

Operational Guidelines for Mainstreaming Accountability to Affected People (AAP) in the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster Response in Yemen



Revised Edition — July 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Guideline

The 2022 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the Yemen response identified persistent accountability gaps, including insufficient community participation in programme design, limited access to trusted feedback mechanisms, inconsistent communication with affected populations, and inadequate consideration of the differentiated needs of women, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and other marginalized groups. These gaps reduce programme effectiveness, weaken community trust, and increase the risk of exclusion, unintended harm, and inefficient use of humanitarian resources. Accountability of Affected People (AAP) is therefore not an optional programme component but a core humanitarian responsibility and a key determinant of response quality. Evidence consistently demonstrates that programmes designed and adapted through meaningful community engagement are more effective, equitable, accepted, and sustainable. Integrating AAP across all stages of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle strengthens programme relevance, improves targeting, enhances protection outcomes, supports localization efforts, and contributes to more accountable and transparent humanitarian action.

These Operational Guidelines provide practical minimum standards for integrating AAP across FSAC interventions in Yemen. They translate global commitments into operational actions that partners can apply during the entire humanitarian programme cycle. The guidance aims to ensure affected populations are informed, consulted, able to influence decisions, and have access to safe and accessible feedback mechanisms throughout the programme cycle.

1.2 Scope

These guidelines apply to all organizations implementing food security and agriculture interventions under the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) response in Yemen, including national and international NGOs, United Nations agencies, Red Crescent organizations, community-based organizations, and local actors. The guidance applies to all FSAC-supported interventions, including food assistance, cash and voucher assistance, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, poultry and livelihood support activities. The guidance covers accountability considerations throughout programme design, targeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, preparedness, anticipatory action, and response adaptation. These

guidelines complement, and do not replace, agency-specific accountability policies, donor requirements, safeguarding frameworks, and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) obligations.

1.3 Guiding Principle

These guidelines establish minimum accountability standards for the FSAC response. FSAC Partners are encouraged to adopt stronger accountability measures where agency policies, donor requirements, or contextual considerations require higher standards.

2. Foundational Accountability Framework

2.1. Core Accountability to Affected People Commitments

The FSAC accountability approach is guided by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Accountability to Affected People Framework. These five commitments represent the minimum standards that should be reflected across organizational systems, programme design, implementation, monitoring, and partnership arrangements. Together, they provide the foundation for accountable, inclusive, and people-centered humanitarian action. Progress against these commitments should be assessed both at organizational level and through collective FSAC accountability mechanisms.

The commitments below should be reflected in organizational policies, project design, field implementation, monitoring systems, and partnership arrangements.

AAP Commitment	Operational Definition	FSAC Partners Leadership Commitments
Leadership and Governance	Senior management demonstrates visible commitment to AAP and integrates accountability measures into organizational systems.	Senior leadership allocates resources, establishes accountability structures, and ensures AAP is embedded in organizational policies, strategies, and decision-making processes.
Transparency	Affected people receive timely, accurate, accessible information about assistance and entitlements.	Senior leadership ensures organizational policies, systems, and resources support consistent, timely, and accessible communication with affected populations.
Feedback and Complaints	Safe, accessible, and trusted mechanisms exist for affected people to provide feedback and raise concerns.	Senior leadership ensures functioning feedback and CFM are established, adequately resourced, monitored, and acted upon across all programmes.
Participation	Affected people actively shape programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.	Senior leadership promotes a culture of participation and ensures community perspectives inform organizational planning, programme design, and strategic decision-making.
Learning and Adaptation	Programmes are designed, monitored, and evaluated with community involvement and findings inform adaptation.	Senior leadership ensures community feedback, perception data, and accountability findings are systematically reviewed and used to improve programme performance and learning.

Table 1 FSAC Partners Leadership Commitments

The following practical outcomes describe how accountability should be experienced by affected people. These represent the minimum expectations that FSAC partners should seek to achieve through programme implementation and community engagement.

