Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework

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Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework

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Introduction

There is a growing body of evidence that shows that involving affected people in all phases of aid programmes and systematically collecting and responding to their feedback increases the likelihood of achieving more relevant, appropriate and sustainable outcomes for them.[1] Recent initiatives, such as the Core Humanitarian Standard on quality and accountability (CHS), the World Humanitarian Summit, and the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution and Localisation work streams all call on aid organisations to better engage people affected by crises in decisions around the planning, design, implementation, management and monitoring of aid programmes.

As seen in the CHS, providing affected people with means to share their perspectives and feedback on the quality and relevance of aid programmes and then using this information to guide decision-making is a key component of Accountability to Affected People (AAP). Organisations can then determine if assistance is aligned with affected people's priorities and preferences, and adapt activities to achieve better results for them. It also supports affected people's rights to respectful and dignified treatment by aid providers.

Despite the commitment to be more responsive and accountable to affected people, aid organisations have found it difficult to systematically integrate feedback and response mechanisms into performance measurement and management systems. Without this, organisations cannot demonstrate how well they respond to affected people's needs and concerns, or how this approach contributes to better results. With limited evidence on how and why AAP measures like participation and feedback mechanisms improve responses, it is difficult to influence changes within organisations and in the aid sector.

IRC, with the support of Sida, is attempting to address this gap by developing, testing and validating the Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework.[2] The framework aims to help organisations monitor, assess and verify how well they are "putting people at the centre" by using inputs and feedback from affected people in decision-making around aid programmes. This will contribute to an evidence base on the organisation's application of AAP commitments in programming and practices to leverage change in the sector.

- **Section One** summarises the relationship between client responsiveness and AAP, and the importance of performance measurement for improving aid quality, effectiveness and accountability.
- **Section Two** outlines the proposed Measurement Framework, including outcomes, indicators, and performance benchmarks.
- **Section Three** provides suggestions to integrate client responsiveness measures into the project lifecycle.
- **Section Four** provides a summary of tools and resources to support organisations' implementation of client responsiveness measures in programming.
- **Annex One** provides a detailed matrix of the performance framework's outcomes, indicators and benchmarks, including definitions of key terms and suggestions for data collection and analysis.

Section One: AAP and Client Responsiveness

How is Client Responsiveness related to AAP?

The CHS describes accountability to affected people (AAP) as the responsibility of aid providers to put "communities and people at the centre of humanitarian action," to ensure that assistance is timely, relevant, appropriate and effective at meeting their needs and priorities, and to deliver it in ways that empowers them and respects their rights and dignity. The CHS recognises that the participation of crisis-affected people is the cornerstone of an effective humanitarian response. In particular, CHS Commitments Four emphasizes the need for safe, accessible and appropriate participation, feedback, and Commitment Five states that complaints are welcomed and responded to.[3]

Many aid organisations have made significant investments to improve the responsiveness of management systems through community engagement, participation strategies, two-way communication and feedback mechanisms at the individual project and collective level. For example, Ground Truth Solutions, working with organisations like IRC, pioneered the use of perception and satisfaction surveys of affected people for more informed decision-making.[4] Other organizations, like the IFRC, UNICEF, OCHA and the CDAC Network, support the use of collective platforms and mechanisms to collect and analyse feedback on their programs.[5]

At the IRC, *Client Responsiveness* is a strategic priority. IRC has developed a *Client Responsiveness Framework* to ensure that the "needs and aspirations of those IRC serves" - its "clients" – are taken into account in aid programmes.[6] IRC uses the term "client" (as opposed to beneficiary or victim) to signal its "belief that the people we serve have the right to and the power to decide what kind of aid and services they need and want."[7] The framework entails systematically collecting, analysing and responding to feedback, and using these inputs to influence decision-making throughout the programme lifecycle, from design through start-up, implementation and monitoring to close-out.

The framework is built around [eight actions]() and [eight enablers]() that ensure IRC can systematically integrate and implement client responsiveness throughout its programmes. IRC has also defined "Good and Great Standards"[8] that set out minimum recommended actions and benchmarks for success for integrating clients' views and feedback into the programme lifecycle. The intention is that integrating the Framework, Good and Great Standards, and associated practices into country Strategic Action Plans will reflect client responsiveness all programmes.

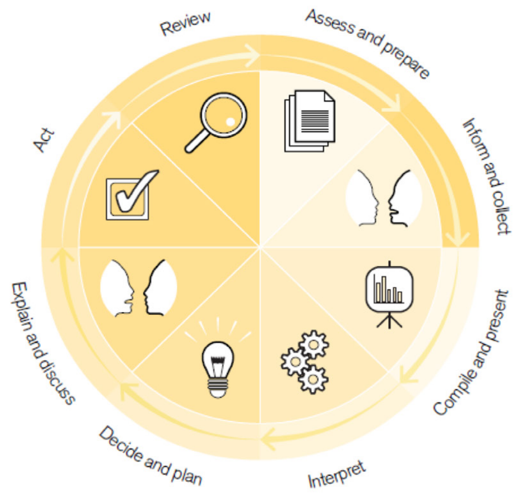
In this document, community is understood as a group made up of women, men, boys and girls, each with different capacities, needs and vulnerabilities. Acknowledging diversity within a given community will inform programmes and help to ensure that different needs are met. Collecting and using data disaggregated by sex, age and ability will give diverse groups a say in the decisions that shape the response.

When analysing feedback and satisfaction data, it is important to use a gender and age analysis. Disaggregated data based on gender, age, disability and diversity can help identify who is accessing feedback mechanisms, the varying issues or concerns raised, and any gaps in the data. This can help avoid unintended biases or mistakes in interpreting the data.

Watch for the ⚥ symbol calling out where specific considerations for gender, age, vulnerability and diversity groups may exist and could influence the choice of activities to inform clients, and collect and analyse data.

Diagram 1: The Client Responsiveness Feedback Cycle (8 Actions and 8 Enablers)

The feedback cycle



The Eight Enablers

A. Defining roles and responsibilities
B. Data management
C. Defining internal and external systems & pathways
D. Leadership
E. Resourcing client responsiveness
F. Managing risks
G. Organisational development/capacity building
H. Coordination and collective actions

Why measure Client Responsiveness as part of organisational performance?

In *theory*, engaging with clients and considering their perspectives can make programmes and services more **effective, relevant, appropriate and accountable** to clients' needs, concerns, priorities and preferences. The underlying argument for using client feedback to influence decision-making is that this helps organisations to:

- Reinforce **trust, transparency and respect** in the relationships with clients
- Understand and address clients' **needs** and **security and protection** concerns
- Better enable interventions to respond to the specific needs of **women, girls, and other marginalized groups**
- Improve the **quality** and **outcomes** of programming
- Identify, mitigate and **manage risks**
- **Empower** clients to more actively engage in decision-making
- Strengthen people's and communities' **capacities and resilience** to respond to crises

Without a **means to measure** organisational adoption and implementation of client responsive approaches, **the potential benefits are largely assumptions**, with little evidence to back up how well these approaches are integrated into programming, and with what results.

There are still few means to collect and compare data on implementation of client responsiveness actions across programmes and countries, and there is limited **evidence demonstrating how responsive programming has contributed to better quality and accountability**. Thus, organisations including the IRC see performance measurement as an entry point to leverage sustained changes in the design and delivery of humanitarian assistance.[9]

What are the benefits of measuring performance around Client Responsiveness?

By consistently monitoring and measuring how organisations communicate with, engage and involve a diverse and representative array of clients throughout all programme phases, organisations can build a **better evidence base around the quality and effectiveness of programmes from the clients' perspectives**, with special attention to different gender, age, and vulnerability groups.

At the project level, tracking, monitoring and assessing how well Client Responsiveness is integrated into programming provides organisations with data to:

- Better assess if project designs actually **respond to clients' needs and priorities**, in particular the needs of women and girls and marginalised or vulnerable groups
- Foster **gender-sensitive** and **disability inclusive** programming
- Monitor if activities are **timely, relevant and appropriate** to the context and clients' needs and expectations
- **Take timely corrective actions** to address changes in the context, needs and risks if needed
- **Identify, mitigate and manage risks,** and make referrals to protection or other relevant actors (internal or external) if necessary
- Identify **opportunities** to **scale-up client responsiveness** in future projects

Aggregating project data at the country and global level provides evidence on an organisation's overall progress applying client responsiveness approaches. When aggregated with data from other organisations and coordination mechanisms such as clusters, the evidence can support collective learning and continuous improvement in the broader humanitarian community. ***This is particularly important for advocacy within organisations and with partners, governments and donors to support and prioritise client responsiveness as a means to improve aid results***. [10]

Section Two: The Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework

What is the focus of the Measurement Framework?

Based on consultations with IRC staff and other stakeholders, the proposed ***Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework*** aims to better integrate and measure key AAP and client responsiveness concepts and practices for organisational performance management and accountability systems.[11]

Drawing on growing sector-wide practices, the framework attempts to consolidate and scale-up IRC's experiences and learning on applying "*Client Responsiveness*" and accountability approaches in programming.

The primary focus of the framework is generating data and evidence ***from the perspective of affected people themselves*** about how projects are meeting their priority needs and if they feel they have influence over decisions that affect them. This approach is different than traditional project monitoring and evaluation approaches which assess objectives and indicators defined by aid organisations and donors as it puts the focus on the opinions and lived experiences of the intended clients. It allows aid organisations to draw on a more comprehensive set of evidence to assess the relevance, appropriateness and outcomes of aid interventions.[12]

> In order to assess client responsiveness, organisations need performance measures that go beyond inputs, outputs and "technical" indicators, and must include **measures to assess how affected people themselves view the quality, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian actions.**

How is the Measurement Framework organised?

While aid organisations use different terms to describe phases of the **project lifecycle**, the performance measurement framework is oriented around three phases:

- **Design/start-up** - which includes needs assessment, context analysis, planning and initial start-up activities
- **Implementation** - which includes implementation, monitoring and information management
- **Close-out** - which includes exit and transitional planning and evaluation

The framework includes proposed **outcomes**, **indicators** and performance **benchmarks** that describe effective client responsiveness in each phase. The proposed outcomes are in line with major AAP policy commitments in the sector, such as the CHS, the IASC Commitments for Accountability to Affected People (CAAP) and the Grand Bargain. They are also linked to organizational outcomes, such as IRC's strategic outcome for its theory of change around power: "People Collectively Influence Decisions that Affect Their Lives."

