



**HUMANITARIAN AID INTEGRITY PROGRAMME
REFERRAL SYSTEM FOR COMPLAINT HANDLING
SUMMARY NOTE**

A. Identified gaps/ Proposed solution

One of the key weaknesses identified during the 2011 analysis of the Drought Response¹, that is also a challenge for other sectors such as Water, Health or Education, is the lack of accountability mechanisms at the grassroots level. The Food Assistance Integrity Study highlights that investments in beneficiary accountability mechanisms not only improve programming – and play a more transparent and accountable role in capturing concerns of beneficiaries – but also increase the capacities of communities in exercising their rights and entitlements. Effective accountability mechanisms at the grassroots levels also enhance people's participation in the design and implementation of development and humanitarian aid programmes, thus enhancing sustainability.

Although people in Kenya increasingly consider corruption as one of the main impediment to sustainable development, reporting of corruption cases is generally low because 1) People don't know where to report corruption; 2) People feel that no action will be taken afterwards.

In the Humanitarian Aid sector, when organizations have accountability systems in place, their complaint response mechanisms are exclusively set up for their own operations. The consequence is that if someone has a complaint on services or aid delivered by one organization, he/she needs to go and complain to the same organization. This results in a weak system because 1) complaints are often cast to another organization and never referred to the organization concerned (no referral systems between one organization and another), 2) People may not have access to or live too far to go to the place where they can express their concerns, 3) gatekeepers within the organization may impede action.

Transparency International Kenya is thus proposing to develop an automated web-based Integrated Complaint referral mechanism. This will allow the referral of complaints from one organization/ institution to another and will provide a one stop point for people to cast their complaint regardless of the organization concerned. It will thus also bring feedback and participation mechanisms closer and more easily understandable to the people. Integrated at the county level, the system will be linked to the county authorities and will establish linkages with the oversight institutions and law enforcement agencies to facilitate the resolution of complaints.

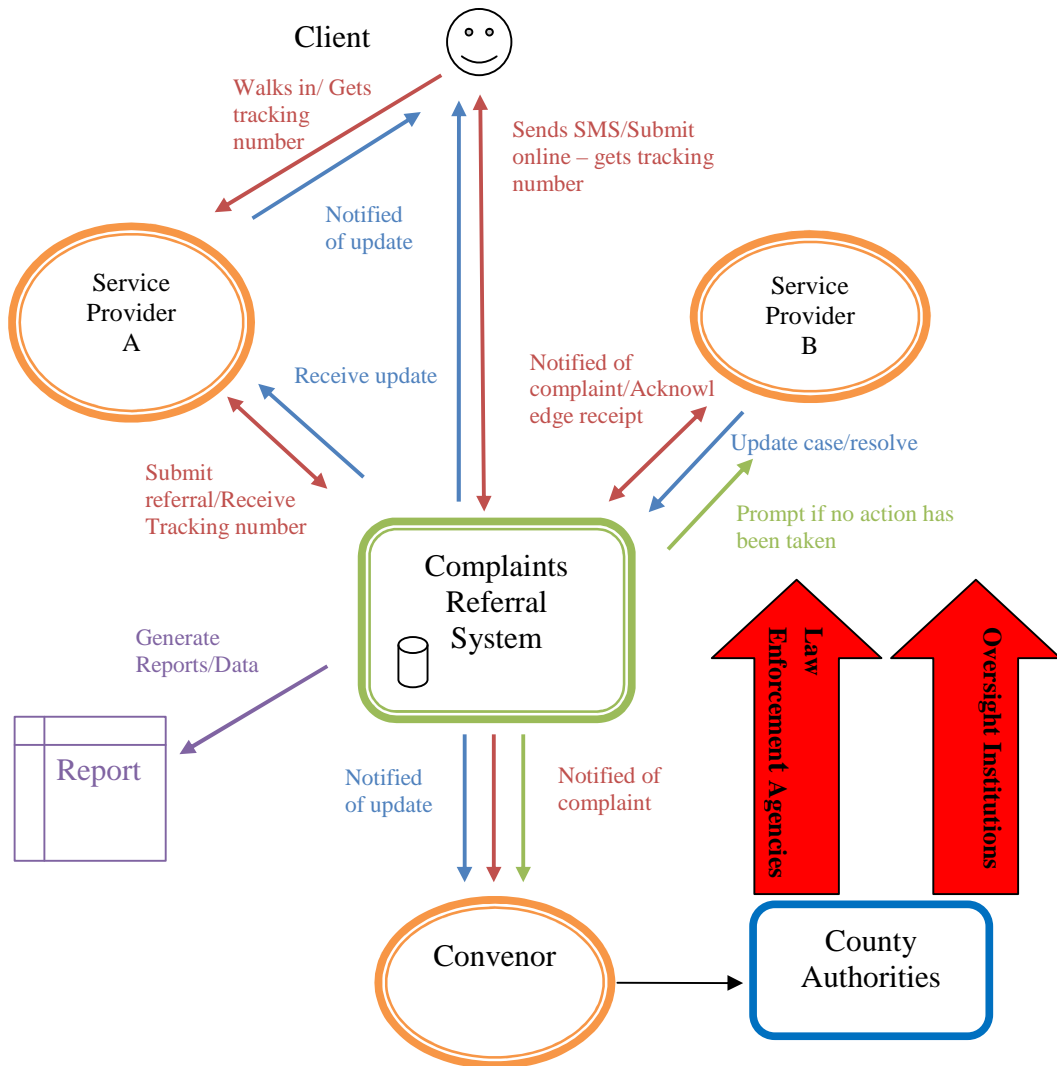
The system will allow people to report online or via SMS to any organisation/ institution participating. Any complainant will automatically be issued a tracking number by SMS and will receive notification each time any update is made on his/her complaint. People with no access to mobile phone or internet will have the possibility to walk in the closest office/ staff or community reporting structure of any organisation participating in the programme to launch their complaint. This organisation will log in into the system, take the complaint and refer it to the organisation concerned. The option to walk in will also allow illiterate beneficiaries to report their cases.

If no action is being taken or no response is being given after a defined lapse of time, the organisation will received a reminder by email and the convenor of the integrated complaint response mechanism will also be notified to follow up. This will thus also enhance effectiveness and coordination of organizations in responding and addressing beneficiaries' complaints and feedbacks.

¹ http://www.transparency.org/files/content/pressrelease/2012_TIKenya_FoodAssistanceIntegrityStudy.pdf

Finally, the Integrated Complaint Response Mechanism will generate data and reports regarding the type of complaints received geographical areas of origins, time lapse between complaints received and actions taken / complaints resolved. This will contribute enhance learning, responsiveness and effectiveness of aid and basic services at the county level.

B. Schematic view of the referral system for complaint handling



For more information, please contact Nicolas Seris, Humanitarian Aid Integrity Programme Coordinator at nseris@tikenya.org