What Accountability Means to Affected People

Affected people should be able to;

- Understand who is providing assistance and why
- Know their rights and entitlements
- Participate in decisions that affect them
- Raise concerns safely
- Receive responses to complaints
- See evidence that their feedback influences programmes

2.2. Accountability and Localization

Localization and accountability are mutually reinforcing principles. The Grand Bargain commitments require a fundamental shift in how FSAC partners engage with national and local organizations. Localization is not simply subcontracting; it means treating local actors as equal partners with decision-making power, adequate resources, and meaningful participation in strategic processes. For the FSAC response, local actors include national NGOs, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), Women-Led Organizations (WLO), youth groups, farmer associations, cooperatives, community committees, volunteers, and other locally rooted structures accountable to affected communities. Government authorities are important stakeholders but are treated separately from local actors for localization purposes.

The table below details the minimum commitments for accountability and localization.

AAP and Localization Area	Operational Definition	Minimum FSAC Partner Commitment
Local actor participation	National NGOs, CBOs, OPDs, WLO, farmer groups, cooperatives, youth groups and other local actors contribute to programme design, planning, implementation, monitoring and review.	Engage local actors in programme design, needs analysis, targeting discussions, monitoring reviews and programme adaptation decisions.
Locally led community engagement	Local actors support community consultations, information sharing, feedback collection, accountability monitoring and response adaptation.	Utilize local actors, where appropriate, to facilitate community engagement, consultations and feedback processes while ensuring affected populations can engage directly with implementing agencies when needed.
Trusted local structures	Community committees, focal points, OPDs, women-led groups, farmer associations, youth groups and other trusted community structures support participation, communication and accountability.	Identify and engage trusted local structures to support information dissemination, community consultation, feedback collection and accountability monitoring.
Community representation and inclusion	Community representatives participating in consultations and decision-making processes reflect the diversity of affected populations, including women, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, IDPs, minority groups and female-headed households.	Ensure community consultations and representative structures are inclusive and do not rely solely on traditional leaders or dominant groups.
Programme learning and adaptation	Local actors contribute to the review of monitoring findings, community feedback, complaints trends and programme performance.	Share relevant monitoring findings and feedback trends with local partners and involve them in identifying corrective actions and programme improvements.
Local participation in coordination	Local actors contribute to FSAC coordination meetings, technical discussions, assessments, learning events and accountability initiatives.	Promote meaningful participation of local actors in FSAC coordination structures and provide support to address barriers to participation where feasible.

Table 2 Minimum Accountability Standards for Localization

2.3. Accountability and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) represent one of the most serious violations of humanitarian accountability. Both AAP and PSEA seek to address power imbalances between humanitarian actors and affected populations and promote safe, respectful, and accountable engagement with communities. Effective AAP systems contribute to PSEA by ensuring communities have access to trusted information, safe reporting channels, and opportunities to raise concerns without fear of retaliation. FSAC partners should ensure that accountability and safeguarding measures are integrated throughout programme design and implementation. SEA complaints must be managed through dedicated PSEA reporting and referral pathways in accordance with organizational and inter-agency procedures. Section 4 outlines Operational requirements related to complaint handling, reporting, referral, and survivor-centered response.

The following minimum requirements should be integrated across all FSAC programmes to strengthen the link between accountability systems and PSEA commitments.

Key AAP–PSEA Integration Requirements

- Communities are informed, through regular awareness activities, about expected staff behavior, prohibited conduct, available SEA reporting channels, and survivor confidentiality principles.
- CFMs must include confidential SEA reporting pathways and clear referral procedures aligned with inter-agency PSEA protocols
- Community consultations and monitoring activities routinely assess SEA risks, barriers to reporting, and perceptions of safety and trust in assistance delivery
- Women and girls have access to female staff, female volunteers, or other safe and culturally appropriate engagement mechanisms to support participation and reporting.
- Partners maintain active engagement with relevant inter-agency PSEA coordination mechanisms and apply agreed referral pathways.
- SEA complaints are managed through dedicated survivor-centered procedures and must not be investigated or managed through routine programme complaint processes

3. Yemen Context: Critical AAP Considerations

3.1. Context-Specific Accountability Requirements in Yemen

Accountability approaches should be adapted to the operational realities of Yemen while maintaining common minimum standards across all FSAC interventions. Partners should ensure that community engagement, information sharing, participation, and feedback mechanisms remain accessible, inclusive, and responsive within different geographic, social, and security contexts.