Each outcome has **process** and **outcome indicators** to assess if the project has the required processes in place to support client responsiveness, and if those systems are meeting the expectations and desired outcomes for clients. This includes indicators on clients' perceptions of their ability to shape and influence decisions for the design and implementation of project activities and their satisfaction with the quality of assistance. At a minimum, each indicator should be sex and age disaggregated.

Client Responsiveness Outcomes and Indicators

The measurement framework is built around three client responsiveness outcomes and related indicators:

Outcome 1:

- Aid providers consistently use feedback and inputs from clients to design and adapt projects/programmes, with special attention to gender, age and diversity

Indicators:

- Projects have a formal, funded Client Responsiveness Plan (or equivalent) linked to project management and monitoring plans
- # of project objectives or activities that are designed/changed/adapted in line with client feedback

Outcome 2:

- Clients collectively influence decisions that affect their lives at all stages of the project lifecycle

Indicators:

- Projects have adequate mechanisms for consultation and participation of clients throughout the project lifecycle
- % of clients satisfied with their ability to influence project decisions in all phases of the project lifecycle

Outcome 3:

- Clients are satisfied that projects have adequately addressed their priority needs

Indicators:

- Projects regularly assess client satisfaction throughout the project lifecycle
- % of clients satisfied with the quality of services and assistance provided though the project

The outcomes and indicators are complemented by **benchmarks**, which define key enabling actions that contribute to achieving the outcomes. The benchmarks set out three levels of performance for projects:

L1. Level 1 (MINIMUM): The project has achieved the minimum requirements for client responsiveness, such as **informing clients** on key information and decisions for the program, and channels to file feedback and complaints.

L2. Level 2 (INTERMEDIATE): The project has achieved the minimum requirements, and adopted additional client responsiveness measures, such as mechanisms to **collect and respond to feedback and complaints**, and **validate** plans with clients.

L3. Level 3 (ADVANCED): The project has achieved minimum and intermediate requirements and adopted additional measures, such as mechanisms for clients to **participate directly** in project decision-making.

The three levels allow projects or organisations with limited experience implementing client responsive approaches to work towards achieving the minimum requirements. Other organisations with more capacity and experience should work towards the intermediate and advance performance benchmarks. The levels recognise that there can be crisis contexts where implementing client responsiveness measures are difficult (for example, access and security), and achieving intermediate or advanced levels may not be possible. However, higher benchmarks can be targets to promote continuous improvement if the context changes.

The benchmarks provide decision-makers with key information to support internal **quality assurance** processes for integrating client responsiveness measures into project lifecycle phases with gender and diversity considerations. This is useful for both internal management decision-making and learning, as well as external reporting to donors and other stakeholders.

The assumption is that if these outcomes, indicators and benchmarks are applied, monitored and measured consistently, there is a **greater likelihood that programmes will be more effective at responding to client's needs, preferences and priorities.**

However, used alone, the Framework's outcomes, indicators, benchmarks will only provide a partial picture of project results for clients. They must be used in conjunction with other performance indicators (such as Sphere technical standards) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of **what** a project achieved for clients, **how** it was done, and **if** it contributed to addressing clients' priority needs while protecting their rights and dignity.

The table below provides a summary of the client responsiveness benchmarks for each outcome in each project phase. Client feedback should be sex and age disaggregated to achieve each benchmark (see p. 16 for quality assurance criteria to meet benchmarks). **Annex One** provides a detailed matrix of the outcomes, indicators and quality criteria, with definitions and suggestions for data collection and analysis.

Table 1: Client Responsiveness Benchmarks in Project Lifecycle Phases

Outcome 1:

Aid providers consistently use feedback and inputs from clients to design and adapt projects, paying special attention to gender, age and diversity

Design/Start-up	Implementation	Close-Out
L1. Project proposals include an **explanation of intended measures to support client responsiveness** or Accountability to Affected People (AAP) **(MINIMUM)**	L1. Project teams **regularly review client feedback** as part of management processes **(MINIMUM)**	L1. Projects **conduct an end-of-project analysis** of overall feedback trends and management responses to influence future projects **(MINIMUM)**
L2. Project proposals include **references to lessons learned and client feedback** from previous projects on preferred **communications and participation channels (INTERMEDIATE)**	L2. Project teams respond to feedback within **agreed timelines and channels, and adapt projects accordingly (INTERMEDIATE)**	L2. Projects **share and validate the results** of their analysis with clients **(INTERMEDIATE)**
L3. Project teams involve clients in **co-designing the project (ADVANCED)**	L3. Project teams regularly **report back to clients** on how feedback has been considered or addressed and **validate project adjustments with clients (ADVANCED)**	L3. Projects **consult with clients to identify recommendations** on how to improve feedback mechanisms and address unresolved issues for future projects **(ADVANCED)**
L1. Projects **inform clients** of planned (reactive and proactive) feedback and response mechanisms **(MINIMUM)**		
L2. Projects **consult and validate with clients** on their preferred feedback and response mechanisms **(INTERMEDIATE)**		
L3. **Clients jointly define** communications and feedback mechanisms with project teams **(ADVANCED)**		

Table 1: Client Responsiveness Benchmarks in Project Lifecycle Phases

Outcome 2:
Clients collectively influence decisions that affect their lives in all phases of the project ⚥

Design/Start-up	Implementation	Close-Out
L1. **Projects inform clients of planned** project objectives and activities (**MINIMUM**) L2. Projects **consult with clients on their** priority needs and preferences for delivery of assistance (**INTERMEDIATE**) L3. **Clients jointly define** project objectives and activities and mechanisms for participation in decision-making **with project teams** (**ADVANCED**)	L1. Projects **regularly inform clients** on planned activities and available feedback channels (**MINIMUM**) L2. Projects act upon received **feedback and consult with clients** on the design of activities and delivery mechanisms (**INTERMEDIATE**) L3. **Clients directly participate** in management and monitoring of project activities with project teams (**ADVANCED**)	L1. Projects **inform clients** of close-out and transition activities (**MINIMUM**) L2. Projects **consult and validate with clients** on planned close-out and transition activities (**INTERMEDIATE**) L3. **Clients jointly define** project close-out and transition activities with project teams (**ADVANCED**)

Outcome 3:
Clients are satisfied that projects have adequately addressed their priority needs ⚥

Design/Start-up	Implementation	Close-Out
L1. **Projects inform clients of planned** mechanisms to collect satisfaction data (**MINIMUM**) L2. **Projects consult and validate with clients** on the design of satisfaction monitoring mechanisms (**INTERMEDIATE**) L3. **Clients jointly define** client satisfaction monitoring mechanisms and quality criteria for assessing satisfaction (**ADVANCED**)	L1. Projects **regularly monitor and analyse** clients' satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of project activities (**MINIMUM**) L2. Projects **consult and validate with clients** the findings from satisfaction monitoring data (**INTERMEDIATE**) L3. **Clients jointly analyse and interpret** satisfaction data with project teams (**ADVANCED**)	L1. Projects **conduct an end of project analysis** of overall client satisfaction trends with the quality and effectiveness of responses over the course of the project (**MINIMUM**) L2. Projects **share and validate the results** of their analysis with clients (**INTERMEDIATE**) L3. Projects **consult with clients** to identify lessons learned and recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of projects, and document this to orient future projects (**ADVANCED**)

Section Three: Integrating the Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework into the Project Lifecycle

This section provides 10 key steps to integrate the performance measurement framework into the project lifecycle.

Project design and start-up phases

Step 1 Include elements of client responsiveness programming into project proposals, plans and budgets

Step 2 Integrate sex and age disaggregated client feedback into needs assessment and project design processes

Step 3 Inform and consult with clients on the project objectives and activities early and often in the design or start-up phases of a project ⚥

Step 4 Revise and adjust plans for client participation and feedback mechanisms based on client groups and context ⚥

Implementation phase

Step 5 Regularly collect client feedback data through proactive and reactive channels

Step 6 Analyse and interpret satisfaction and feedback data with attention to sex, age, disability and other vulnerabilities

Step 7 Systematically use client feedback data as part of decision-making

Step 8 Respond to clients' feedback within agreed timeframes

Close-out phase

Step 9 Plan close-out and transition activities early, and in consultation with clients and other stakeholders ⚥

Step 10 Document challenges, lessons learned and opportunities to scale-up good practices

Project teams can also refer to IRC's Client Responsiveness Enablers and Staff Management Guide for more recommendations on how to integrate client responsiveness into organisational processes.

Integrating the measurement framework into project design and start-up phases

The design and start-up phase is a critical point in the programme lifecycle as design flaws can have serious consequences on successful implementation and the quality and outcomes of interventions. The following steps are based on current good practice, and linked to the benchmarks outlined in Table 1.

Step 1 Include elements of client responsiveness programming into project proposals plans and budgets

One of the most important means to ensure projects are client-focused is to **include specific client-responsiveness outcomes into project proposals**, and to link the outcomes to management, implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements. Too often, organisations make initial efforts to reference the needs of clients in project proposals, but then neglect to plan for *collecting, analysing and acting on client feedback and engaging them in decision-making processes* throughout the project lifecycle. As a result, client responsiveness measures are often done on an ad-hoc basis, leading to gaps in information and missed opportunities to ensure projects adjust to changing needs and priorities of clients.

Projects should develop a clearly defined ***Client Responsiveness Plan*** (or AAP plan) that sets out the roles, responsibilities, processes and activities to support client-focused programming. This is critical to ensuring clients' views and perspectives drive project management and decision-making. At the very least, the plan should have clear links to monitoring and evaluation plans, but ideally, it would form the basis for the overall project management plans and decision-making processes.

