activities
- Launching new projects or partnerships
- Adding additional partners to existing projects
- Renewing commitments made recently if activities to realize these commitments are still ongoing

All commitments should include:

- Strategic social investments
- Advocacy and public policy engagement

Commitments must be closely tied to the commitment-maker's mission to ensure optimal, sustainable, and meaningful impact and change. NAC and commitment makers should also aim to mitigate potential negative impacts that may inadvertently arise in the implementation of the commitment, e.g., using NAC's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Form (2014).

DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

NAC has developed a number of documents towards improving the accountability of all programs and actions towards national and international donors, the community members we serve, powerholders on national and subnational levels in Afghanistan, and towards our members in Norway, including:

NAC Anti-Corruption Policy and Handbook

NAC has zero tolerance for corruption and nepotism in all its forms and is committed to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate all of its programs, projects, activities, and operations in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

For NAC, anti-corruption is more than a legal obligation, it is a fundamental ethical commitment to the people of Afghanistan and Norway, and to the international community. Corruption is a threat to the international community, Afghan society, and the communities we serve. These documents provide practical guidance on:

- The Afghanistan National Strategy on Combatting Corruption
- Norad and the Norwegian views on corruption
- Key messages – NAC's position on corruption
- The responsibilities of NAC management and staff
- The NAC Organizational Strategy
- Different forms of corruption
- How to reduce corruption risks and vulnerabilities when procuring goods and services for programs and operations
- How to reduce corruption risks in budgeting and other aspects of financial management
- How to reduce corruption risks and vulnerabilities when dealing with government authorities
- How to reduce corruption risks in Human Resources (e.g., hiring and promoting staff)
- Corruption risks and vulnerabilities in relations with partners
- The economic and social impacts of corruption
- How to report and speak-up against corruption
- Promoting a culture of anti-corruption within the NAC and with partners and other stakeholders

The NAC Anti-Corruption Policy and Handbook are compulsory reading for all NAC management and other staff members, commitment makers and other partner organizations, departments, and institutions.

NAC Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms

NAC develops project and activity specific beneficiary feedback mechanisms (BFMs) and accessible information leaflets form community members with limited literacy skills with information about the goal and scopes of the activity or project, with contact details and a brief outline of the NAC complains mechanism.

NAC Child Protection Policy

NAC supports the education of more than 200,000 children and youth, and thousands of teachers and health-care workers in mostly rural and hard-to-reach communities throughout Afghanistan. NAC is firmly committed to the highest ethical standards, in accordance with Afghan, Norwegian and International laws, and promotes and practices the provisions outlined in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) in all its programs and operations.

NAC Code of Conduct

All NAC staff, officers, interns, volunteers, and consultants are obliged to follow the NAC Code of Conduct, promoting behaviors and conduct in line with Afghan, Norwegian, International and laws, and aligned with the ACBAR's Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is also aimed towards the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

NAC Complaints & Feedback Mechanism

All NAC beneficiaries and partners have the right to provide feedback and raise complaints related to programs, projects and activities and the behavior of NAC staff.

All NAC employees, members, volunteers, and consultants are required to report suspected irregularities. The public and NAC partners can also play an important role. Anyone can report suspected irregularities trough the NAC's whistleblower email: complaints@afghanistan.no

What can beneficiaries and partners complain about?

- Suspected corruption
- Implementation of projects in and with Afghan communities and institutions
- NAC's work in Norway
- Behavior of NAC staff

Which issues not covered?

All internal employment conditions, such as salary levels, performance evaluations, working areas, etc, will not be handled within this system, unless considered as being in breach of NAC's Ethical Guidelines, or regulations and commitments specified in NAC's manuals, e.g., Finance and HR. Such grievances should be handled on the lowest level possible through line management.

False Accusations

Any employee who makes false and malicious accusations, will face disciplinary actions (ref. NAC Ethical Guidelines and Commitments). NAC will take appropriate legal, or other actions (e.g., termination of employment) against those who make false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

How to issue a complaint?

Project participants, other community members, and project partners can send an email to: feedback@nacaf.org or an SMS, voicemail, or direct call to two designated Afghan mobile phone numbers: 0702 255307 (between 08:00 and 13:00) and 0772 245068, 0789 868406, 0702 255278 and 0745 013478 (between 18:00 and 07:00).

, where female and male responders who are able to communicate in both Dari, English and Pashto will be made available.

Regular channels for raising complaints for NAC staff:

- Through the responsible regional or project manager, Deputy Country Director, and Country Director
- Through the Deputy Country Director, Country Director if the regional manager is involved
- Through the Country Director and Secretary General if the Deputy Country Director is involved
- Through the Secretary General if the Country Director fails to act or he/she is involved
- Through the Chair of the Board if both the Secretary General and the Country Director fail to act or are themselves involved

The aim is for complaints to be resolved at the lowest administrative level possible, to reduce response times.

NAC Ethical Guidelines and Commitments

All NAC staff, officers, interns, volunteers, and consultants are obliged to act in accordance with NAC's ethical guidelines. Breaches of the ethical guidelines will be investigated and addressed and may lead to disciplinary actions.