Context Factor	Strategic Accountability Consideration	Minimum FSAC Partner Commitment
Access and security constraints	Access limitations may restrict direct engagement with affected communities and increase reliance on remote approaches.	Ensure communities have access to information, participation opportunities, and feedback mechanisms through context-appropriate approaches, including direct engagement, local partners, community focal points, remote communication channels, or third-party arrangements where required.
Gender norms	Social and cultural norms may limit the participation of women and girls in consultations and decision-making processes.	Ensure women and girls can safely access information, consultations, assistance, and feedback mechanisms through gender-sensitive engagement approaches, including separate consultations where appropriate.

Context Factor	Strategic Accountability Consideration	Minimum FSAC Partner Commitment
Disability and inclusion barriers	Persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups may face barriers in accessing information, participation opportunities, and feedback channels.	Ensure information, consultations, assistance delivery points, and feedback mechanisms are physically and communication accessible to persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups.
Low literacy levels	Written communication alone may exclude significant portions of affected populations.	Use verbal, visual, pictorial, audio, and community-based communication approaches and avoid reliance on written materials alone.
Digital connectivity limitations	Reliance on digital communication may exclude individuals with limited access to phones, internet, or digital platforms.	Maintain multiple communication and feedback channels, including at least one non-digital option, to ensure equitable access and participation.
High levels of need and limited resources	Resource constraints may create tensions, exclusion concerns, and unrealistic expectations among communities.	Clearly communicate targeting criteria, beneficiary entitlements, programme limitations, and available complaints mechanisms to manage expectations and strengthen trust.
Targeting and exclusion risks	High levels of vulnerability and limited resources may result in perceptions of exclusion, unfair beneficiary selection, or disputes regarding assistance eligibility.	Ensure targeting criteria, beneficiary selection processes, entitlements, and complaints procedures are communicated clearly to communities before assistance delivery and can be challenged through established feedback mechanisms.

Table 3 Context-Specific Accountability Considerations and Minimum FSAC Partners Commitments

3.2. Inclusive and Accessible Community Engagement

FSAC partners should ensure that all affected population groups can access information, participate in programme decisions, and utilize CFM without discrimination or barriers. Partners should identify and address barriers that may limit participation and take appropriate measures to promote meaningful, safe, and equitable engagement throughout the programme cycle.

Population Group / Requirement	Minimum Recommended Accountability Actions
Women and girls	Ensure safe and meaningful participation through female staff, gender-sensitive consultation approaches, separate discussions where appropriate, and confidential feedback and reporting channels.
Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	Ensure information, consultation processes, feedback mechanisms, help desks, and service delivery points are physically and communication accessible. Engage Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in programme design, monitoring, and review.
Older persons	Use accessible communication methods, adapt consultation approaches where necessary, and ensure physical access to engagement and feedback mechanisms.
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	Ensure IDPs are represented in community consultations, targeting discussions, programme monitoring, and feedback processes, including those living outside formal displacement sites.
Female-headed households	Proactively identify and engage female-headed households and ensure they can safely access information, consultations, assistance, and complaints and feedback mechanisms.
Community representatives and committees	Ensure community representatives and committees reflect the diversity of affected populations and do not replace direct engagement with women, youth, PWDs, IDPs, and other underrepresented groups.
Youth and adolescents	Create age-appropriate opportunities for participation and ensure youth perspectives inform programme design, implementation, and monitoring.
Minority and marginalized groups	Identify participation barriers and implement targeted measures to ensure equitable access to information, consultations, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms.

Population Group / Requirement	Minimum Recommended Accountability Actions
Low-literacy populations	Use verbal, visual, audio, and community-based communication approaches and avoid reliance on written materials alone.

Table 5 Inclusive and Accessible Community Engagement Requirements

3.3. Digital Access and Connectivity

Digital engagement mechanisms should complement rather than replace face-to-face engagement. No community member should be excluded from participation or feedback opportunities due to lack of phone ownership, digital literacy, connectivity, disability, gender-related barriers, or financial constraints. Access to Mobile phones in Yemen is high but uneven, with lower connectivity and access in rural areas, among women, and among elderly and displaced populations. Internet access is limited and unreliable. Partners must not assume digital channels are universally accessible.