Deliberately including client responsiveness outcomes, indicators, and benchmarks into project design and regular monitoring can be a powerful tool to demonstrate that projects are "putting people at the centre." At a minimum, projects should include a section on AAP or client responsiveness in proposals that explains how these measures will be organised and implemented.

Examples of client responsiveness activities could include setting up feedback channels, organising gender balanced community meetings and separated focus groups, conducting opinion and satisfaction surveys, and carrying out field monitoring visits. Measures to support client participation could include gender balanced community committees, with representation of specific marginalized groups, such as youth, people with disabilities, etc., participation in project management meetings, or directly managing and implementing some project activities. Teams should explore prioritising and using the capacities and resources of local partners and clients themselves for implementation, jointly managed monitoring, or feedback and consultation mechanisms.

Whenever possible, planned engagement strategies included in project proposals should be informed by clients' priority needs and preferences around service delivery, communication and engagement channels, and feedback mechanisms. If this information is not available, use feedback and lessons learned from previous projects or other sources (such as local experts) to justify the proposed project interventions.

Project proposals and budgets should have adequate staff and resources to include client responsiveness as an integral part of project management and monitoring, rather than as a stand-alone activity. Budgeting for monitoring activities will allow organizations to demonstrate how client responsiveness contributes to more informed decision-making and better quality programming.

Developing a good Client Responsiveness Plan

Project teams can use the following questions to develop a Client Responsiveness Plan:

- What are clients' preferred channels for communications, feedback and engagement? How do we know?
- What are the proposed proactive and reactive feedback mechanisms that will be used? How often will they be used? How will feedback be documented and registered?
- What mechanisms will be used to promote client participation in decision-making? How will the project ensure adequate, participation and safe access for clients to use the feedback mechanisms? How will the project ensure informed consent and confidentiality of data?
- Who will be responsible for collecting, recording and acting on the different types of client feedback received? Who will ensure oversight and quality assurance?
- How often will feedback be reviewed and how will it be used for decision-making?
- How will sex, age, disability and diversity data be collected, analysed and interpreted?
- How will clients be informed about the responses to feedback and any follow-up actions?
- What resources are needed to do all the above?

Step 2 Integrate client feedback into needs assessment and project design processes

Many needs assessment tools only include "objective" quantitative data, such as nutrition status, number of people displaced, or households without access to safe water, without considering clients' expectations and preferred assistance. Consulting with clients early on can help prioritise needs, identify those the most vulnerable groups in the population, define project selection criteria and determine which interventions are most appropriate. Engagement during the needs assessment is also a good opportunity to identify preferred and trusted channels for communication and engagement with clients. These preferences should be incorporated into project proposals and the Client Responsiveness Plan.

There are several ways to incorporate client feedback into the needs assessment such as including qualitative questions into existing needs assessment tools, conducting key informant interviews or leading focus group sessions with clients to discuss needs, priorities and preferences. In ideal circumstances, organisations will use a mixed approach to verify the needs assessment and highlight gaps between priorities identified by aid organisations and clients.

In an emergency context, there are often time and access constraints that limit engagement with clients in the needs assessment and proposal development stage. In these cases, use feedback information from previous projects, or the inputs from local experts to get an initial overview of priority needs and the most appropriate channels for communication and engagement with clients. As soon as possible, consult directly with communities to gather this information and test your assumptions about needs. **A limited amount of consultation is better than no consultation at all.**

Tips: Client-focused Needs Assessments

Here are some tips to make sure needs assessments consider clients' perspectives:

- Coordinate needs assessment and consultation exercises with other actors. Clients consistently complain of the number of uncoordinated assessments by multiple actors, and the time it takes to repeatedly share the same information, often with little follow-up information or actions.
- Keep need assessment tools and questions as simple as possible .
- Don't look at needs from a narrow technical perspective, or only concentrate on needs related to your organisation's competencies. Needs should be looked at holistically, and aid organisations should support communities' efforts to find solutions for priorities that can't be covered by the project.
- Use participatory methods to test and validate needs assessment findings with clients.
- Use evidence-based approaches to plan the most effective interventions, but be prepared to explain your choices and then reconcile them if they do not match clients' priorities or preferences.
- Consider power dynamics when speaking with different client groups. If needed, hold separate meetings with women and men facilitated by female and male staff, respectively.

Step 3 Inform and consult with clients early and often in the design and start-up phases of a project

In line with the CHS, organisations have a responsibility to share timely, accurate, accessible, transparent and relevant information with clients and other stakeholders at the outset of a project. At minimum, projects should provide clients with information about the organisation, project aims and objectives, planned activities, selection criteria to receive assistance, and mechanisms to obtain more information or provide feedback and complaints. This basic information should be shared through community meetings, and when appropriate, posted in accessible places in the community. In order to ensure that all clients receive the information, in is important to seek out spaces that diverse groups frequently access – i.e. women's group meetings, youth centres, health facilities, etc.

As soon as possible, clients should be directly consulted to ensure plans meet their priority needs and preferences. When the context allows for it, clients should have opportunities to review and validate plans, and to participate directly in defining project objectives and activities.

Confidentiality, Informed Consent and other Ethical Issues

Aid organisations often "extract" data from communities as inputs for project planning and implementation, but provide few details on how that information will be used, and how privacy and confidentiality will be protected. This is particularly problematic in conflict situations or situations with sensitive information such as sexual exploitation and abuse or corruption.

Organisations have an obligation to obtain informed consent from clients to participate in projects, and to provide clear, accessible and understandable information on how personal data and feedback will be used and safeguarded. This includes providing information on the process for feedback and complaints, and the response procedures.

Project staff and partners should be fully aware of their obligations to protect and safeguard client confidentiality and personal information and help clients exercise their rights and preserve their dignity. This should be done in conjunction with staff training around related issues such as Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, organisational Codes of Conduct, and Data Management and Security.

Step 4 Revise and adjust plans with client participation and feedback mechanisms

Designing feedback mechanisms that are responsive to clients' needs and preferences for communication, engagement and feedback is critical. Many organisations do not take the time to consult with clients which leads to poorly designed mechanisms with little acceptance or use by communities. Additionally, clients may be unaware of their rights to access information, uncomfortable providing negative feedback on the quality of assistance, or unsure of their relationship with aid providers. In other cases, clients may not be familiar using the feedback tools and mechanisms proposed by aid providers. Monitoring clients' use of feedback mechanisms, and if it varies by group, can identify if there is a barrier that must be adjusted. Clear and regular client engagement will help overcome these challenges and ensure that all clients can engage with feedback mechanisms.

To maximize opportunities for feedback, it is important to plan for a combination of mechanisms, including proactive and reactive mechanisms. Proactive feedback channels, where project teams directly engage with clients, are often the best means to gather clients' views, perspectives and opinions. Examples of proactive feedback methods include satisfaction or perception surveys, focus groups, community meetings or key informant interviews.

The advantage of these proactive approaches is that they allow for in-depth discussions to explore why clients hold certain opinions or behaviours, or to understand the reasons behind varying levels of satisfaction with projects. Diverse client groups should be targeted to ensure more equitable participation in feedback mechanisms, and more accurate and representative data. Collecting unbiased, honest opinions from clients about their satisfaction with the quality of assistance and their relationship with aid providers can be challenging with proactive mechanisms. Ensuring that monitoring teams have female and male members and using separate monitoring exercises by gender and age group can help reduce this risk.

Reactive feedback mechanisms present opportunities for feedback, but do not involve direct outreach. Reactive feedback channels include suggestion boxes, telephone hotlines or help desks. However, because clients must take the initiative to provide feedback, it can be more difficult to determine if an issue or opinion is widespread amongst the population. Special attention should given to ensuring reactive feedback channels do not inadvertently impede certain groups of clients from providing their inputs. For example, low levels of literacy, a lack of privacy using suggestion boxes, or help desks may act as a barrier for some clients. The design of reactive channels should consider accessibility challenges of women, girls and boys, the elderly, or clients with reduced vision, mobility or other disabilities.

In terms of engagement and participation in project implementation and management, clients' views and preferences can help determine the most appropriate manner for involving them in projects. This could range from representation in project steering committees, participation in project implementation and quality monitoring, to other mechanisms where clients' perspectives can inform decision-making.

Use a combination of feedback and monitoring methods to increase data quality and validity

In general, reactive feedback channels alone will not be enough to generate reliable data for analysis and decision-making. Using a mix of proactive and reactive feedback channels can help improve the quality of data to analyse and crosscheck against other monitoring sources, such as number of clients using services, changes in health or nutritional status, or other more technical quantitative data.

At a minimum, projects should plan for at least one reactive and proactive feedback channel and early engagement to share with clients how to access and use these mechanisms.

Don't underestimate the importance of direct observation and informal monitoring. Affected people consistently report higher satisfaction with aid efforts when aid providers are in closer proximity to them and they have more opportunities to directly engage. Seeing firsthand how activities are carried out is often an opportunity to make real-time changes that dramatically improve clients' satisfaction with the quality of an intervention.

Teams can also consider using independent or third-party monitoring, especially for projects with limited capacity or knowledge of qualitative data collection, or in situations with remote management arrangements. Independent monitoring can also be useful if there are issues of mistrust and poor relationships with aid providers. **However, in these cases, projects should look for reliable partners with experience in community engagement in humanitarian crisis contexts and a shared commitment to respectful and dignified treatment of clients.**

Integrating the measurement framework into the project implementation phase

A well-designed Client Responsiveness Plan can help ensure client feedback is used to inform decision-making. But a good plan is not enough; it needs to be put into practice and applied consistently, with projects and activities adjusted based on client feedback. This is why it is important to explicitly link client responsiveness measures to project monitoring and management processes in the implementation phase. **Client responsiveness activities should be considered an essential component of good management practices, and not a stand-alone activity within a project.**

The following suggestions are based on current good practice, and linked to the benchmarks outlined in Table 1.

Step 5 Regularly collect client feedback through proactive and reactive channels

One of the proposed performance measurement indicators is that projects have adequate feedback and response mechanisms in place. Beyond determining which feedback mechanisms to use, projects must also consider how data will be collected, processed, and stored, with attention to data protection and confidentiality. This includes defining responsibilities for data collection. As always, projects should ensure the ability to collect and disaggregate sex, age, disability and diversity data is built into the design of data collection and analysis tools so that this information can inform analysis and interpretation.