The Ethical Guidelines and Commitments also aims at preventing and responding to any form of physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal abuse in line with UN Guidelines and Initiatives on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

NAC Procurement Guidelines

NAC's procurement process is guided by strong ethical guidelines, prevention of child-labor and abuse, and seek to promote businesses owned and run by women, persons with disabilities, and other groups vulnerable to exclusion from economic development and participation. The Guidelines thus aims at preventing any form of abuse in line with NAC principles, UN Guidelines and Initiatives on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY & PROCESS

NAC recognizes whistle blowers as persons making valid complaints about malpractice in the organization and/or breaches of the Ethical Guidelines and Commitments.

These are the key principles of the NAC Whistle Blower Policy:

1) Every complaint will be taken seriously
2) The interest of both the whistle blower and those targeted by the complaint must be considered; the legitimate interests of any incriminated person must, in particular, be respected to avoid victimization and stigmatization
3) The identity of anonymous complainants will not be sought or revealed and the withholding of the identity of named persons who want to remain anonymous in further follow-up will be respected
4) In the case of revelations indicating risks of personal danger, these will always be communicated to those involved in managing whistleblowing claims, regardless of the credibility of the information
5) Intentionally false accusations and reports by NAC staff are considered a serious breach of Ethical Guidelines and will lead to disciplinary action
6) Any accusation, in itself, will never be considered as proof of fault
7) Anonymous complaints are welcome, however, as anonymous complaints are difficult to investigate without compromising the confidentiality of the complainant, anonymous complaints are not recommended; complainants that want to be anonymous are recommended to complain through a trusted NAC employee, to enable the organization to seek and pass on information to the parties involved in order to investigate the case

How to alert:

- Afghan mobile phone numbers: 0702 255307 (between 08:00 and 13:00) and 0772 245068, 0789 868406, 0702 255278 and 0745 013478 (between 18:00 and 07:00).
- Spoken languages: Dari, English and Pashto
- Email address: complaints@afghanistan.no
- Languages for written complaints: Dari, English, Norwegian and Pashto

All complaints are registered, and emails sent to: complaints@afghanistan.no are read and recorded by NAC's Secretary General. NAC is committed to inform donors about any complaints on issues of suspected theft, corruption, or sexual and other types of physical abuse.

The NAC Anti-Corruption and Complaint Committee is comprised of the:

- Secretary General
- Country Director
- Deputy Country Director
- Internal Auditor (Norway)
- Internal Auditor (Afghanistan)
- Female staff member

After launching a written complaint, the emailer will receive a first response within three working days. Pending on the sensitivity and nature of the complaint, one or all members of the anti-corruption committee will be involved in assessing the complaints in accordance with the following criteria:

- Does the notification contain sufficient information to enable the case to be investigated? Examples of when this is not the case are whenever provided information is vague, or decisive information is missing, e.g., where the irregularity has occurred. If a notification is not considered possible to proceed with, it will still be saved for at least 1 month, in case further information should arise.
- Is there a larger context to consider? A particular suspicion may seem insignificant, but it is essential to clarify whether it is part of a series of reports relating to a certain phenomenon, group of people, office, or project.
- What type of irregularity does the information relate to? It is crucial to clarify whether the information indicates a violation of the Code of Conduct, or if it is a violation of program implementation regulations, irregularities in personnel issues or recruitment, or procurement. It can also be a combination of one or more categories.

Response to the whistle-blower within two weeks

- The emailer will be informed and will be sent a message to confirm the receipt of the complaint and also informed that the complaint needs to be detailed in order to be considered
- If the complaint is deemed valid, the emailer will be informed about next steps

Protection of the whistle-blower – confidentiality

NAC is responsible for protecting anyone reporting their suspicions by never disclosing their identity and taking action to prevent reprisals, whenever needed. Information is treated confidentially. If information should leak this will be considered as obstruction of the investigation and will become a matter of further investigation and disciplinary measures.

Submitting whistleblowing complaints without acting in good faith, but rather with intent to harm others, will become a matter of investigation and disciplinary measures.

Right to contradiction

The accused has the right to contradict any findings, and she or he has the right to confidentiality, and to have her/his identity protected and kept confidential, unless punitive actions result in a legal process.

Investigation

If the preliminary assessment detailed above indicates that irregularities of any kind exist, the Secretary General and the Country Director will decide on the investigation and establish the terms of reference, including precisely what needs to be investigated. The affected donor(s) and the NAC's Board will be informed. Based on the initial assessment, a decision will be made on whether an external auditor or resource person will be required.

Directions for the Investigation Team

An investigation is a fact-finding exercise to collect all the relevant information on a matter. The role of an investigator is to be fair and objective so that they can establish the essential facts of the matter and reach a conclusion on what did or did not happen. The investigator should to this by looking for evidence that supports the allegation and evidence that contradicts it.

In potential disciplinary matters, it is not an investigator's role to prove the guilt of any party, but to investigate if there is a case to answer.