Channel	Recommended Use	Operational Considerations for FSAC Partners
Mobile phone calls / SMS	Individual feedback, post-distribution monitoring, appointment notifications, information sharing, and rapid consultations.	Verify phone ownership and access among women and vulnerable groups. Do not rely on SMS alone where literacy levels are low.
WhatsApp and messaging applications	Communication with community focal points, dissemination of information materials, remote consultations, and group engagement where appropriate.	Should complement, not replace, direct community engagement. Consider privacy, data protection, network limitations, and unequal access to smartphones.
Community radio	Dissemination of information on assistance, entitlements, targeting criteria, complaints mechanisms, and key programme updates.	Use clear and locally understood language. Combine with feedback channels, radio alone does not provide two-way communication.
Community help desks	Information sharing, complaint intake, clarification of entitlements, and direct engagement with programme participants.	Ensure accessibility for women, persons with disabilities, older persons, and individuals with low literacy. Staff should be trained on confidentiality and referral procedures.
Suggestion boxes	Collection of anonymous feedback and complaints where communities prefer written reporting.	Should not be used as the sole feedback channel. Monitor and review regularly and communicate actions taken in response to feedback.
Toll-free hotlines / call centers	Confidential feedback, complaints handling, information requests, and referrals.	Ensure staff are trained on confidentiality, safeguarding, PSEA referral pathways, and local language or dialect requirements. Monitor response times and resolution rates.
Community focal points and volunteers	Information dissemination, community consultations, and identification of emerging concerns in hard-to-reach areas.	Community focal points should support, not replace, direct engagement with affected populations. Ensure diverse representation and avoid over-reliance on local elites or gatekeepers.

Table 6 Digital Engagement Channels: Recommended Use and operational Considerations

Minimum Digital Engagement Standards

- Digital engagement should complement, not replace, face-to-face community engagement.
- At least one non-digital feedback channel should be available in each operational area.
- Partners should assess barriers to phone ownership and digital access among women, older persons, persons with disabilities, and displaced populations.
- Digital feedback mechanisms should comply with data protection and confidentiality requirements.

4. Complaints and Feedback Mechanism: Minimum Standards

4.1. Purpose

A Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) is a structured process that enables affected people to seek information, provide feedback, raise concerns, report misconduct, and receive responses. Effective CFMs support programme quality, strengthen accountability, identify operational issues, and inform programme adaptation.

4.2. Complaint and Feedback Mechanism Design Principles

Effective complaints and feedback mechanisms are essential for ensuring that humanitarian assistance remains accountable, responsive, and people centered. FSAC partners should establish and maintain mechanisms that are accessible to all affected populations, protect confidentiality, promote timely action, and support continuous programme improvement.

The principles below define the minimum operational standards for complaints and feedback management across FSAC interventions in Yemen.

Principle	Minimum Requirement
Accessibility	Maintain at least two feedback channels, including one non-digital channel, that are accessible to different population groups, including women, persons with disabilities, older persons, IDPs, and low-literacy populations.
Safety and Confidentiality	Complaints and feedback mechanisms must protect users' confidentiality, dignity, and safety. Sensitive complaints must be managed through secure and restricted processes.
Awareness and Understanding	Communities must be informed about available feedback channels, the types of issues that can be reported, expected response timelines, and how information will be used.
Responsiveness	All complaints and feedback should be acknowledged within 3 working days. Information requests and routine programme complaints should be addressed within established organizational timelines. SEA allegations and high-risk protection concerns require immediate referral through appropriate pathways.
Inclusivity	Women, girls, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced populations, minority groups, and other at-risk populations must have safe and accessible opportunities to provide feedback and raise complaints.
Transparency	Partners should communicate targeting criteria, entitlements, programme limitations, complaint handling procedures, and actions taken in response to community feedback.
Analysis and Learning	Feedback and complaint data should be regularly analyzed to identify trends, recurring concerns, operational risks, and opportunities for programme improvement.
Programme Adaptation	Community feedback should inform programme adjustments where feasible, and significant changes resulting from feedback should be communicated back to affected communities.
PSEA and Safeguarding	CFMs must include confidential SEA reporting pathways and referral procedures. SEA complaints must be managed separately from routine programme complaints using survivor-centered approaches and established inter-agency referral pathways.