In most cases, projects can use or modify ***existing data, monitoring tools and processes*** to collect client responsiveness monitoring data. Internal documents, such as such as project proposals and management reports, can be a valuable source to track how well projects meet the measurement frameworks' ***benchmarks*** or to identify gaps in processes and procedures. For more qualitative client feedback and satisfaction data, many monitoring tools can be adapted or expanded to incorporate client feedback. For example, exit surveys at health clinics or schools to track numbers of clients accessing and using services could be expanded to allow clients to provide feedback on a range of other issues.

Monitoring internal quality assurance to meet benchmarks

Project teams should regularly analyse and report on benchmarks during internal quality assurance processes. This will help identify where projects are meeting or exceeding the minimum criteria, and where adjustments and improvements are needed.

For some client responsiveness quality criteria, the easiest approach is to collect data and interpret it with a simple yes/no analysis. For example, teams could report that they meet the "good" benchmark because they have consulted and validated the design of feedback mechanisms with clients. However, this is a missed opportunity to assess the quality of the consultation process, and may lead to overly positive assessment of their performance.

Teams should go a step further and assess the effectiveness of that consultation. Criteria for analysis could include:

- Was the consultation done in culturally appropriate manners and in the local languages?
- Was there an attempt to consult with all groups of the population?
- Were special measures taken to ensure gender, age and disability representation?
- Was the consultation focused on actually listening to clients, or more about collecting information to meet the project's information needs?
- Was this documented and shared with relevant technical staff and management?

This could be done as a self-assessment exercise, or incorporated into more formal evaluation processes, such as a mid-term review, to promote continuous learning and improvement.

Regularly review and update your Client Responsiveness Plans

The Client Responsiveness Plan must be reviewed regularly to assess if it is functioning as planned or needs to be adjusted.

Here are some questions that can help teams assess the effectiveness of their Client Responsiveness Plans:

- Are all groups of clients aware of and familiar with project feedback and participation mechanisms? Do they know how to access them and give inputs and feedback?
- Are project feedback and participation mechanisms biased in favour of some groups at the expense of others? Which groups are using the mechanisms, how frequently and for what kind of feedback (complaints, information requests, etc.)? How can we make sure other groups have opportunities to engage and provide feedback?
- Do all groups of clients have safe access to feedback mechanisms? What can we do to make it easier to provide feedback and inputs? Do we need to consider other mechanisms?
- Do clients trust that inputs and feedback are listened to and acted on? Are we responding in a timely manner to their concerns? Are we listening to them and reporting back to them on what we have or haven't done in response?
- Are we fully committed to adapting our project plans based on client feedback and increasing their participation and role in management decision-making?

Step 6 Analyse and interpret feedback data with attention to sex, age, disability and diversity issues

At the most basic level, projects should track, classify and document all feedback - formal and informal - and the type of response required. The data should be disaggregated by sex, age, disability or other diversity factors to facilitate more accurate data analysis and interpretation.

Projects teams will need to regularly test and validate their assumptions about the quality, accuracy and representativeness of feedback and satisfaction data. For example, feedback mechanisms may not be accessible or easy to use by some groups. This can lead to gaps or biases in the data, which in turn can result in misinterpretation of the data. Teams should use a variety of other monitoring data to crosscheck and verify information. Following up with clients and engaging them through focus groups or other methods can help identify gaps or issues in the data collection process and the reasons behind low rates of participation and use of feedback mechanisms. If necessary, projects should adjust feedback mechanisms and data collection tools based on this feedback.

Sensitive issues around gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, or other issues must be handled, recorded and investigated using the adequate channels and protocols in order to protect the client and the confidentiality of the information shared. The IASC GBV Guidelines (2015) GBV Pocket Guide provides best practices to address sensitive information that should inform and be used along with the organisational policies.

Ideally, all projects should assess programme quality for both technical quality as well as perceptions of quality from clients' point of view. Dimensions of quality such as timeliness, relevance, and appropriateness of assistance are often part of humanitarian evaluation criteria. Including an additional consideration of client feedback can help provide evidence for evaluations and learning exercises. Clients themselves will have their own concepts of quality and which dimensions to prioritise in project monitoring. Project teams should engage clients to jointly define what satisfaction means in terms of quality, the relationship with aid providers and how to measure these factors.

When analysing feedback data, including client satisfaction, it is important to use a **gender and age analysis** to interpret the data. Disaggregated data based on gender, age, disability and diversity can demonstrate not only who is accessing feedback mechanisms, but also document varying perspectives among different groups of clients depending on their experiences accessing assistance. Adult women may have different views and experiences than adolescent girls. Men and boys may have different needs that are not immediately evident when designing and implementing programmes. People with disabilities or the elderly may have very different experiences in accessing assistance, and important opinions on whether or not their needs are considered.

After an initial analysis, teams should share and validate with clients - or better still, involve them in helping to analyse and interpret the data. Focus group sessions, key informant interviews or community meetings can help teams interpret the issues from the perspective of different groups of clients. Also including indirect clients – people not directly receiving assistance – can uncover other issues that affect quality and outcomes, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of the data and tailored solutions depending on the different needs of client groups.

Step 7 Systematically use client feedback data as part of decision-making

Regularly monitoring and interpreting client feedback data, including client satisfaction, can help teams identify and manage issues to improve performance. **However, the time and effort needed to collect, analyse and interpret client feedback data is pointless unless it is actually used to shape and influence decision-making.**

One simple way to ensure client feedback is considered is by making it a standard agenda item on every management team meeting agenda. This could be complemented by monthly reviews, and a more compressive quarterly management review, or as part of a mid-term review process.

When reviewing feedback and satisfaction data, **it is important to go beyond a superficial review of the data analysis before making decisions**. Feedback and satisfaction data need to be contextualised and carefully interpreted to avoid misunderstandings or bias, which can lead to an incorrect identification of problems and corrective actions. A good analysis based on disaggregated data, and crosschecked with other monitoring data, will ensure more informed decisions.

Negative feedback is not necessarily a sign that a project is failing to respond to clients' needs. There are often many factors that impact clients' perceptions of aid quality and their ability to influence decision-making. Many of these may be beyond the scope of the project, such as issues around security and protection or other factors unrelated to the project's objectives.

In other cases, clients may be dissatisfied for reasons that can be changed. In these situations, projects have a responsibility to consider the feedback and a response. For example, clients may express dissatisfaction about the lack of information about planned activities or the timing and location for delivery of services or assistance. Rather than ignoring this data, or in contrast, seeing it as a failure of the project, it is an opportunity for teams to review their performance and take corrective action to ensure the communications channels used are the most trusted and appropriate, or if activities can be reorganised to better meet clients' preferences.

At the same time, consistently positive feedback is not a guarantee that a project is responsive to clients. For example, clients may state that they are satisfied with the project quality, but other data may contradict this and show that they are not using the services as planned. Similarly, a project may have delivered services aligned to clients' priority needs and preferences, but in a way which may be perceived as disrespectful and undermining their dignity. Project teams should challenge themselves to compare satisfaction data with other monitoring data to ensure client-responsiveness in all regards.

Presenting data and analysis

Project teams should define how to best present data and analysis to key internal and external audiences to facilitate decision-making processes.

Experience shows that decision-makers respond better to data if it is presented clearly, simply, and with visual aids and graphics. In particular, clear options and recommendations will help decision-makers to take the right decision. It is equally important to be clear about the limitations of the data and analysis, and present the evidence and rationale used to justify any proposed actions or recommendations. **This should be documented and included in project management records.**

Teams should also consider the best ways to share the analysis and interpretation with clients, using channels and messages that are accessible and appropriate to the culture and context based on an understanding of clients' communications preferences.

At a minimum, project teams should compile and analyse feedback and satisfaction data on a monthly basis, with more detailed analysis on a quarterly basis to track trends in feedback and the effectiveness of management responses.

Step 8 Respond to clients' feedback within agreed timeframes

Clients have a right to be informed about and participate in decisions that affect them, but organisations often limit their engagement to consultations for needs assessments in the project design and start-up phase. Systematically collecting, interpreting and acting on client responsiveness indicators, and showing clients how the organisation has responded to their feedback, demonstrates that clients' opinions, capacities, knowledge and experience are recognised and valued. This in turn can influence clients' sense of ownership, empowerment of project outcomes and may encourage them to take an active role in continuing and sustaining project activities when a project ends.

Unfortunately, many projects neglect the final step in the feedback cycle: **reporting back to clients, on the decisions taken as a result of their feedback within agreed timeframes.** This is a critical moment to demonstrate accountability to clients. Like any other communications with clients, teams will need to identify the most appropriate channels to use and ensure that information is accessible and understandable to all groups of clients and other stakeholders as needed. Closing the feedback loop is also an opportunity to check once more that problems are correctly identified, to discuss and validate any proposed solutions, and to review if there may be any unintended risks or consequences for clients or the project.

At a minimum, projects should inform clients on a monthly basis on progress of activities, through regular community meetings for example, with information posted in a visible, accessible location in communities. In order to ensure that all clients receive the information, in is important to seek out spaces that other groups access frequently – i.e., women's group meetings, youth centres, health facilities, etc. This can be complemented with other information-sharing measures, such as focus group sessions, SMS alerts, radio announcement or other relevant means, according to the context and clients' preferred communication channels.

In some projects, there may be valid reasons to not act on client feedback, or to take decisions that are not aligned to clients' preferences or opinions. For example, clients may want the project to take actions that may contravene humanitarian principles or the organisation's own policies. In these cases, reporting back to clients and explaining the evidence and decision is still important and presents an opportunity to reinforce an ongoing, open and transparent dialogue with clients.

> Experience shows that even when there are differences of opinions on the actions to take, the relationship between clients and aid providers can be strengthened through a dialogue based on transparency and mutual respect.

Projects should document how clients have been informed and engaged in project implementation and include this in management records. This could include, for example, tracking the number of meetings, with a breakdown of participation using SADD, as well as the outcomes of those meetings, with particular attention to decisions or actions that contradict clients' views and opinions. This will help provide evidence that the project is meeting its responsibilities to inform and engage clients.