Internal Investigation Team

The internal investigation team should ideally be ethnically mixed, and gender balanced. If the case is related to sexual exploitation or abuse, the NAC contracted psychologist will support the team.

The composition of the Team and its Terms of Reference will depend on the size and scope of the investigation. The Team Leader (normally the Internal Auditor) should be from outside the affected region. If needed the Country Director should appoint external members to assist the team (e.g., a psychologist in case of sexual exploitation or abuse, or other external technical experts relevant to the case).

Based on the Report from the Internal Investigation Team, the Anti-Corruption Committee will decide if a second or third mission, or a new Internal Investigation Team should be dispatched to complete the investigation, or whether an external investigation will be required. The final report will be sent to the affected donor and to the NAC Board of Directors for approval.

The investigation is guided by the general principles for conducting work-place investigations (ref: acas.org.uk):

STEP 1: Organizational preparation

- Decide if an investigation is necessary
- Establish terms of reference – the rules that the investigation will follow, including precisely what needs to be investigated
- Choose an appropriate investigator

STEP 2: An investigator's preparation

- Draft an investigation plan
- Identify who might need to be called to an investigation meeting
- Identify what evidence might need to be gathered – and how to get it
- Contact parties involved in the matter

STEP 3: Handling an investigation meeting

- Establish who can accompany employees at the meeting
- Plan what questions need to be asked
- Interview the parties involved and any relevant witnesses
- Handle reluctant witnesses or refusals to meet appropriately

STEP 4: Gathering evidence

- Arrange and agree witness statements
- Collect any relevant written records and documents, e.g., timesheets
- Collect any relevant and appropriate physical evidence, e.g., CCTV

STEP 5: Report the investigation findings

- Write an investigation report
- Report what is likely to have happened – the balance of probabilities
- Make a recommendation, where requested

STEP 6: After an investigation is completed

- Submit the report and conclude the investigator role
- Retain the report for an appropriate period of time
- Ensure any recommendations unrelated to the matter are considered

External Investigation Team

External investigation teams should ideally be ethnically mixed, and gender balanced. If the case is related to sexual exploitation or abuse, an externally contracted psychologist will support the team. The steps followed for external investigation teams should follow the same principles outlined above, unless the donor(s) for the program, project or activity impacted have their own rules on how external investigations should be conducted.

Specific considerations in investigating gender-based violence (GBV)

NAC rules and regulations have been informed by the principles outlined in the GBV Pocket Guide (ref: gbvguidelines.org)

Respect

All actions you take are guided by respect for the survivor's choices, wishes, rights and dignity.

Safety

The safety of the survivor is the number one priority.

Confidentiality

People have the right to choose to whom they will or will not tell their story. Maintaining confidentiality means not sharing any information with anyone.

Non-discrimination

It is essential to provide equal and fair treatment to anyone in need of support.

Supporting Children and Adolescents under 18 years

- Do no harm: Do not seek out child survivors. It is not your job to investigate or assess if a child/ adolescent is experiencing violence. Doing so can lead to more violence and risks for the child/adolescent. Be approachable if a child/adolescent wants to seek your help.
- Remember your role: If a child or adolescent reaches out to you for help:
    - Provide a listening ear, free of judgment
    - Support the child/adolescent by connecting them to an adult that the child/adolescent identifies as being safe and trusted; this may not be their parent, caregiver, or a family member
    - Do not make decisions for him/her, including forcing the child/adolescent's caregiver or any other person to be with them when s/he talks to you
    - Provide comfort
    - Allow the child/adolescent to lead the conversation, even if this means providing company in silence; be at the child/adolescent's eye level with open body language to show them that they can open up to you if s/he wants to; refrain from asking questions about what happened, by who and why – instead, use comforting statements and speak in a manner that they can understand

CONCLUDING REMARKS

From time-to-time we all may find ourselves in, or experience situations where there we suspect, observe, or find evidence of corruption and misuse of funds, nepotism in connection with recruitments, sexual abuse of staff, students and community members, or elite capture of much needed resources by power holders in communities.

This Provisional Accountability Framework provides a practical overview of NAC's values, policies, rules, and regulation relating to anti-corruption, child-protection, discrimination based on gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances, or gender-based violence (GBV), with the aim of guiding us in making the right decisions at all times. We have all seen blatant examples of lack of accountability and inaction among government ministries and departments, UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, community elders, formal and informal leaders, and other power holders.

However, as stewards of funds entrusted to us by private individuals, civil society actors, nation states and donor agencies, NAC remains committed to being accountable towards all our national and international donors, the community members we serve, powerholders on national and subnational levels in Afghanistan, and towards our members in Norway.

As the Polish theologian and anti-Nazi dissident, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, once said: **'Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility.'** NAC remains committed, prepared and ready to be accountable and to take all necessary actions to combat abuse of people, finances, other resources, and ideals, and to do all that we can to Empower Rural Afghanistan.

Kabul and Oslo, 1st March 2021

Liv Kjølseth
Secretary General

Terje Magnussønn Watterdal
Country Director