Table 7 CFM Design Principles and Minimum Requirements

4.3. Standard Complaints and Feedback Mechanism Process

All FSAC partners must implement the following six-stage CFM process:

Stage	Action	Responsible	Timeline
1. Receive	Community members submit feedback, complaints, information requests, suggestions, or reports of misconduct through available channels. Communities should be informed of available channels and expected response timelines. All channels should be monitored regularly.	CFM Focal Point / Field Staff	Ongoing
2. Acknowledge	Confirm receipt of the complaint or feedback and explain the next steps, expected timelines, and available follow-up options. Where possible, provide a reference number.	CFM Focal Point	Within 3 working days
3. Record	Log the complaint or feedback in the CFM register, including date received, channel, category, location, programme, status, and action taken. Only collect information necessary for managing the case.	CFM Focal Point	Within 24 hours of receipt
4. Categorize and Refer	Classify complaints by category (e.g., information request, programme complaint, suggestion, protection concern, fraud and corruption, SEA allegation). Refer SEA allegations and protection concerns immediately through established referral pathways.	CFM Focal Point / Designated Focal Point	Within 1 working day
5. Review, Investigate and Resolve	Review the complaint, conduct any necessary investigation, determine corrective actions, and implement an appropriate response. Significant issues requiring programme adjustments should be communicated to relevant management and programme teams.	Relevant Programme Team / Designated Responsible Officer	Within established organizational timelines (maximum 15 working days for routine programme complaints)
6. Close and Report	Inform the complainant of the outcome where possible, record the resolution, update the CFM register, and include findings in regular management and accountability reporting. Document lessons learned and actions taken.	CFM Focal Point	Upon resolution

Table 8 Standard Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) Process

4.4. Data Protection in Complaint and Feedback Mechanism

Weak data protection practices in Yemen's operational context pose real risks to beneficiaries particularly in conflict-affected or politically sensitive areas. The following data protection standards are mandatory for all CFM-related data:

- Personal data collected through CFMs must be stored securely, with access restricted to authorized staff only.
- Beneficiary names and personal identifiers must not appear in shared reports or documents outside the immediate programme team.
- Digital CFM data must be password-protected and, where possible, encrypted.
- Community members must be informed of how their data will be used before providing information.
- Data retention policies must be established: CFM records should not be kept longer than necessary for programme purposes.
- Sensitive complaints, including SEA allegations, must never be shared through unsecured communication platforms or informal messaging groups

⚠ Data Protection Gap Identified in 2025 Partner Survey

The 2025 FSAC survey found inconsistent adherence to data protection standards among partners, with significant variation in how personal information is stored, shared and retained.

5. Mainstreaming AAP Across the Humanitarian Programme Cycle

Accountability to the Affected People (AAP) must be integrated at every stage of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), from preparedness through evaluation. This section provides operational guidance, core commitments, and SMART indicators for each HPC stage.

5.1. Preparedness and Anticipatory Action

Preparedness and Anticipatory Action (AA) are critical components of accountable humanitarian response. Effective preparedness requires that communities are informed, consulted, and able to access information and feedback mechanisms before a crisis occurs. AA should be based on transparent communication, community engagement, and clearly defined triggers to ensure affected populations understand planned actions and can influence response decisions. Establishing accountability systems during preparedness strengthens the speed, quality, and relevance of humanitarian interventions when shocks occur.

Core Commitments

- Conduct community profiling to identify communication preferences, trusted information sources, existing feedback mechanisms, community structures, and barriers to participation, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and displacement status.
- Pre-identify and regularly update communication channels, community focal points, referral pathways, and feedback mechanisms that can be rapidly activated during emergencies.
- Pre-test assessment tools, communication materials, and feedback mechanisms with representative community groups and adapt them based on feedback.
- Ensure preparedness and anticipatory action plans address the needs and participation of women, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and other at-risk groups.
- Train assessment and response teams on AAP principles, ethical data collection, safeguarding, and referral procedures.
- Inform communities of anticipated hazards, trigger thresholds, planned actions, eligibility criteria, and available feedback mechanisms where anticipatory action approaches are being implemented.
- Ensure communities can provide feedback and raise concerns before, during, and after anticipatory action interventions.
- Periodically review preparedness arrangements, communication channels, and accountability systems to ensure they remain functional and appropriate to the operating context.