Closing the feedback loop

Reporting back to clients within agreed timeframes should be done through a combination of community meetings as well as posting information in a place in the community accessible by women, girls, vulnerable and marginalised groups, and using appropriate, understandable language. At minimum, projects should regularly document and report back to clients on:

- Issues identified through feedback and their prevalence (such as how many people it affects)
- Analysis conducted and decisions taken as a result, and an explanation on how and why these decisions were taken
- Proposed changes to the project (if any) or any follow-up action (such as further consultation, research or advocacy)
- Who is responsible and when actions will be taken or a rationale why actions cannot be taken (lack of access, resources, beyond scope of project, etc.)
- How the project will reassess and review if these changes generate the expected results

Building a client-responsive organisational culture

Incorporating and consistently measuring client responsiveness in programming can be a positive incentive for staff to adopt more client responsive attitudes and behaviours. This sends a strong message that the organisation is committed to prioritising client responsiveness and linking this to decision-making. Showing that applying and measuring client responsiveness approaches is feasible and that it has tangible benefits for affected people are incentives for the sector to achieve the goal of better aid.

Too often, aid organisations are reluctant to accept negative feedback from clients, or to acknowledge mistakes. Many project teams worry that asking clients about their needs, priorities and preferences may raise unrealistic expectations, or that negative feedback will reflect poorly on project staff within the organisation or with donors. However, being more accountable and responsive to clients underpins all of the major policy commitments in the humanitarian sector in the past five years. Project teams should leverage these commitments to support more flexibility in internal decision-making to adapt and adjust projects based on client feedback, and for greater involvement and participation in identifying and finding solutions to problems.

At the organisational level, senior management and human resources teams can support an internal culture of accountability and client responsiveness by including client responsiveness in staff job descriptions and performance review processes. Project staff should be supported and empowered to take time to listen and respond to clients' views and perspectives, and to take risks when needed to adjust activities. Training, coaching and mentoring can also help raise awareness and build the skills and competencies needed for applying client responsiveness in day-to-day work.

In order to change the culture, organisations need to lead by example by systematically integrating client responsiveness across the organisation and advocating with partners and other stakeholders to adopt common approaches to using client feedback and participation mechanisms in responses.

Integrating the measurement framework into the project close-out phase

When project activities are drawing to end, organisations will plan a transition to scale down activities, or transfer them to community organisations or local authorities. Most projects will also include a final evaluation. These are good opportunities to consolidate lessons learned and share good practices that can help build client responsive capacities for future projects.

The following suggestions are based on current good practice, and linked to the benchmarks outlined in Table 1.

Step 9 Plan close-out and transition activities early, and in consultation with clients and other stakeholders

All projects should develop an exit strategy during the design and start-up phase, and revisit the strategy regularly to adjust to changing contexts and anticipate clients' future long-term needs. Consulting with clients in advance can help minimise the uncertainty and ensure transition plans are realistic, relevant and appropriate to meeting their priorities. At a minimum, this should be done at least two months before a project closes to give time for clients to begin their own planning processes, and to engage with and secure support from other stakeholders such as local authorities.

Actively engaging clients in the discussions and planning of close-out can help reinforce their rights and empower them to take an active role in defining what they need and want, and how to best achieve this beyond the project end date. This may also help identify additional capacity-building and preparedness measures to minimise clients' vulnerability and support more effective, client-focused responses to future crises.

Step 10 Document challenges, lessons learned and opportunities to scale-up good practices

The close-out phase is a good time to conduct an end-of-project assessment of how well client responsiveness measures worked and how they contributed to better project outcomes. Projects should analyse which mechanisms for information sharing, feedback, participation and engagement were most effective, and if there was equitable access and use of client responsiveness mechanisms, with disaggregated data based on sex, age, disability and other diversity factors. The timeliness and effectiveness of management responses to client feedback and inputs should also be assessed.

> Asking clients themselves to reflect on and identify suggestions, lessons learned and recommendations for the future can provide powerful insights on how organisations can better plan and implement future projects with a client focus. It can support organisational learning to identify changes needed in internal systems and processes or changes in humanitarian coordination processes more broadly. The process can also help clients and communities identify opportunities to strengthen their capacities and resilience, and better articulate their needs and expectations of future relations with aid providers or other stakeholders.

Systematically collecting and documenting what kind of feedback was collected and how it was used for decision-making provides an evidence base for end of project reviews and evaluations. Prioritising the views of clients and engaging them throughout final evaluations can improve the quality of the analysis. It also helps to identify good practices and areas for improvement for future projects.

Considering how to engage clients in evaluation exercises can help improve the quality of evaluation findings and ensure clients' perspectives are prioritised in findings and lessons learned. Beyond this, whenever feasible, organisations should consider planning and budgeting for longer-term post-project impact evaluations to collect clients' feedback on projects and the impact on improving their lives and livelihoods. This kind of information is rarely collected in the humanitarian sector, but can provide insights and evidence on how aid interventions can be better designed for long-term sustainability and impact.

Comparing evaluations with a client-focused approach and similar client feedback and satisfaction data can help determine if certain practices are limited to a specific project, or if they are consistent across all of an organization's projects and sectors at the country level. This allows organisations to have a global overview on what is working well to scale and replicate in other projects or countries. It can also help identify common trends, challenges and areas for improvement at various levels throughout the organisation and within the sector.

Tips: Include assessing satisfaction of clients in any evaluation terms of reference

Make sure evaluations include a clear focus on assessing quality and outcomes from clients' perspectives.

Many evaluation terms of reference have a very limited focus on the views and opinions of clients and affected people. Putting people at the centre means that evaluations should prioritise assessing what clients feel about a project.

Evaluation teams should make use of existing client feedback and satisfaction data and directly consult with clients to verify that projects have met their priority needs and preferences. This could include asking for their views on the quality of assistance, relationship with aid providers, or perceptions around their current situation and their resilience to address future situations of vulnerability or crises.

Including these elements in evaluation terms of reference, and ensuring adequate budget for consultations, can ensure that evaluation findings are more comprehensive. Terms of reference should also consider using participatory evaluation processes and including a budget for "closing the loop" and sharing and validating findings with communities.

Section Four: Tools and Resources

This section provides an overview of selected client responsiveness tools and resources that project teams can use to support client responsiveness performance measurement. The emphasis is on tools that have already been tested and used in other situations and that are easy to adapt to different organisations and contexts.

Selected Tools and Resources to Support Client Responsiveness

Tool/Resources	Description
Sector-wide AAP Commitments	
CHS Standard Guidance Notes and Indicators (https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators)	Provides guidance on how to implement and measure the CHS Commitments, Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities.
Sphere Standard Handbook 2018 (https://spherestandards.org/handbook-2018/)	The update edition is linked to the CHS and provided revised technical standards including protection mainstreaming.
World Humanitarian Summit Agenda for Humanity (https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/agendaforhumanity?referer=home)	Outlines the key commitments made at the WHS, and collective progress towards implementing them.
Grand Bargain (https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc)	Describes the key commitments made by donor governments, UN agencies and NGOs to promote Participation and Localisation in humanitarian actions, amongst others.
IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected People - CAAP (https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/documents-61)	Updated version of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee commitments to AAP, with greater emphasis on use of the CHS and collective feedback, complaints and response mechanisms as well as Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA).
Needs Assessments	
ACAPS needs assessment resource library (https://www.acaps.org/library/assessment)	ACAPS has a comprehensive library of needs assessment and analysis tools and resources.
IASC AAP-PSEA Task Team – Suggested Qualitative Needs Assessments Questions (https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/news-52)	Provides a common set of qualitative questions that can be included in needs assessment tools to collect affected people's views and priorities on needs.
CDAC Network media landscape tool (http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/media-landscape-guides/)	Provides guidance on how to map and identify affected people's information needs, preferred and trusted information sources and media channels.

IFRC CEA questions assessment and monitoring evaluation (https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/community-engagement-and-accountability-toolkit/)	Excel spread sheet with examples and data collection templates for client responsiveness and accountability questions for needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation, including Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys.
Project Proposals and Planning	
IRC Quick Guide for IRC Proposal Writing (https://rescue.box.com/s/dduauqurxfq70rp2djiyqdmmkubf9gp5)	Offers useful tips and suggestions on how client responsiveness can be integrated into project proposals.
IRC Guidance on Client Responsiveness Project Design (https://www.rescue.org/resource/guidance-client-responsive-project-design)	Guidance on how to integrate client responsiveness into project designs.
Design of Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms	
IRC Guidance note to Select and Design Feedback Channels (https://rescue.box.com/s/j7sozb98s42g2jtc5vtyhwrvhdkafx99)	Information on how to develop and implement effective and appropriate feedback mechanisms.
IRC Guide to Writing Questions to Proactively Collect Client Feedback (https://rescue.box.com/s/llifl4q2o5al5qutzj1yj7vbmelm4tmz)	Tips and suggestions on how to formulate open-ended questions to use in proactive client feedback mechanisms.
IASC Best Practice Guide Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms (https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/node/17836)	Provides guidelines and standard procedures to develop and implement safe, accessible community-based complaints mechanisms, focusing on common approaches to dealing with PSEA issues.
Data Collection and Information Management	
IRC Feedback Registry (https://rescue.box.com/s/jdzr91fccsmqatenx5ad7y5juvzrl8az)	A useful tool to register different types of feedback and track responses.
IRC Monitoring for Action (MfA) Data Analysis and Action Planning Meeting Notes Template (https://rescue.box.com/s/byl1oisbf0puk62fgzezvlh8e53r22eb)	Templates to help orient monitoring activities, adaptable to incorporate client feedback and follow-up actions.
IOM Community Response Mapping database tool (www.communityresponsemap.org)	An open source web-based database to track and classify different types of feedback, including from social media, as well as management responses.
IFRC Guidance for running a focus group (https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/community-engagement-and-accountability-toolkit/)	A simple guide to organising and running an effective focus group session, including sample questions related to AAP, quality and satisfaction issues.
IFRC CEA questions assessment and monitoring evaluation (https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/community-engagement-and-accountability-toolkit/)	Excel spread sheet with examples and data collection templates for client responsiveness and accountability questions for needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation, including Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys.
Ground Truth Solutions perception and satisfaction survey tools Contact Ground Truth at (info@groundtruthsolutions.org)	Tools and technical support to design and implement perception and satisfaction surveys and link to decision-making processes.

