

# **BRIDGIT WATER FOUNDATION**

## **COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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### **POLICY STATEMENTS**

BridgIT Water Foundation strives for high standards in everything that it does and welcomes feedback from individuals, intermediaries, businesses, partners, and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our work. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

The objectives of the Compliments and Complaints Policy are to:

- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear and acceptable timeframes
- Ensure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our services

We will ensure that we:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
- Record, process, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with acceptable norms
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated timeframe
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented as a result of the complaint, where appropriate
- Report, on a quarterly basis, the number of compliments and complaints received; the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken

### **DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not.

An individual may make a complaint if they feel we have:

- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service
- Delayed in providing a service
- Made a mistake in the way we have provided a service

- Failed to act in a proper way
- Provided an unfair service

This policy and procedure relates only to complaints received about BridgIT Water Foundation and its services. Individuals who make complaints about partner organisations will be notified in writing within one working day of receipt of the complaint that they need to complain to the organisation they have the complaint with, and will be provided with contact details, where possible.

## COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### COMPLIMENTS

Any verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the member of staff receiving the compliment and be passed to the appropriate manager for recording on the Compliments Register. Any member of staff identified as being the subject or contributing to any matter giving rise to the compliment will be notified within three working days. Feedback on compliments will be shared with employees at appropriate timings and the organisation may request approval to use positive feedback in communications or website material for promotional purposes.

### COMPLAINTS

BridgIT aim to settle issues quickly and satisfactorily through its internal complaints handling process.

There are 3 stages to the complaints procedure:

- Stage One – Complaint
- Stage Two – Appeal
- Stage Three – Independent Review

#### STAGE ONE

As a first step, we encourage all beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or visitors to refer all issues to the member of staff or the relevant manager providing the service (each project will have a designated point of contact). Concerns may be resolved quickly by way of an apology, by providing the service required or by providing an acceptable explanation to the individual.

If any individual wishes to make a formal complaint to the organisation should first establish how they will make the complaint. Individuals can make written or verbal complaints.

A written complaint can be issued to BridgIT Water Foundation either by email or by post.

**Email:** [info@bridgitwater.org](mailto:info@bridgitwater.org)

**Post:** BridgIT Water Foundation, P.O Box 1039, Stafford, Queensland, 4053, Australia

If the individual prefers to make a verbal complaint then they may do so by contacting the relevant manager or calling the BWF Director on the contact number provided below.

**Complaints Line: +61 402 638 665**

The person receiving the call will enter details on the 'Verbal Complaints Form.'

If the complainant is willing, or asks, to submit a formal written complaint, the 'Written Complaints Form' will be sent to them on the day of their call. On receipt, each complaint will be allocated a unique reference number and logged on the Complaints Register. Details of the complaint will be emailed immediately to the Complaints Investigator.

Complaints will be acknowledged within one working day of receipt. The complaints will be fully investigated and a written response, either hard copy or email, provided to the complainant by the BWF staff member within 20 working days of receipt. In exceptional circumstances where this deadline is not able to be met, the complainant will be advised of the reasons for this and notified of a revised date for response.

The Complaints Register will be updated by the staff member who received the complaint and any pending complaints will be flagged for follow-up by the relevant manager.

Individuals will be advised that if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal to the relevant Director within 14 working days and progress to Stage Two.

BWF commits to provide appropriate assistance and referrals to complainants, including referrals to medical, social, legal, and financial services.

### Special Circumstances

People with literacy issues, people who may be hearing or vision impaired, women, children, and those who do not speak English as their primary language should alert the relevant manager of their need to be provided with a translator or necessary assistance to enable them to express their complaint. In these circumstances, BWF is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure we fully understand their complaint and can effectively assess its legitimacy.

Serious incidents including child protection and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment are escalated and demand immediate attention.

### In-Country Complaints

Complaints from people in the countries where BridgIT works can be lodged with the BridgIT Country Directors, where applicable, or the Founding Director in Australia. Alternatively, complaints can be made to the heads of BridgIT's local NGO partners. Contact information for these NGO partners is available on BridgIT's website, [www.bridgitwater.org](http://www.bridgitwater.org).

Complimentors or Complainants are able to provide feedback or complaints in-country by contacting BridgIT's NGO partners in person, via the telephone, social media, E-mail, or in writing. Since many stakeholders and beneficiaries of BridgIT's projects overseas are illiterate or semi-literate, it is important that BridgIT make them aware of their ability to register complaints verbally. BridgIT trains its NGO partners to provide information about complaints and complaint remedy procedures to stakeholders/project beneficiaries during the initial project planning meetings with the community. All stakeholders, including the most vulnerable, challenged, and disadvantaged individuals are invited to attend these meetings, so they will be made aware of BridgIT's complaints policy from the start. In addition, the NGO partners are available to the stakeholders for any complaints that might arise during the course of the construction project, and they can help the people lodge such complaints, if necessary. When the project has been delivered to the Water User Committees, these committees are required to field complaints from users of the water systems, and such complaints can be referred to BridgIT via its NGO partners, if necessary. Misunderstandings are minimized since the Water User Committees and the NGO partners communicate with the people in the local language.

## **STAGE TWO**

The Founding Director will appoint a manager to investigate the matter independently if appropriate or investigate personally. This person may need to contact the complainant to clarify the issues, conduct the investigation and explore resolution. The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal together with any recommendations/remedies made, such as, staff development and training, reviewing of policies or appropriate improvement to our services. The outcome should not refer to any individual employees or groups of employees.

Occasionally, investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent after 20 working days and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can request an Independent Review within 14 working days of the date of the outcome letter and progress to Stage Three.

## **STAGE THREE**

The Founding Director will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions, within 20 working days:

- Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
- Implement changes to the Stage Two recommendations/actions.
- Refer the matter to a higher authority such as the ACFID Code Committee.

## **ANONYMOUS COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

Compliments and complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

## DATA PROTECTION

To process a complaint, we will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. We will hold this data securely in accordance with our privacy policy and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

Individuals have a right to obtain a copy of their personal data. However, there are exceptions to this right. We will normally destroy compliments and complaints files in a secure manner six years after the compliment has been made or the complaint closed.

## MONITORING

Compliments and complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by endline surveys, user feedback and focus groups, will allow us to learn more about the services we provide. They offer a useful source of information about how individuals see our organisation and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn from compliments and complaints, the following data will be collected:

### COMPLIMENTS:

- Name and address
- Nature of the compliment
- Date of compliment
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the compliment, if appropriate

### COMPLAINTS:

- Name and address
- Name of person dealing with the complaint
- Date of complaint and response date
- Nature of complaint
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint
- Lessons learned

Compliments and complaints information will be considered on a quarterly basis by the Senior BridgIT Water Foundation Management Team and the BridgIT Water Foundation Board of Directors. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

## **ACFID CODE COMMITTEE**

### Making a complaint to the ACFID Code Committee

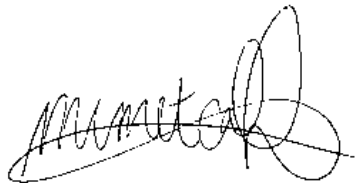
If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the organisation, they can also make a written complaint regarding an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee:

Email to [code@acfid.asn.au](mailto:code@acfid.asn.au)

Or posted to:

Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee  
Care Of ACFID  
Private Bag 3  
Deakin ACT 2600

## **AUTHORISATION**



Signature of Board Secretary

**BridgIT Water Foundation**

Date of approval by the Board: 30<sup>th</sup> December 2019