Accountable preparedness and anticipatory action ensure that communities understand potential risks, influence response decisions, and have access to information and feedback mechanisms before crises escalate.

5.2. Needs Assessment and Analysis

Needs assessments provide the evidence base for humanitarian decision-making and should reflect the priorities, capacities, concerns, and preferences of affected populations. Accountable assessments go beyond data collection by ensuring communities participate throughout the assessment process, understand the purpose of data collection, and are informed of how findings will be used. Assessment approaches should be inclusive, context-appropriate, conflict-sensitive, and designed to capture the perspectives of diverse population groups, particularly those at risk of exclusion.

Core Commitments

- Ensure assessment samples and consultation approaches capture the perspectives of women, men, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and other at-risk groups.
- Use gender-balanced assessment teams and ensure female enumerators are available to engage female respondents where appropriate.
- Clearly explain the purpose of data collection, how information will be used, and any limitations regarding assistance or programme eligibility.
- Integrate mechanisms for communities to provide feedback on the assessment process and raise concerns related to data collection activities.
- Ensure assessment tools and methodologies are adapted to local languages, literacy levels, and accessibility requirements.
- Apply conflict-sensitive and protection-sensitive approaches to minimize risks associated with data collection and community engagement.
- Validate key assessment findings with affected communities where feasible and document significant differences between community perspectives and assessment conclusions.
- Share assessment findings with participating communities in accessible formats and within a reasonable timeframe, including how findings informed response planning and prioritization.

Accountable assessments generate evidence that reflects community priorities, supports transparent decision-making, and contributes to more relevant, inclusive, and people-centered humanitarian responses.

5.3. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning translates assessment findings and community priorities into programme objectives, targeting approaches, response modalities, and resource allocation decisions. Community perspectives should inform programme design, targeting approaches, implementation arrangements, and accountability measures to ensure assistance is relevant, inclusive, and responsive to identified needs.

Core Commitments

- Use assessment findings, community feedback, and consultation outcomes to inform programme objectives, response priorities, targeting approaches, and implementation arrangements.
- Ensure planning processes consider the perspectives of women, men, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and other groups at risk of exclusion.
- Clearly define and communicate targeting criteria, beneficiary selection processes, entitlements, and programme limitations before assistance delivery.
- Integrate AAP measures, including community engagement, communication, feedback and complaints mechanisms, inclusion actions, and monitoring arrangements, into programme design and implementation plans.
- Allocate adequate resources to support accountability activities throughout the programme cycle.
- Document how community input has influenced programme design, prioritization, targeting, or implementation decisions.
- Apply relevant gender, age, disability, protection, and conflict-sensitivity considerations during programme design and planning.
- Consider community perspectives when developing transition, exit, handover, or sustainability arrangements where applicable.

Accountable planning ensures that community priorities, concerns, and preferences are reflected in programme design, targeting decisions, and implementation approaches, resulting in more relevant, inclusive, and trusted humanitarian responses.

5.4. Resource Mobilization

Meaningful accountability requires adequate financial, human, and operational resources. Community engagement, communication, feedback mechanisms, inclusion measures, and learning activities should be planned and resourced from the outset of programme design rather than added during implementation. Partners and FSAC coordination structures should advocate for accountability activities as essential components of effective humanitarian response.

Core Commitments

- Allocate adequate resources to implement AAP commitments, including community engagement, communication, feedback and complaints mechanisms, inclusion measures, safeguarding, and learning activities.
- Integrate accountability activities and associated resource requirements into project design, budgets, staffing plans, and implementation arrangements.
- Ensure local and national partners have sufficient resources and capacity to fulfil their accountability responsibilities, including community engagement and feedback management.
- Advocate with donors and funding mechanisms for recognition of AAP as a core programme requirement and for adequate resourcing of accountability activities.
- Monitor the adequacy of resources allocated to AAP implementation and identify gaps that may affect programme quality, inclusion, community engagement, or responsiveness.
- Report significant constraints affecting implementation of AAP commitments through FSAC coordination mechanisms to support collective advocacy and problem-solving.
- Promote investment in staff capacity, systems, tools, and learning processes that strengthen accountability and community engagement.