Analysis and Interpretation of Feedback Data	
IRC Guidance to Present, Interpret and Respond to Client Feedback (https://rescue.box.com/s/eccojegezd8ut0th5368qxku7d0pqjd4)	Provides tips and guidance on how to analyse and interpret feedback data, and present it to support project decision-making.
IRC Note on Core Feedback Themes (https://rescue.box.com/s/oo1gntzym9mtwqcqur1ensa87r2gpaid)	Useful guide to classify different types of feedback by themes.
IRC Guidelines for Handling Negative Feedback (https://rescue.box.com/s/m7qfelhkhbycw7voiauayoa3m5446w5i)	Tips on how to deal with negative feedback.
IRC Safety and Ethical Considerations for Sensitive Complaints (https://rescue.box.com/s/q2x5pe8dv7oesq5eybpwxao67eyh21yw)	Tips on how to deal with sensitive complaints.
Gender, Age, Disability and Diversity Analysis	
IASC Gender and Age Marker Tool (https://reliefweb.int/report/world/iasc-gender-age-marker-gam-2018)	Useful tool to track how well gender equality, age, disability and diversity are incorporated in projects from an AAP perspective, including participation in decision-making, feedback and complaints, and outcomes aligned to clients' needs.
IRC Examples of Gender Sensitive Considerations (https://rescue.box.com/s/gk04lgm9tivk1txyk4v4adkjqk0140vu)	A guide note to ensure specific consideration for safety and accessibility of feedback channels for women and girls'.
ADCAP (2015) 'Minimum Standards For Age And Disability Inclusion In Humanitarian Action' (Pilot Version): (http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/adcap-age-and-disability-capacity-building-programme/)	This document brings together nine key inclusion standards, from learning and resource management, to identification and resilience, alongside seven sector-specific standards, which include nutrition, shelter and education. Each standard comes with key actions, guidance, tools and resources, and case studies illustrating how older people and people with disabilities have been included in humanitarian responses.
Human Resources and People Management	
IRC Client Responsiveness Human Resources Management Guide www.rescue.org	Provides a comprehensive set of guidelines to incorporate client responsiveness into management, staff selection and performance review processes.

Endnotes

1 See for example IRC's research on client responsiveness and feedback mechanisms at: www.rescue.org

2 In this document, the term "client" is used to refer to vulnerable and crisis-affected people that are targeted to receive services or assistance by a project or organisation. This includes women, men, girls and boys of different ages and capacities, and acknowledges the diversity and different needs, priorities within any group or community.
The term "client responsiveness" refers to measures to collect, analyse and respond to affected people's feedback and complaints and supports their participation and engagement in project activities and decision-making processes. The term encompasses similar concepts and approaches used by organisations such as "Accountability to Affected People (AAP) or Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).

3 CHS Alliance. The Standard. Available at: https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard. Accessed 2 March 2019.

4 See for example, IRC's work with Ground Truth and CDA at: www.rescue.org

5 CDAC Network (2017). The Communication & Engagement Initiative. Available at: http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20170809164937-cx7b5. Accessed 2 March 2019.

6 IRC (2016). Strategy 2020: the outcomes and evidence frameworks–evidence maps. Available at: https://www.rescue.org/resource/strategy-2020-outcomes-and-evidence-framework-evidence-maps. Accessed 2 March 2019.

7 IRC (2016). Client responsiveness – resourcing considerations for project teams. Available at: https://www.rescue.org/resource/client-responsiveness-resourcing-considerations-project-teams. Accessed 2 March 2019.

8 IRC. Client Responsiveness Factsheet. Available at: https://rescue.box.com/s/bbpn9qymi52dszmvlemmstb0krnnbhxj. Accessed 2 March 2019.

9 As an example, the CHS Guidance Notes proposes client-focused indicators for each of the nine commitments. The Grand Bargain Participation and Localisation and IASC AAP-PSEA Task Team are in the process of developing indicators to help monitor and benchmark AAP measures at the collective level.

10 The Grand Bargain, for example, commits donors to invest more in local responses and participation and feedback mechanisms. Some donor governments like the UK and US are now requiring aid providers to demonstrate how affected people are involved in decision-making and assess their degree of satisfaction with assistance provided.

11 Over 15 IRC staff from country teams in Cameroon, Pakistan, Thailand, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe, were interviewed as part of the consultation process, along with staff from regional offices and Headquarters. Representatives from the IASC AAP-PSEA Task Team, the IFRC, UNICEF, World Vision, CARE and the SCHR were also consulted in the design of the framework.

12 See for example, IRC's Theory of Change for "Power", which outlines how different interventions collectively contribute to the overall outcome of "People Collectively Influence Decisions that Affect Their Lives" at www.rescue.org

Annex One: Client Responsive Performance Measurement Outcomes and Indicators Matrix

This matrix provides a more detailed description of the Client Responsiveness Measurement Framework, including definitions of key terms and suggestions on data collection and analysis.

Outcome 1:

Aid providers consistently use feedback and inputs from clients to design and adapt projects, paying special attention to gender, age and diversity

Purpose:
This outcome relates to IRC OEF outcomes around power, CHS Commitments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9, the IASC CAAP, and Grand Bargain Participation Revolution commitments, amongst others. It describes the influence of client feedback on the design and implementation of humanitarian actions.

Rationale:
Organisations that do not systematically collect, analysis and act on inputs and feedback from clients are less likely to design and implement activities that are timely, relevant, appropriate and effective at meeting clients' priority needs and protecting their rights and dignity. Clearly defining how the project will collect and respond to client feedback and inputs helps ensure management and decision-making processes are responsive to clients' needs, priorities and expectations.

Indicator 1.1	Definitions	Suggestions for Data Collection and Analysis:
Projects have a formal, funded Client Responsiveness Plan (or equivalent) linked to project management and monitoring plans.	"Client Responsive Plan" (or equivalent) refers to a formal plan and budget to support Client Responsiveness measures, including defining roles and responsibilities and how client feedback will be collected, analysed, acted on, and reported back to clients.	Projects should pay particular attention to gender and diversity issues when designing, implementing and reviewing their Client Responsiveness Plan. This will help identify and plan any specific measures needed to ensure safe, equitable access to client responsiveness mechanisms for all groups of clients, and improve the quality and accuracy of information needed to support client-focused decision-making. Projects can use project proposals and management plans as evidence that a Client Responsiveness Plan is in place. However, teams are encouraged to assess the quality of their plan by ensuring that it adequately addresses how the project will: a. Define roles, responsibilities, timelines and channels to collect and respond to feedback and complaints b. Obtain informed consent from clients and protect the confidentiality of data c. Collect and analyse disaggregated data on sex, age and diversity d. Provide clients with accessible and relevant information about the organization and project plans e. Ensure equitable access to all groups of clients to feedback and participation mechanisms, using sex, age, disability and diversity analysis f. Regularly collect and analyse inputs and feedback from clients using safe, accessible and appropriate mix of reactive and proactive channels g. Provide equitable opportunities to clients to engage with and participate in project activities and decision-making processes h. Integrate and use the client feedback and satisfaction data and analysis for management and decision-making i. Deal with sensitive issues such as sexual exploitation, abuse of power, corruption, etc. At a minimum, plans should be assessed and reviewed as part of project proposal review and approval stage, identifying gaps and areas for improvement. Management teams should conduct a mid-term review to assess if the planned client responsiveness mechanisms are appropriate and functioning well, and if the plan is supporting more effective, client-focused decision-making. Ideally, project management will also carry out a quarterly analysis, and adjust the plan as needed.

Indicator 1.2	Definitions	Suggestions for Data Collection and Analysis:
# of project objectives or activities that are changed/ adapted in line with client feedback.	Objectives or activities" refer to formal project commitments to undertake actions to support clients, normally included in a project proposal, plan and results framework. "Changed or adapted" means that there has been a deliberate, documented decision to adjust activities based on feedback received. "Client feedback" refers to the views, opinions and perspectives of clients collected through formal or informal means, including passive (reactive) and proactive channels.	In order to analyse this indicator, projects will need to establish a means to track, monitor and document decisions and indicate the data sources and rationale used for making changes, such as feedback received, changes in the operating context, etc. Projects should also document situations where feedback has been received but no changes have been made, with a justification for not acting on feedback. In many cases, feedback received may be informal, and project teams may be able to make immediate changes to the design and implementation of activities. These should still be documented, as it will help show that feedback is consistently listened to and acted on. It will also help teams to see if there are consistent trends that could be addressed more systematically by adjusting project plans. In terms of analysis, a lower number of changes does not necessarily imply poor performance. Active engagement of clients in the design and implementation activities may result in well-designed projects that do not require major changes. In other cases, the low number of changes may be due to clients feeling uncomfortable expressing complaints, or participation in feedback mechanisms may be biased against some groups of the population. In these cases, the need for changes might not be identified nor acted on.

Design/Start-up Phase

Benchmarks	Definitions	Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:
L1. Project proposals include an explanation of intended measures to support client responsiveness or Accountability to Affected People (AAP) (MINIMUM) L2. Project proposals include references to lessons learned and client feedback from previous projects on clients' preferences on communications and participation channels (INTERMEDIATE) L3. Project teams involve clients in co-designing the project (ADVANCED)	"Measures to ensure client responsiveness or Accountability to Affected People" means any measures that are intended to ensure projects address clients' priority needs and preferences for delivery of assistance, communications and participation in projects, and to protect and promote their rights and dignity. "Lessons learned" refers to formal and informal learning from previous projects that can be used to increase the likelihood of more relevant, appropriate and effective interventions in line with clients' priorities and preferences.	This information can be gathered from project proposals and should assess how well client responsiveness and AAP measures are understood and addressed in the proposal, using a simple ranking scale (for example: poor, adequate or good). At a minimum, organisations should include a section on AAP and client responsiveness in all project proposals, outlining the planned measures to ensure safe, equitable access and opportunities for different groups of the population to engage and participate in decision-making and provide feedback and/or complaints. Proposals should also refer to any lessons learned or other experiences (positive and negative) from previous projects to explain the proposed AAP and client responsiveness measures. If available, information from previous projects can be used as a baseline to help track and monitor client responsiveness measures over the course of a project.

Benchmarks	Definitions	Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:
L1. Projects inform clients of planned feedback and response mechanisms processes (MINIMUM) L2. Project teams consult and validate with clients on their preferred communications channels and feedback mechanisms (proactive and reactive) (INTERMEDIATE) L3. Clients jointly define communications and feedback mechanisms with project teams (ADVANCED)	"Inform clients" refers to providing people who are directly targeted by the project with information about planned feedback mechanisms, how to access them, and how feedback will be responded to. "Consult and validate on preferred communications channels and feedback mechanisms" means clients have had the opportunity to provide inputs on the relevance and appropriateness of planned objectives and activities. "Jointly define" means that clients have been actively engaged and participated in decisions around communications and feedback channels.	At a minimum, projects should plan to have at least one reactive and one proactive feedback channel, and to share information about how to access and use these channels through at least one community meeting, with information posted in an accessible, appropriate place and an understandable manner in communities. If projects are able to consult directly with clients, or facilitate their direct participation in defining feedback and response mechanisms, the number of meetings and consultations made with clients should be documented, with a breakdown based on sex, age, and disability and diversity issues (SADD). Projects should document the type and degree of participation of different groups in the selection and design of feedback mechanisms, using a simple three-point scale (for example: not involved, somewhat involved, very involved), with disaggregated data on numbers of clients, gender, age, disability and diversity data (SADD). All this information should be incorporated into the Client Responsiveness Plan, as well as in project management records or donor reports.

Implementation Phase		
Benchmarks L1. Project teams regularly review client feedback as part of management processes **(MINIMUM)** L2. Project teams respond to feedback within agreed timelines and channels **(INTERMEDIATE)** L3. Project teams regularly report back to clients on how feedback has been considered or addressed **(ADVANCED)**	**Definitions** "Regularly review client feedback" means projects formally analyse and review feedback data as part of management processes. "Agreed timelines and channels" means the response to feedback meets the time commitments made with communities (or in the Client Responsiveness Plan), using agreed channels for dealing with different kinds of feedback (including appropriate channels for sensitive issues). "Report back to clients" means any analysis and follow-up actions are documented and shared with clients using appropriate channels.	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:** Regularly collecting, reviewing and acting on feedback at different phases of a response is key to ensure client responsiveness approaches are systematically applied in projects and across the organisation. At a minimum, management reviews of client feedback data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other diversity data (SADD) should be done on a monthly basis. The management responses to client feedback should be documented and reviewed on a quarterly basis to see if projects are using the correct channels and meeting agreed timeframes and commitments to respond to feedback and complaints, with particular emphasis on maintaining confidentiality and safety for sensitive issues, and attention to gender, age, disability and diversity issues. Efforts made to close the feedback loop by reporting back to clients should also be tracked and documented. At a minimum, projects should report back to clients on general feedback issues and the management response on a quarterly basis, using at least one community meeting, and posted in an accessible, appropriate and understandable manner in communities.

Close-out Phase		
Benchmarks L1. Projects teams conduct an end of project analysis of client feedback to assess overall trends and management responses over the course influence future projects **(MINIMUM)** L2. Projects share and validate the results of their analysis with clients **(INTERMEDIATE)** L3. Projects consult with clients to identify recommendations on how to improve feedback mechanisms for future projects, and document this to orient future projects **(ADVANCED)**	**Definitions** "Analysis of client feedback" means classifying feedback types and identifying trends and recurring issues, and assessing the effectiveness of responses, with appropriate SADD analysis. "Share and validate results" means that projects have shared feedback analysis in accessible and appropriate ways and that clients have had opportunities to provide inputs on the validity of the findings. "Consult with clients on recommendations for improvement" means that projects have asked for clients' inputs on how to improve feedback mechanisms.	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:** This information can be tracked through project reports and evaluations. At a minimum, an end of project analysis should include an assessment of who has accessed and used feedback channels, with disaggregated data on the number, sex, age, disability and diversity (SADD) of clients, and an assessment if responses were timely and effective, and used appropriate channels. Ideally, projects should organise at least one community meeting and separate focus group sessions to share the overall trends around feedback and validate the findings from the feedback received over the course of the project. Whenever possible, projects should also look for means to actively seek inputs, suggestions and recommendations from clients on how to improve projects overall, as well as client responsiveness and feedback approaches. This information should be shared and disseminated to appropriate internal and external stakeholders (including clients).

Outcome 2: People collectively influence decisions that affect their lives

Purpose:
This outcome helps assess clients' perceptions around their power and influence over decisions that affect them. It relates to IRC OEF outcome around Power, the CHS Commitments 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9, and the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution commitments, amongst others.

Rationale:
Clients that feel they can influence decision-making are more likely to feel a sense of ownership over project outcomes which can contribute to more effective and sustainable project outcomes. It also captures if clients feel empowered through the project lifecycle, and can contribute to building local capacities and resilience.

Indicator 2.1 Projects have **adequate mechanisms for consultation and participation of clients throughout the project lifecycle**	**Definitions** "Adequate mechanisms for consultation and participation" refers to having safe, accessible and appropriate mechanisms in place for projects to consult with clients and for clients to participate in project activities and decisions.	**Suggestions for Data Collection and Analysis:** This indicator helps projects demonstrate that systems and processes are in place to enable clients to influence project objectives, activities and outcomes. Projects can determine if mechanisms for consultation and participation are adequate through several means, including: ● Consulting clients on their perceptions of the safety, accessibility and effectiveness of mechanisms ● Assessing mechanisms against sector-wide examples of good practice ● Tracking and monitoring the number of clients participating and using established mechanisms ● Tracking how the outcomes of client participation and consultations has influenced decision-making (see indicator 1.1 above)
Indicator 2.2 **% of clients satisfied with their ability to influence project decisions at all phases of the project lifecycle**	**Definitions** "Satisfaction" refers to clients' perception on whether the project meets their expectations about their ability to influence decisions. "Influence" is limited to the scope and objectives of the project and the ability of the organization to respond to project-related issues. Wider issues, such as national-level responses or recovery plans may require advocacy on behalf of clients, but may be beyond the ability of the project and clients to influence changes. "Project decisions" include any decision around the definition and prioritization of activities and/or allocation of resources. This could include times and locations of service delivery, client selection criteria, communications and feedback channels, etc.	**Suggestions for Data Collection and Analysis:** There are a number of ways projects can track clients' views and perceptions of their influence over decision-making. This includes: ● Satisfaction surveys ● Focus group sessions ● Key informant interviews ● Community meetings Whenever possible, the sample size of clients consulted should be as representative as possible, with equitable representation of women and men, and adequate attention to age disability and diversity issues. In some cases, it will be important to use a variety of different monitoring tools and adapt approaches to target specific vulnerable groups, like children, in order collect this information. This information should be gathered as a baseline at the start-up phase of the project, and regularly tracked to assess trends and to make adjustments to mechanisms for participation and feedback as needed. At a minimum, data collection should happen in the project mid-term review and evaluation. More frequent monthly monitoring may provide more accurate information on clients' views and allow for better adjustments to projects. In more stable situations, quarterly reviews may be sufficient, while crisis situations with rapidly changing contexts, may require monthly reviews.

Design/Start-up Phase		
Benchmarks	**Definitions**	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:**
L1. Projects inform clients of planned project objectives and activities **(MINIMUM)** L2. Project teams consult and validate with clients on their priority needs and preferences for delivery of assistance **(INTERMEDIATE)** L3. Clients jointly define project objectives and activities and mechanisms for participation in project decision-making processes **(ADVANCED)**	"Inform clients" refers to providing people who are directly targeted by the project with information about the organisation, the objectives and planned activities, and selection criteria. "Consult and validate on priority needs," means clients have had the opportunity to provide inputs on their needs and priorities as well as their opinions on the proposed means of delivery of assistance. "Jointly define" means that clients have been actively engaged and participated in decisions around the project objectives and the design, management and implementation plans for project activities.	Project records can track when, how and with whom projects have communicated objectives and activities, and opportunities to consult and engage in the design. At a minimum, projects should share planned activities with clients through at least one community meeting, and post information in an accessible, appropriate and understandable manner. Projects should document how information has been shared, as well as how gender and diversity issues have been addressed to ensure information is accessible to all groups of clients. For active engagement with clients, projects should use a common approach to carry out surveys, focus group sessions or other consultations, and track and document the number and outcomes of meetings. At a minimum, at least one community meeting and 2 separate focus groups discussions (women and girls, men and boys) should be held to get clients' direct inputs on their perceived priority needs and delivery preferences, and define objectives and activities. Projects should also request inputs from clients to recommend the most appropriate means of participation in decision-making processes. Examples could be client representation in project steering committees, holding votes on different options for delivery of services or assistance, participatory consensus-building exercises, using community-based monitoring, etc. The selection of participation mechanism should be coordinated with other actors to ensure consistency and avoid conflicting approaches within communities.

Implementation Phase		
Benchmarks	**Definitions**	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:**
L1. Projects regularly inform clients on planned activities **(MINIMUM)** L2. Projects consult and validate with clients on the design of activities and delivery mechanisms **(INTERMEDIATE)** L3. Clients participate in management and monitoring of project activities with project teams **(ADVANCED)**	"Inform clients" refers to providing people who are directly targeted by the project receive information about the timing, location and purpose of planned activities. "Consult and validate on the design of activities," means clients have had the opportunity to provide inputs on the relevance and appropriateness of planned objectives and activities. "Directly participate" means that clients have equitable opportunities and defined roles in managing and monitoring of some or all project activities, such as through community management committees or monitoring.	Project teams have a responsibility to regularly inform clients about planned activities or any changes made based on client feedback or changes in the context. At a minimum, clients should be updated on a monthly basis (or more frequently if the context is rapidly changing), using accessible and appropriate information-sharing channels. If there is the possibility of more active engagement with clients, at least one community meeting and 2 separate focus groups discussions (women and girls, men and boys) should be held on a quarterly basis to get clients' opinions on the relevance and appropriateness of planned activities. This should be documented and shared with other actors so that the perspectives of clients can inform other project plans or activities. Projects should also track, document and report how clients participated in decision-making, such as number and outcomes of meetings, focus group sessions or other consultations.