Sustainable accountability depends on adequate resources, organizational commitment, and continuous investment in systems that enable meaningful engagement with affected populations

5.5. Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation and monitoring are the primary means through which accountability commitments are translated into practice. Communities should have access to timely information, understand their entitlements, participate in programme implementation, and be able to provide feedback throughout the project cycle. Monitoring should assess not only what assistance was delivered, but also how affected populations experienced the response and whether community feedback informed programme improvements

Core Commitments: Prior to Implementation

- Inform communities of programme objectives, eligibility and targeting criteria, beneficiary entitlements, implementation arrangements, available feedback channels, expected standards of staff conduct, and safeguarding commitments.
- Ensure complaints and feedback mechanisms are operational, accessible, and communicated to affected populations before assistance delivery begins.
- Provide information in accessible formats and through communication channels appropriate to local languages, literacy levels, age, gender, disability, and context.
- Verify that community engagement, referral pathways, and accountability arrangements are functional before programme launch.

Core Commitments: During Implementation and Monitoring

- Monitor community awareness of programme objectives, targeting criteria, entitlements, and available feedback channels.
- Record, analyze, and respond to feedback and complaints in accordance with established procedures and timelines.
- Conduct post-distribution monitoring or equivalent monitoring activities that assess programme quality, community satisfaction, awareness of entitlements, access to feedback mechanisms, and perceptions of fairness and inclusion.
- Engage affected populations regularly through consultations, monitoring activities, community meetings, or other appropriate mechanisms to identify concerns and emerging issues.
- Analyze feedback, complaints, monitoring findings, and community perceptions on a regular basis to identify trends, operational risks, and opportunities for improvement.
- Document programme adjustments made in response to community feedback and monitoring findings.
- Communicate significant programme changes, actions taken, and responses to common concerns back to affected populations through appropriate channels.
- Ensure monitoring data is disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and other relevant vulnerability characteristics where feasible.

Accountability is demonstrated when communities are informed, listened to, able to influence programme implementation, and can see evidence that their feedback contributes to programme improvements and decision-making.

5.6. Operational Peer Review and Evaluation

Operational peer reviews and evaluations provide an opportunity to assess whether programmes were relevant, inclusive, accountable, and responsive to affected populations. Effective reviews and evaluations should capture community perspectives, identify accountability strengths and gaps, and generate actionable recommendations to improve future programming. Accountability is strengthened when affected populations contribute to assessing programme performance and shaping future intervention.

Core Commitments

- Include community perspectives and experiences as a core component of operational reviews and evaluations.
- Ensure women, men, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and other at-risk groups are represented in evaluation and learning processes where feasible.
- Assess the effectiveness of communication, community engagement, participation, targeting transparency, feedback mechanisms, and responsiveness to community concerns.
- Review whether affected populations understood programme objectives, eligibility criteria, entitlements, and available feedback channels.
- Examine the extent to which community feedback informed programme adaptation, implementation decisions, and response quality.
- Identify accountability strengths, gaps, lessons learned, and good practices to inform future programme design and implementation.
- Share key findings and lessons learned with relevant stakeholders, including participating communities, in accessible and appropriate formats.
- Ensure evaluation recommendations include practical actions to strengthen accountability, inclusion, communication, safeguarding, and feedback systems in future interventions

Accountability is strengthened when affected populations contribute to assessing programme performance, identifying lessons learned, and influencing future programme design and implementation

5.7. Coordination and Information Management

Coordination and information management are essential for maintaining consistent accountability standards across the FSAC response. Community feedback, complaints data, monitoring findings, and accountability trends should inform coordination discussions, strategic decision-making, advocacy, prioritization, and response adaptation. Effective coordination and information management enable partners to identify systemic issues, strengthen collective learning, and improve the overall quality and accountability of the humanitarian response.

Core Commitments

- Regularly review AAP implementation, community feedback trends, and accountability issues through FSAC coordination mechanisms.
- Facilitate participation of national and local actors in accountability discussions, learning processes, and coordination forums.
- Collect, analyze, and utilize aggregated community feedback, complaints trends, monitoring findings, and accountability data to identify systemic issues, operational risks, and response gaps.
- Use accountability data to inform response planning, prioritization, advocacy, targeting approaches, and programme adaptation.
- Maintain and share relevant AAP tools, guidance, templates, lessons learned, and good practices to support partner capacity and continuous improvement.
- Promote appropriate data protection, confidentiality, and responsible information sharing when collecting, analyzing, and reporting accountability-related information.
- Strengthen linkages between FSAC accountability activities and relevant inter-agency mechanisms, including PSEA, protection, cash coordination, disability inclusion, and community engagement initiatives.
- Document and disseminate key accountability findings, lessons learned, and recommendations to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

Effective coordination and information management strengthen collective accountability by ensuring that community perspectives, feedback, and evidence are systematically used to improve humanitarian decision-making, response quality, and programme effectiveness.

6. List of Annexes

6.1. Annex 1: AAP Quick Reference Card



Open annex online: [Annex 1: FSAC AAP Quick Reference Card | Food Security Cluster](#)

Quick field reference for staff to apply minimum AAP actions.

6.2. Annex 2: Minimum Data Disaggregation Categories



Open annex online: [Annex 2: Recommended Data Disaggregation Categories](#)

Minimum categories for assessment, monitoring, PDM and CFM data.

6.3. Annex 3: Minimum AAP Indicators for FSAC Response



Open annex online: [Annex 3: Minimum AAP Indicators for FSAC Response | Food Security Cluster](#)

Minimum indicator framework for monitoring AAP implementation.

6.4. Annex 4: FSAC AAP Resources and Templates

Tool	Purpose	Link
Global Food Security Cluster AAP-PSEA Tip Sheet	Provides practical guidance on integrating AAP and PSEA in food security programmes.	Global Food Security Cluster AAP and PSEA Tip Sheet
Yemen FSAC Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) Tool	Rapid emergency needs assessment with integrated AAP indicators	Yemen FSAC Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) Tool
Yemen FSAC Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Tool	Post-distribution monitoring with AAP-specific questions on awareness, satisfaction, and CFM usage	Yemen FSAC Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Tool
FSAC AAP Indicator Bank	Comprehensive library of SMART AAP indicators for all HPC stages	AnnexA FSAC AAP Indicator Bank.docx
FSAC CFM SOP Template	Standard operating procedures template for partner CFM establishment	AnnexB FSAC CFM SOP Template.docx
FSAC Community Profile Template	Tool for mapping community communication preferences and key structures	AnnexC FSAC Community Profile Template.docx
FSAC AAP Learning Brief Template	Quarterly template for compiling CFM trends and programme adaptations	AnnexD FSAC AAP Learning Brief Template.docx
FSAC IEC Material Templates	Standardized IEC materials in Arabic, pictorial, and audio formats	AnnexE FSAC IEC Material Templates.docx
Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)	Nine commitments forming the foundation of quality and accountable humanitarian action	corehumanitarianstandard.org
IASC AAP Framework	Five AAP commitments; guidance for inter-agency AAP implementation	IASC / interagencystandingcommittee.org
SPHERE Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards	Minimum standards for humanitarian response including participation and information	spherestandards.org
IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities	Comprehensive guidance on disability inclusion in humanitarian response	IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, 2019 IASC
IASC Gender and Age Marker	Tool for designing and monitoring gender-responsive and age-appropriate programmes	The IASC Gender with Age Marker IASC
Grand Bargain Localization Commitments	Commitments to shift power and resources to local actors	The Grand Bargain (Official website) IASC

Tool	Purpose	Link
WFP Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2016)	Foundational data protection standards for humanitarian programmes	WFP Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2016)
AAP-PSEA Linkages Guidance (IASC 2018)	Framework linking AAP and PSEA processes and responsibilities	The Essential Linkages Between AAP and PSEA
Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability	Internationally validated tool for disability identification in surveys	Washington Group on Disability Statistics – Short Set of Questions on Disability

For any queries on this guideline, please contact:

Abigael Nyukuri

Yemen FSAC Technical Advisor

Email: Abigael.Nyukuri@fao.org