Close-out Phase		
Benchmarks	**Definitions**	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:**
L1. Projects inform clients of close-out and transition activities **(MINIMUM)** L2. Projects consult and validate with clients on planned close-out and transition activities **(INTERMEDIATE)** L3. Clients jointly define project close-out and transition activities with project teams **(ADVANCED)**	"Inform clients" refers to providing people who are directly targeted by the project with information about close-out and transition activities. "Consult and validate close-out activities," means clients have had the opportunity to provide inputs on their needs, priorities and preferences to and that this is used to inform closeout plans. "Jointly define" means that clients have been actively engaged and participated in decisions around the design of close-out activities.	Projects should plan in advance how to support clients' long-term needs and resilience, beyond the project's timeframe. Projects have a responsibility to provide timely and accurate information to clients about how and when projects will close, and plans for transition. At a minimum, clients should be informed at least two months in advance of transition plans, using accessible and appropriate information-sharing channels. If there are more opportunities for active engagement with clients, at a minimum, at least one community meeting and 2 separate focus groups discussions (women and girls, men and boys) should be held to get clients' opinions on the relevance and appropriateness of close-out and transition plans. This will also help to set realistic objectives and manage expectations with clients. This should be done with sufficient time, and documented and shared with other actors to ensure a coordinated approach so that the perspectives of clients can inform the plans of other project and organisations.

Outcome 3: Clients are satisfied that projects have adequately addressed their priority needs

Purpose:
This outcome relates to IRC OEF commitments around power, the CHS Commitments 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9, the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution commitments, amongst others.

Rationale:
All projects need to be able to demonstrate that services and assistance have addressed people's needs. However, if monitoring and evaluation activities only focus on measuring quantitative data around services and assistance provided (people reached, health or nutrition rates, etc.), there will be enormous gaps in the analysis. Client responsive projects require more qualitative data to analyse how clients themselves view the quality and effectiveness of aid efforts. This information allows for a more comprehensive understanding of whether responses have been relevant, appropriate and effective from both a technical perspective and from the clients' perspective.

Indicator	Definitions	Suggestions for Data Collection and Analysis:
Indicator 3.1 **Projects regularly assess client satisfaction throughout the project lifecycle**	"Regularly assess client satisfaction" means measures are in place for organisations to proactively ask clients for their opinions and perceptions around the relevance, appropriateness and effectiveness of services and assistance, and use this to adjust programming when necessary.	This indicator helps projects demonstrate that systems and processes are in place to enable organisations to track clients' perceptions and degree of satisfaction opinions about programme quality and effectiveness. As indicated above, there are a number of ways projects can track clients' views and perceptions on project quality. This include: • Satisfaction surveys • Focus group sessions • Key informant interviews • Community meetings • Direct observation and field monitoring Whatever the tools used, projects should work towards ensuring a representative sample to ensure the perspectives of all groups of clients are reflected and considered in the analysis, with a breakdown by sex, age, disability and other relevant diversity factors. Ideally, projects should collect and interpret this data frequently (for example, on a monthly or quarterly basis) in order to build clients' familiarity, trust and confidence in the tools used to assess satisfaction. This can reduce the risk of response biases. Additionally, frequent data collection allows projects to crosscheck against other monitoring and feedback data, to respond more quickly to issues. At a minimum, this should be done as part of a project baseline, mid-term review and end of project evaluation, with more frequent monitoring if needed.
Indicator 3.2 **% of clients satisfied with the quality of services and assistance provided through a project**	"Satisfaction" refers to clients' perception on whether the services and assistances delivered through the project meet their expectations and priorities. "Quality" refers to clients' opinions on different elements such as timeliness, relevance, appropriateness, or effectiveness of services and assistances, as well as their opinions on the way services and assistance were provided.	Whenever possible, consult clients directly on their views and expectations for quality. Understandings of quality can range from timely assistance to culturally aligned services. Most likely, it will be a combination of several quality criteria, which is why a comprehensive approach is recommended. Monitoring and analysing client perceptions of quality should be linked to other "technical" quality measures, such as meeting relevant technical standards. In some situations, services and assistance may meet technical standards, but do not meet the priorities or expectations of clients, or are delivered in inappropriate ways, leading to lower satisfaction levels. For analysis and interpretation, projects may want to establish their own benchmarks and targets for client satisfaction. For example, a project might set out a target of at least 50% of clients consulted satisfied the quality of services and assistance at the start-up phase, and progressively increase this over time, to reach a target of 75% by the end of project. When interpreting satisfaction and perception data, it is important to remember that the crisis context and other factors (such as gender or local culture) can influence or bias results. Poor levels of satisfaction may be due to factors beyond the control or influence of a project. Similarly, high levels of satisfaction may not necessarily mean clients are satisfied; they may not be aware of their rights and entitlements to services that meet relevant technical standards which can affect satisfaction ratings. Thus, projects need to closely analyse the data to determine if there are other factors influencing the level of satisfaction, and what can be done to improve this - including asking clients themselves for their suggestions and preferences on the selection and design of assistance.

Design/Start-up Phase		
Benchmarks	**Definitions**	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:**
L1. Projects inform clients of planned mechanisms for collecting satisfaction data (MINIMUM) L2. Projects consult and validate with clients on the design of satisfaction monitoring mechanisms (INTERMEDIATE) L3. Clients jointly define satisfaction monitoring mechanisms and quality criteria for assessing satisfaction (ADVANCED)	"Inform clients" refers to providing people who are directly targeted by the project with information about the planned mechanisms used to collect satisfaction data (such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.). "Consult and validate on the design of satisfaction monitoring mechanisms," means clients have had the opportunity to provide inputs issues such as questionnaire design, equitable participation of different groups of the population, etc. "Jointly define" means people directly targeted by the project participate in the design of satisfaction monitoring mechanisms, such as the focus of questions, definitions of quality from clients' perspectives or other issues.	Project records can track when, how and with whom they communicated about collecting clients' perceptions of quality and satisfaction, or how they would be engaged to design satisfaction data and other monitoring tools. At a minimum, projects should share planned satisfaction and monitoring tools with clients through at least one community meeting, and post information in an accessible, appropriate and understandable manner in communities. Projects should document how information has been shared, as well as how gender and diversity issues have been addressed to ensure information is accessible to all groups of clients. For active engagement with clients, projects should use a common approach to engage with clients and to track and document the number and outcomes of meetings, focus group sessions or other consultations. At a minimum, at least one community meeting and 2 separate focus groups discussions (women and girls, men and boys) should be held to get clients' direct inputs on their preferences on satisfaction monitoring, as well as their views and expectations around on what constitutes quality in the project. Projects should also document how satisfaction and feedback data will be integrated with other monitoring data and analysed to inform decision-making processes, as part of the Client Responsiveness Plan.

Implementation Phase		
Benchmarks	**Definitions**	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:**
L1. Projects regularly monitor and assess clients´ satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of project activities (MINIMUM) L2. Projects consult and validate findings from satisfaction data with client (INTERMEDIATE) L3. Clients jointly analyse and interpret satisfaction data with project teams (ADVANCED)	"Regularly monitor and assess client satisfaction," means projects proactively seek out clients' views and opinions on project activities, with attention to gender and diversity issues. "Consult and validate findings," means projects have provided accessible and equitable opportunities for clients to provide inputs on the accuracy and appropriateness of satisfaction data and analysis. "Jointly analyse and interpret," means clients have participated in reviewing and interpreting satisfaction data and reaching conclusions and recommendations.	Monitoring client satisfaction is a useful tool to support better management and decision-making. Regularly collecting, reviewing and acting on client satisfaction data can help identify issues with the quality or delivery of services or assistance. At a minimum, management reviews of client satisfaction data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other diversity data (SADD) should be done on a quarterly basis. The management responses to client satisfaction data should be documented to show if projects have high rates of satisfaction and that projects took corrective actions if needed. Projects should also report back to clients on how satisfaction data has been interpreted and any changes made to programming as a result. At a minimum, projects should report back to clients on a quarterly basis, using at least one community meeting, and with information posted in an accessible, appropriate and understandable manner in communities.

Close-out Phase		
Benchmarks	**Definitions**	**Tips for Data Collection and Analysis:**
L1. Projects conduct an end of project analysis of overall client satisfaction trends with the quality and effectiveness of responses over the course of the project (MINIMUM) L2. Projects share and validate the results of their analysis with clients (INTERMEDIATE) L3. Projects consult with clients to identify lessons learned and recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of projects, and document this to orient future projects (ADVANCED)	"Analysis of client satisfaction trends" means projects review both specific satisfaction data along with other feedback and performance monitoring data to identify trends and areas for improvement. "Consult and validate findings," means projects have provided accessible and equitable opportunities for clients to provide inputs on the accuracy and appropriateness of the satisfaction trends analysis. "Jointly analyse and interpret," means clients have participated in reviewing and interpreting satisfaction data and making conclusions and recommendations for future projects.	This information can be tracked through project reports and evaluations. At a minimum, an end of project evaluation should include an analysis of client satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of project outcomes, with disaggregated data on the number, sex, age, disability and diversity (SADD) of clients. This should also include a review of how management and decision-making processes used satisfaction data to adjust and adapt projects. Ideally, projects should organise at least one community meeting and separate focus group sessions to share the overall trends around feedback and validate the findings from the feedback received over the course of the project. Whenever possible, projects should also plan to actively seek inputs, suggestions and recommendations from clients on how to improve client satisfaction with projects overall. This information should be shared and disseminate to appropriate internal and external stakeholders (including clients).

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